THINKING POLITICALLY ABOUT GENDER:
WHAT THE LITERATURE SAYS

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FEBRUARY 2018

ABOUT THE GENDER AND POLITICS IN PRACTICE RESEARCH PROJECT

How can a gendered understanding of power and politics make development work more effective? Many development programs tend to look at gender issues and politics separately. Through a series of case studies, this research asks what we can learn from more integrated approaches. It includes:

- a literature review on thinking and working politically and gender equality

- a context paper, and three in-depth studies that examine how gender and politics came together in social change processes

  - women political leaders in the Pacific

  - labour reform in Vietnam's clothing industry

  - transgender empowerment and social inclusion in Indonesia

- 14 short case studies of development programs that aim to be both politically informed and gender aware, and a synthesis of their key insights

GAPP is led by the Developmental Leadership Program, which involves the University of Birmingham and La Trobe University, in collaboration with the Australian Government. Partner organisations include The Asia Foundation, Palladium, RMIT, Kings College London, UCL and the University of Southampton.

GAPP is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Gender Equality Fund and DFAT's partnership with The Asia Foundation.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This literature review was prepared by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) for the Gender and Politics in Practice research project. It is published in collaboration with the GSDRC.

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Suggested citation: Laws, E., Brigden, S. & Ahluwalia, K. (2018). *Thinking politically about gender: what the literature says*. (Gender and Politics in Practice series). University of Birmingham: Developmental Leadership Program / GSDRC.

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1 OVERVIEW

This report looks at the extent to which authors and development practitioners who identify with the principles and methods of thinking and working politically (TWP) have used them to consider gender-related issues. There is an increasing recognition that the obstacles to effective change in developing countries are not only technical or financial, but are also bound with domestic politics and power relationships. Mindful of these political barriers, TWP encourages more politically informed thinking and working, based on a deep understanding of the local context, support for local actors' iterative problem solving, and a commitment to flexible and adaptive programming through learning (TWP Community of Practice, 2015a). This agenda has been on the ascendance recently, and a number of complementary frameworks, analytical tools and communities of practice have emerged. These include political economy analysis (PEA), political settlements analysis (PSA), and adaptive development. While there are differences between these agendas, they share the starting premise that development is a fundamentally political process.

But to what extent have these specific frameworks and tools been used to analyse gender inequality? There are at least two ways of considering gender-related issues through a TWP lens: (a) purposefully attempting to apply TWP principles to tackle gender inequality; and (b) understanding gender as a key dimension of power to be considered during analysis, regardless of whether the initiative seeks explicit gender equality goals. Both of these aspects will be considered in the course of this literature review.

Given that gender is one of most central and pervasive systems that shape power relations in the world, incorporating gender would seem to be an important part of being politically informed in the context of most analyses and programs (Koester, 2015). But a number of authors have noted that there is only limited evidence of TWP being applied to issues of gender equality (Browne, 2014; Koester, 2015).

The aim of this report is to provide a more systematic and complete appraisal of the degree to which TWP literature incorporates a gender focus than has been offered in other reviews. By undertaking this exercise, we hope to contribute to an assessment of the degree to which TWP literature can inform more effective approaches to development.

The remainder of this section sets out the methods and scope of this report, reflections on the evidence base, and key messages from the literature. In section 2, we review how power and politics are approached in some common tools for gender analysis. In doing so, we set out some of the reasons why paying close attention to issues of gender inequality should be an integral part of the efforts to improve political analysis and practice within aid agencies. Section 3 looks at the degree to which gender has been considered in the three frameworks mentioned above – PEA, PSA, and adaptive development. These three have been selected for consideration in this literature review because they are among the tools and approaches that have been used most commonly to incorporate TWP in the analysis, implementation and evaluation of development programs. This section also looks at a common critique, which is that certain aspects of TWP may imply a tacit or strategic acceptance of elements of the status quo in developing countries, which could include entrenched patriarchy or other harmful gender practices. Section 4 moves on from the more conceptual literature looked at in section 3, to discuss examples of gender-related objectives being advanced through TWP methods in the context of specific sectors and issues, including conflict and peacebuilding, workplace equality, and social protection. Taking a look at different sectors in this way enables a closer analysis of how TWP overlaps with gender issues in the context of specific development problems and areas of development activity.

Section 5 looks at cases where TWP and gender equality have been incorporated into more general political process involving developmental leadership and reform coalitions. These examples are then used in the concluding section to build a series of key messages on how TWP can be used to foster positive change for gender objectives. Finally, the report identifies some directions for future research.

METHODS AND SCOPE

This literature review is an assessment of academic, policy and grey literature published in the last decade. Material was collected primarily through searching Google, Google Scholar and academic journal indexes with combinations of search terms including 'gender' OR 'equality' OR 'women's rights' OR 'female rights' OR 'LGBTI' AND 'politics' OR 'development' OR 'thinking and working politically' OR 'political settlements' OR 'adaptive' OR 'political economy'. Similar searches were run through the GSDRC and Research for Development websites, and those of various think tanks, NGOs, international financial institutions (IFIs) and donors.

The initial results were scanned for their relevance and then filtered using additional search terms related to conflict, peacebuilding and statebuilding, leadership and elections, social protection, and natural resources. This initial filtering identified 38 documents, 31 of which were considered sufficiently relevant for further analysis. Experts in the field were identified on the basis of an initial scope of the literature and were invited to comment and recommend relevant sources.

Feminist movements have a rich experience of campaigning for rights and equality, and their successes over the years indicate that they have had to understand and negotiate with power and politics to bring about change (Derbyshire et al., 2018). At the same time, gender analysts have examined the political and power relations that sustain gender difference and inequality, including the informal, less visible culture and norms that underpin visible manifestations of power (Ibid).

As such, there is an extensive body of literature and practitioner experience demonstrating how understanding and accomplishing the conditions for gender equality implies thinking and working politically. But although this wider literature and experience clearly reflects an extensive engagement both with gender and politics, it is not explicitly connected to the TWP community. It should be stressed that the aim of this report is to assess the degree to which the TWP approach to aid policy and programs has been informed by and applied to issues of gender equality, and therefore this wider body of work sits outside its remit.

REFLECTIONS ON THE EVIDENCE BASE

Despite areas of overlap and common points of emphasis, there is limited – albeit growing – evidence of authors and practitioners either using TWP ideas and forms of analysis to tackle gender equality, or incorporating gender as a key dimension of power be considered during analysis.

The relevant scholarship that does exist consists largely of grey literature that has been written or commissioned by think-tanks, research institutes or non-government organisations (NGOs). Informal reflections on these issues can be found on blogs authored mainly by researchers from Oxfam, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP).[1] There appears to be little engagement from academia.

Those studies that have explicitly applied a TWP lens to issues of gender equality tend to support their arguments with narrative case studies rather than through experimental research design. As such, whilst the existing evidence provides broad pointers as to the value of TWP in support of greater gender equality, there is little in the way of rigorous empirical analysis of why particular approaches or interventions have or have not worked in different contexts.

In terms of sector-specific case studies on TWP and gender equality, it appears that the greatest amount of interest is in the area of conflict, peacebuilding and statebuilding. This review found no evidence of intersection between TWP and debates on LGBTI rights or between TWP, gender and climate change and natural resources. There is very limited intersection with debates on labour movements and workplace equality, or with debates on elections and political leadership.

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1 See, for example: http://www.dlprog.org/opinions/gender-and-power-six-links-and-one-big-opportunity.php; https://www.odi.org/comment/10384-putting-adaptdev-practice-gender-conflict-health-and-learning; http://www.dlprog.org/opinions/adding-gender-and-power-to-the-twp-agenda.php; http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/thinking-and-working-politically-an-exciting-new-aid-initiative/

Authors using TWP approaches on different sector-specific areas often arrive at similar strategic recommendations for bringing about change. However, there is sparse evidence of links being explored across thematic or sector-specific areas. For example, there is little analysis of how using TWP principles and methods in regard to gender equality and peacebuilding might have implications for other areas such as social protection.

There is also little evidence of authors exploring links between various complementary frameworks in regard to TWP and gender equality. For example, authors who discuss issues of gender within the adaptive development community do not appear to have engaged extensively with insights from the political settlements field.

There has been limited dialogue or collaboration across disciplinary boundaries. Most notably, there appears to be little direct engagement between the TWP community and gender analysts, despite the fact that the latter are explicitly focused on the political and power relations that sustain gender inequality.

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE LITERATURE

There is a relatively small but growing appreciation of the relevance of TWP methods and principles to gender issues. Examples can be found of political economy analysis, political settlements analysis and insights from the adaptive development field being used to shed light on the underlying power relations that restrict gender equality, and to inform programming. There is evidence that these frameworks can enhance understanding of the underlying drivers behind gender-related inclusion or exclusion from political processes, particularly by drawing attention to informal power structures.

There is still only limited evidence of donors or other international organisations explicitly identifying themselves with TWP methods and principles in the course of supporting gender-related objectives. However, success stories can be found, and these emphasise the importance of local knowledge, working informally and behind the scenes, working with the grain of local power relations and taking an open-ended approach to change. In particular, instructive case studies have been developed by the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP), focused on gender and women's leadership, and coalitions working for change in gender relations and associated policy.

One concern expressed frequently in the literature is that working with the grain of politics in developing countries could imply a tacit acceptance of the status quo and could therefore reinforce structural inequalities, including harmful gender practices. Political settlements analysis, for example, is centrally concerned with how elite pacts underpin the performance of institutions. There is little guarantee that these pacts will be informed by or responsive to the interests of different gender groups. Therefore, there is a danger that donors or other external actors could inadvertently shore up regressive gender norms or practices if they are overly concerned with tailoring their strategies to fit with the existing settlement. Whilst there has been limited engagement with this critique, some authors have suggested that the problem can be addressed in principle through in-depth gendered analysis of the political settlement and its implications for gender equality.

Women and gender concerns tend to be excluded from peacebuilding and statebuilding processes, but there are examples of women's groups achieving representation through politically informed strategies of coalition-building and framing.

According to a recent review of the evidence, whilst there are some important exceptions, gender-related programs and organisations, like most development activities and agencies, do not commonly use structured experimentation to facilitate learning. Such experimentation is a hallmark of the adaptive development school of development programming and analysis (O'Neil 2016: 25).

2 GENDER ANALYSIS, POWER AND POLITICS

This section reviews how common gender analysis tools approach power and politics. It sets out some of the reasons why attention to gender issues should be an integral part of the efforts to improve political analysis and practice that authors in the TWP field recommend.

WHAT IS GENDER ANALYSIS?

A gender analysis is an analytical process to examine the different experiences, priorities (interests), capacities and inequalities between women, men, girls and boys, which may otherwise be invisible. These inequalities may manifest in (but are not limited to) access to, and control over, resources, different roles and responsibilities, power relationships and different barriers and opportunities. Gender analysis can reduce the likelihood that decision-making is based on gendered assumptions and stereotypes.

Gender analysis should be an 'integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluations of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated' (UN 1997: 27). Gender analysis is rooted in feminist objectives of achieving women's equality and rights. Gender analysis that aims to advance women's rights, empowerment and equality is inherently political in its design and intention. As Caroline Moser (1993: 87) writes:

> Gender planning includes several critical characteristics. First, it is both political and technical in nature. Secondly, it assumes conflict in the planning process. Thirdly, it involves transformative processes. Fourthly, it characterizes planning as 'debate'.

Moser highlights that 'gender planning' (analysis processes) is not neutral (Ibid). An organisation's ideology about women's rights and gender equality will determine the factors and methodology it prioritises in a gender analysis process and the extent to which it addresses the differences and inequalities between women, men, girls and boys in its interventions. Interventions may be limited to gender-sensitive policies that respond to the targeted needs of women or men, or gender-transformative interventions that aim to tackle the underlying causes of inequality[2].

HOW DO GENDER ANALYSIS 'TOOLS' LOOK AT POLITICS?

This section considers five gender analysis frameworks: the Harvard Analytical Framework (or the Gender Roles Framework); the Moser Gender Planning Framework; the Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM); the Women's Empowerment Framework (WEP); and the Social Relations Approach. (See March, Smyth & Mukhopadhay, 1999.) As these date from the 1980s-1990s, more contemporary documents were also considered: Trocaire's *Gender Mainstreaming Resource* (2010); Saferworld's *Toolkit: Gender Analysis of Conflict*; Conciliation Resources' *Gender & Conflict Analysis Toolkit* (2015); and *A Theory of Change on Gender Equality & Women's and Girls' Empowerment* by the DFID PPA Learning Partnership Gender Group (2015). More recent literature and program guidance draws on the concepts and approaches of these gender analysis frameworks.

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2 For example, Conciliation Resources' Gender & Conflict Analysis Toolkit for Peacebuilders (2015) positions itself as gender-sensitive, Trocaire's Gender Mainstreaming Resource Pack (2010) is gender-transformative. It is important to appreciate that the practitioner's own gender expertise and her/his own personal ideology on women's rights and gender equality could further support or undermine the objectives of the tool, when applied.

GENDER AS A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSTRUCT

To understand how gender analysis considers politics and power, it is critical to understand that 'gender refers to the socially and politically constructed roles, behaviours, and attributes that a given society considers most appropriate and valuable for men and women' (Saferworld 2015: 2).

Naila Kabeer's Social Relations Approach explains that gender is *relational* – it is to do with the unequal power relations between women and men. The consequence of social relationships is that not everyone starts at the same point in the social or political system, which affects women's capacities to take advantage of the status quo or of change (March et al., 1999: 103-4).

Gender is one social variable, and it crosscuts with others. These include, but are not limited to, age, ethnicity, class, religion, disability and sexual orientation. Social variables interact and each person or group is at the crossroads of these social interactions – intersectionality. Gender analysis tools promote an intersectional approach to examining the ways different socially constructed categories of power interact to produce cross-cutting forms of inequality.

EXAMINING POLITICAL STRUCTURES

Gender analysis requires an examination of political structures – both *formal and informal* – through which women and men make decisions, establish leadership, or organise social and economic activities across the *public and private* spheres. Women's and men's roles in these structures differ widely based on their individual social variables. Gender analysis across formal and informal structures is critical in highlighting women's exclusion and also in exposing alternative systems women have developed, including systems for organising and influencing.

Kabeer notes that the causes of gender inequality are not confined to the household and family. They are 'produced, reinforced and reproduced' across a range of institutions (the state, market, community and family/kinship) from which women are often excluded. The rules and practices of these institutions, in both the public and private sphere, need to be examined to uncover their core values and assumptions through which inequalities are reproduced. This challenges the assumption that institutions are 'ideologically neutral' (Ibid: 103-5). The DFID PPA Learning Partnership Gender Group refer to a '*continuum of inequality* in both the private and public spheres through both formal and informal mechanisms' (2015: 12).

The Social Relations Approach also highlights that institutions are *interrelated* and that a 'change in the policy or practice of one institution will cause changes in the others' (March et al., 1999: 105). The Social Relations Approach outlines five aspects of social relations shared by institutions (Ibid: 106-7):

1. *rules* (how things get done)

2. *activities* (what is done)

3. *resources* (what is used and produced)

4. *people* (who is in, who is out, who does what)

5. *power* (who decides what and whose interests are served).

Institutional rules and practices must be understood and changed if unequal relationships are to be transformed.

STRATEGIC GENDER NEEDS AND WOMEN'S GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION

Moser acknowledges the *centrality* of power, asserting that women have to get more of it to change their position in society. To transform imbalances of power, the Moser Framework advocates that women's strategic gender interests need to be met. It discusses strategic gender needs in relation to how the state controls gender divisions of labour and power in different political contexts. One example of this is policies relating to domestic violence, where welfare policy, laws and legal systems are biased in favour of men (Moser, 1993: 8, 39). Strategic needs are also met through grassroots mobilisation of women (March et al., 1999: 60).

The DFID PPA Group, like Kabeer, highlights four realms of power to consider (societal, community, household and individual). But it further unpacks the private and intimate realms of power. The household (private realm) is where power relationships are concerned with the family and those within marriage and sexual relationships. The individual (intimate realm) is where an individual's self-confidence, knowledge or self-awareness can be influenced. The need for 'transformative change within each of these levels of power' is highlighted, which 'necessitates women-led engagement with the whole community', including power brokers such as religious and traditional leaders (DFID PPA Learning Partnership Gender Group, 2015: *12*).

WHAT COULD GENDER ANALYSIS TOOLS ADD TO TWP?

Diana Koester in 'Gender & Power' highlights that gender is 'one of the most central and pervasive systems of power worldwide' (2015: 1). Yet she notes that TWP and the analytical tools aimed at understanding the distribution of power and wealth have been largely blind to feminist perspectives of gender as a political and social construct, or as a system of power. By not undertaking a robust gender analysis, practitioners risk excluding women, undermining women's agency, and reinforcing negative stereotypes and the status quo. They can inadvertently recreate hierarchies and inequality, undermining the objective of TWP – to build new alliances for sustainable development, peace and prosperity.

Gender analysis can help to identify not only agents but also pathways to positive change, which can be overlooked in TWP and traditional political economy analysis processes. The Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis, for example, emphasises the importance of building motivational and attitudinal capacities and recognises that the personal view of self will be an important resource or barrier for someone to take action.[3] The PowerCube Framework[4] describes psychological and ideological boundaries of participation as the most insidious dimension of power. Change strategies in this area target social and political culture as well as individual consciousness to transform how an individual envisages future possibilities and alternatives.

Longwe's 'Women's Empowerment Framework' presents five different levels of equality, which indicate the extent to which women are equal with men and have achieved empowerment. These include, in order of hierarchy and importance: control, participation, conscientisation, access and welfare. Longwe argues that if a development intervention focuses on the higher levels, there is a greater chance that women's empowerment will be increased. The 'Levels of equality' tool can be usefully applied to examine the change interventions supported in a program intervention, ensuring interventions are not limited to the least impactful change pathways (March et al., 1999).

PROCESS

Gender analysis emphasises the characteristics of the process methodology itself and its implications, which TWP processes could also benefit from.

It recognises that the transformational objective of gender analysis means the set of technical procedures selected is overtly political, value-laden and subjective. It challenges the concept of a 'neutral planner'. It promotes a process of self-reflection for the facilitator(s) and the need to examine the objectives, values, norms and practice of the agency facilitating the analysis. This is as relevant in a process aimed at gender equality as a process aimed at understanding power and supporting change, where 'how we think about power may serve to reproduce and reinforce power structures and relations, or alternatively it may challenge and subvert them' (Lukes, 2005: 63).

Gender analysis assumes that the process of analysis will involve conflict, which can be transformational, if planning is designed as 'debate'. Moser (1993: 88) explains that:

> *Planning as debate has the potential to confront those who 'currently' hold power at the level of ideology and philosophy as well as materially. It in effect changes the locus of exercise of power from the wielding of material resources, to association with a convincing argument…. Its challenge is to address rather than ignore tensions.*

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3 Control, defined as 'women's control over decision-making process through conscientisation and mobilisation' is also highlighted as a required change for promoting equality and women's empowerment (March et al., 1999: 80, 93-94).
4 See http://www.powercube.net/

Engaging the individual in a process of debate that aims to adjust values and change perspectives can support the type of 'sticky change' that lasts beyond an intervention's life cycle, and which international development has found elusive (Power, 2016).

It is clear from the literature surveyed here that power and politics are a central concern of gender analysis. The following section looks at the degree to which gender equality has been incorporated into some of the more common frameworks or approaches to TWP in development theory and practice.

3 GENDER EQUALITY IN TWP FRAMEWORKS

WHAT IS TWP?

The case for TWP starts with the observation that domestic political factors are usually more important in determining the impact of development programs and policies than the scale of funding or the technical quality of programming. Inclusive economic growth and sustainable poverty reduction involve the redistribution of resources, and affect the interests and incentives of people in positions of power. Therefore, development inevitably involves political contestation, negotiation and compromise.

Building on these insights, a growing body of evidence points to the importance of reform-oriented leaders, who find ways to make progress by enabling local problem-solving and collaboration among interest groups. Armed with this understanding of how change happens, the TWP agenda is driven by three core principles: strong political analysis, insight and understanding; detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context; and flexibility and adaptability in program design and implementation (TWP community, 2015a).

The importance of integrating a gender perspective in TWP, and links between TWP and gender-related programming and analysis, were discussed at a meeting of the TWP Community of Practice in Bangkok in 2015 (TWP community, 2015b).[5] It was recognised that in future, addressing gender relations must be an integral part of efforts to improve political analysis and practice within aid agencies, for two main reasons (Roche & Gibson, 2017):

1. It will sharpen political analysis, given that gender relations are embedded in institutions, shape interests and ideas, and mediate political and social structures.

2. Gender relations are power relations that shape, and are shaped by, broader social norms.

Before looking at the degree to which gender equality has been considered in TWP literature, it is worth reflecting on an issue raised in a number of studies, as well as by experts consulted during the course of this research. This is the potential gender implications of donor strategies that involve working politically with local elites.

WORKING WITH THE GRAIN AND GENDER EQUALITY

TWP is often said to involve 'working with the grain', where the point of departure for donor engagement is the way things are on the ground in a particular country, rather than a normative vision of how they should be (Levy 2014). However, if 'the grain' supports status quo power relations, then working with it may result in the continued marginalisation of those groups without power, including gender groups – in the absence of strategies specifically designed to bring about positive change in this area. Authors working in the political settlements field, among others, have voiced this concern, suggesting that a focus on working with local elites could reinforce gender inequality. Given that elites in developing countries are typically male, there is a danger that donors could inadvertently perpetuate the exclusion of women from decision-making processes and outcomes, if their strategies focus on being aligned with the prevailing political settlement (Ní Aoláin 2016; Bell 2015a).

In a paper on reform coalitions supported by the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP), Denney and McLaren (2016: 23) put forward three responses to this critique:

●   First, in all societies are there multiple 'grains', and working with the grain is partly about finding those that can be harnessed to support progressive change. Elsewhere in the literature, there are examples of women's rights activists strategically using aspects of the grain in society – such as gender stereotypes – to bring about positive reforms (Domingo et al. 2014). Going with the grain should not therefore imply an unquestioning acceptance of the status quo, but rather searching for progressive change processes that have local resonance and leadership.

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5 TWP and gender was also one of the core themes addressed at the 2017 Doing Development Differently workshop in Jakarta.
See http://www.dlprog.org/news/doing-development-differently-workshop-jakarta-2017.php

- Second, challenging entrenched elite interests may not be feasible within the time constraints imposed by the current results-oriented aid environment, which can incentivise programs to look for short-term policy wins. Donors therefore need to look for ways to support the longer-term processes of change that are required to shift the norms, behaviours and underlying power relationships in the political settlement that perpetuate gender inequality.

- Third, supporting gender equality through TWP means finding local 'champions' or coalitions that can amplify the collective interests of more marginalised individuals. This may involve looking for support outside the formal political sphere, where elite interests tend to dominate.

Various efforts have been made to integrate TWP into donor analysis and programming via analytical tools and frameworks. A few of most prominent are political economy analysis (PEA), political settlements analysis (PSA), and adaptive development.[6] This rest of this section looks at the degree to which these frameworks have been applied to issues of gender equality.

POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

PEA aims to situate development interventions within an understanding of the prevailing political and economic processes in society, including the interests, incentives and power relations among different groups and individuals. The aim of PEA is to support more politically feasible and therefore more effective development strategies. It is designed to complement conventional governance assessments by providing a deeper level of understanding about power, state capability, accountability and responsiveness (Mcloughlin, 2009: 5).

PEA was pioneered by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) with its Drivers of Change (DoC) approach in the early 2000s. The objective of DoC country studies was to understand 'the underlying political system and the mechanics of pro-poor change', and in particular the role of formal and informal institutions in enabling or hampering such change (DFID 2004). The DoC methodology focused on the interactions between structure (e.g. the long-term economic, social, geopolitical context), institutions (formal rules and informal power relations) and agents (both internal actors like political leaders and business associations, and external actors such as foreign governments and regional organisations). Early examples of this approach described political economy issues in a general sense, without examining political processes in detail (DFID, 2009). The subsequent Politics of Development Approach looks at the dynamics of political systems in more depth, in particular by encouraging more systematic thinking about how political decision-making unfolds (Ibid).

Incorporating a gender focus within PEA should lead ideally lead to a clearer understanding of the political barriers to gender-related change in a particular country context (Derbyshire et al., 2018). But in a recent literature review, Browne (2014a) notes that gender is not systematically included in most PEA. There are some limited examples of gender-oriented analytical questions being included in common PEA tools, including the power analysis framework by Sida (2013), the Framework for Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis developed by Clingendael (the Netherlands Institute of International Relations) (2007), and DoC. However, gender is typically only a small part of the analysis in each of these approaches. Where it is included, the focus tends to be on procedural issues such as the numbers of women included in formal institutions, rather than a more nuanced analysis of gender relations. In an accompanying blog, Browne (2014b) argues that the overarching explanation for this is that 'PEA in general lacks a strong analysis of real politics and power', which may partly explain why gendered power is missing from most PEA tools. Koester (2015) agrees that the PEA and TWP agendas 'are currently blind to key components of the workings of power: how power and politics in the family shape power relations at all levels of society; how wider economic, political and social structures rely on and reproduce gender power relations; and how feminised sources of power offer new opportunities for peace and prosperity.'

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6 Whilst these analytical tools offer ways of adopting a more politically informed approach to development analysis and practice, none of them are synonymous with TWP. Rather than trying to find programming models or forms of analysis that encapsulate TWP, it may be helpful to follow Parks (2014) in conceptualising the approach as a spectrum. On the one side, programs may adopt an 'evolutionary' approach to TWP uptake, for example by incorporating more political economy analysis into an otherwise conventional technical program. 'Revolutionary' approaches on the other side of the TWP spectrum may seek, for example, to partner with politically influential but non-traditional groups, or to mobilise reform coalitions.

One prominent exception not discussed in Browne (2014a) or Koester (2015) is the 2012 World Development Report, which has a chapter devoted to the political economy of gender reform, and acknowledges some key aspects of the TWP approach. It states that policy reforms in advancing gender equality are likely to arise from political processes whereby state and non-state actors vie to shape their environment. According to the theory of change presented in this report, interests and spheres of influence determine the power dynamics that fashion policy reform, and involve trade-offs and costs in the short and long term. The report also notes that coalitions are indispensable for building support for change and countering resistance from influential interest groups, which is a hallmark of the TWP approach (World Bank, 2012: 330).

POLITICAL SETTLEMENTS ANALYSIS

At the heart of PSA is the idea that a society's institutional structure and the policies that flow from it reflect the interests of powerful groups in society. It complements technical, managerial and administrative approaches to development assistance by supporting 'a more detailed understanding of how the interests, ideas and relations of power amongst leaders, elites, and coalitions can assist or obstruct the process of positive change' (Laws & Leftwich 2014: 2). There is considerable variation in the way different authors use the term 'political settlement', but they all share the premise that the underlying distribution of power shapes the trajectory of political and economic processes in society.

PSA is centrally concerned with understanding the formal and informal power relationships among elites, and between elites and their respective groups of followers. Therefore, the starting point for a political settlements approach is careful political analysis to (a) map the key political actors; (b) identify their interests and recognise their forms of power (political, economic, social and ideological); (c) understand their relations with supporters; and (d) appreciate the issues, narratives, beliefs and ideas that shape how and why they interact with each other (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014; Parks & Cole, 2010).

According to a 2014 briefing paper from the Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre (ESID) at the University of Manchester, there is a significant gap between the political settlements literature and mainstream feminist literature on women in politics. The political settlements scholarship is largely gender-blind, in that it typically fails to take into account how women and those who represent women's interests may shape or be shaped by current political settlements. At the same time, feminist political analysis has largely overlooked the insights offered by the literature on political settlements, notably the extent to which the prospects for women's empowerment in developing countries are closely shaped by informal and clientelistic forms of politics. Combining these two bodies of literature has the potential to generate a deeper understanding of how politics shapes the possibilities for greater inclusion of women and promotion of gender equity in development policies, processes and outcomes in developing country contexts (ESID 2014).

ESID (2014) sets out a three-stage analytical framework for incorporating a focus on gender equality within PSA:

- The first stage involves examining the gendered nature of state formation over time, using historical analysis and focusing on critical junctures. These critical moments of state formation usually involve new types of political settlement being established.

- The second stage maps the gendered nature of the current political settlement. This involves identifying the role of women and their interests within the current ruling coalition, the dominant and alternative ideas about gender equity and women's empowerment, and how clientelistic forms of politics influence women's participation and inclusion in politics.

Stage three is divided into two parts:

- The first focuses on the quantity and the quality of women's inclusion and participation in formal political institutions (i.e. political parties, state bureaucracy, parliament, local government), informal spaces, and women's movements.

- The second focuses on how women's political entitlements and political settlements influence the development and implementation of gender equity policies in specific sectors, e.g. education, health, social provisioning, labour, welfare and family law.

The analysis in ESID (2014) is complemented by an earlier ESID research paper by Nazneen and Mahmud (2012). They put forward four arguments as to why the political settlements framework can enhance understanding of women's inclusion in political processes (pp. 6-7).

First, by focusing on agency and structure and the interactions between the two, PSA can be used to explore how women behave as actors and negotiate their interests, and the gendered structures in which they operate. PSA can be used to map the different actors who may promote or oppose gender equality interests, and their interests and incentives. It can also be effective in exploring the role played by policy coalitions, the significance of informal relations and intra-elite bargaining about gender equity concerns.[7]

Second, Nazneen and Mahmud (2012) suggest that the most common approach to the analysis of women's political exclusion has been to focus on the limitations of representative democracy. By comparison, there are few studies on when, where and how women become an important constituency for political elites, and how women can challenge the existing distribution of power in particular sectors and policy areas. PSA is well suited to investigate these issues, as they fall within its core analytic framework of elites and the power relationships between elites and their groups of followers (Laws 2012).

Third, a common concern in the literature on gender and development is the effectiveness of quotas in promoting women's concerns. But few studies investigate which groups of women tend to benefit from these quotas. PSA may be useful for a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between political inclusion and political influence, particularly exploring how and when women in different contexts and opportunity structures become critical actors for promoting gender equality.

Finally, PSA can be used to explore how women as political actors negotiate clientelist politics, and the gender impact of these negotiations (Nazneen & Mahmud, 2012).

Using ESID case studies of political settlements in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, Nazneen and Mahmud (2012) list common political strategies that women's groups (grassroots movements, policy advocates and other organisations) have used successfully to address issues of gender equity:

● build coalitions within the movement on particular issues;

● form alliances with other civil society organisations (CSOs) and the media;

● target particular parts of the state bureaucracy, including local government, concerned ministries and the national gender machinery;

● cultivate allies among women representatives and male politicians;

● use international women's rights discourse/human rights discourse to package demands;

● establish and highlight their expertise and experience on the particular gender equity issue around which they are mobilising.

Ní Aoláin (2016) adopts a similarly strategic approach by asking how political settlements analysis can work to address women's needs, demands and challenges. She suggests the following critical questions as a way of integrating feminist concerns into a political settlements framework:

● How have women tried to affect both the formal and informal 'rules of the game' to influence how power is held and exercised?

● How and where do women 'fit' within an analysis of elite bargaining?

● What strategies have women used to try to encourage more inclusive political settlements?

● What has been their experience of how gains in formal settlement terms, such as peace agreements and constitutions, or inclusion in institutions, such as police, courts, and other institutional settings, have played out? What does this tell us about the 'wider process of bargaining between elites'?

Section 4 below revisits the concept of the political settlement in peacebuilding literature, to look at how some of these critical issues have been dealt with in practice.

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7 These observations seem to apply equally to PEA. This speaks to a wider question: is PSA distinct from PEA, or a particular approach to PEA? Kelsall et al. (2016: 8) see PSA as a variant of PEA that looks closely at the underlying distribution of power that shapes the trajectory of political and economic processes.

ADAPTIVE DEVELOPMENT

Adaptive development is a set of ideas about how best to manage and support development processes. Its advocates call for reform efforts and related assistance to be locally led, politically smart (i.e. astute in working with and around political realities) and adaptive (i.e. based on the need to test, learn, adapt) (O'Neil 2016). The call for more adaptive programming is a response to several political features of the process of development: that development actors may not have a complete grasp of the circumstances on the ground at the outset; that these circumstances often change in rapid, complex and unpredictable ways; and that this complexity means that it is rarely clear at the outset how best to achieve a given development outcome (Valters et al., 2016).

At a minimum, adaptive programming suggests that development actors need to be prepared to react to changes in the political and socio-economic context in which they are operating. In cases where the overall objective of a program is clear but the means to achieve it is unknown or uncertain, an adaptive approach may involve experimentation and a willingness to place 'small bets' to develop new ideas and practices (Andrews, 2011; Faustino & Booth, 2014).

As with political economy and political settlements analysis, some authors have criticised the adaptive development literature for being gender-blind (Green, 2013; 2015). Speaking to advocates for gender equality and advocates for adaptive development, O'Neil (2016) suggests there is the potential for strategic collaboration that has yet to be exploited fully by either side. On the one hand, gender analysis can broaden the understanding of power relations and of informal rules and norms used in mainstream development analysis; on the other, feminist bureaucrats and practitioners can make greater use of adaptive development principles to strengthen the case for cross-sector collaboration and locally-led problem-solving (Ibid).

O'Neil (2016) argues that, whilst some frontline feminist organisations and gender-related aid programs already use informal reflection and adaptation to adjust their strategies to changes in their external environment, they (along with other types of development programs) do not commonly and systematically use structured learning and adaptive techniques to test different ways of empowering women and girls. As O'Neil (2016: 32) recognises, there are some notable exceptions, including the DFID-funded Voices for Change (V4C) program in Nigeria, which explicitly incorporates problem-solving and experimentation in its design, and the Ligada program in Mozambique, which purposefully avoided a fixed set of activities at the outset. Moyle (2015) also notes that the major gender equality programs of the Australian government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – Pacific Women, the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and the Investing in Women Initiative – are all underpinned by the need for flexibility, rolling design and iterative implementation.

Nevertheless, O'Neil (2016: 30) argues that, for this kind of approach to become a more mainstream part of development programming, implementers must put in place the building blocks for systematic learning and adaptation, which include a problem-driven approach, an explicit theory of change, structured learning with rapid feedback, and potential for in-program adjustments to outputs and indicators. Funders need to enable and incentivise adaptive programs through long-term horizons and trusted partnerships, flexible funding arrangements, and more creative thinking about results and how they are reported (Ibid).

4 SECTOR-SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF TWP AND GENDER EQUALITY

This section looks at the degree to which gender-related concerns and issues have been addressed through a TWP lens in the sectors of conflict and peacebuilding and social protection.

CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING

THE ROLE OF DONORS

In an ODI literature review, Domingo et al. (2013) look at evidence on the links between gender equality, peacebuilding and statebuilding. They find that insufficient attention has been paid to the gendered effects of power-sharing institutions during peace negotiations and post-conflict transitions. They also note that, despite the common, explicit acknowledgement of the need to 'engage politically', peacebuilding and statebuilding interventions have been dominated in practice by technical approaches.

Similarly, the OECD (2013) calls for donors to adopt a more politically-informed approach to gender and statebuilding, starting with a nuanced understanding of local context. This includes understanding the power dynamics surrounding the political settlement and the role played by customary law and informal justice institutions. The report acknowledges that fine-grained analysis will reveal the way gender inequalities are innately political and are rooted in deep social, economic and political structures. It can also highlight the challenges involved in integrating a gender perspective into statebuilding programs. Donors should be alert to the underlying reasons for resistance to reform, recognising that gender inequalities can be tied up with broader struggles of power and interest.

Donors also need to improve their understanding of statebuilding as involving gendered processes and how existing institutions, processes and practices, as well as donor strategies and programs, impact men and women in different ways. This is a prerequisite to ensure that donor strategies and programs do no harm, and may mean that donors need to invest more time and resources in this area than is often the case (Ibid: 55-56).

FORMAL INCLUSION AND INFORMAL POWER RELATIONS

Castillejo (2011) notes that post-conflict contexts can provide new opportunities for women to influence statebuilding processes. However, women's ability to do so is often limited by structural barriers and opposition from elites.[8] She argues that gender inequalities are innately linked to the underlying political settlement, including the balance of power between formal and customary authorities. As the political settlement effectively sets the framework for statebuilding, the inclusion of women's interests is critical to the formation of a state that delivers for women. Peace processes often provide an opportunity to renegotiate a political settlement, and the potential benefits of women's full participation in these processes are significant.

Despite frequent exclusion from the formal negotiating table, women have often been able to influence the political settlement from outside. This has usually involved lobbying for recognition in peace agreements and constitutions, and for political governance systems that enable women's participation. For example, in North and South Sudan women successfully campaigned for recognition of women's rights in both interim constitutions, while in Kosovo a strong women's lobby achieved electoral quotas. However, Castillejo (2011) notes that often women have been much less able to influence the informal institutions and power relations that restrict gender equality. In some cases, extensive formal gains for women following conflict are not matched by meaningful changes in underlying power relations. In Guatemala, an inclusive peace process resulted in comprehensive rights for women and a range of state institutions and policies to promote gender equality. However, in this case despite these new formal rules of the game there has been no real shift in exclusionary power relations.

8 The project involved research in Burundi, Guatemala, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Sudan. It investigated three central questions: What role do women play in statebuilding? How do statebuilding processes affect women's political participation? How do statebuilding processes affect women's rights?

Domingo et al. (2015a) review evidence on the processes of change that enable women to exercise voice and leadership in decision-making. Echoing Castillejo (2011), they note that post-conflict and political transition processes can provide opportunities for women to renegotiate political settlements. In some cases, the range of political and economic opportunities for women is greater in the aftermath of a conflict. However, the body of worked reviewed suggests that historically, the extent to which women have been included in the politics of peacebuilding and statebuilding processes is limited. More research is needed to gather evidence on how the formal inclusion of women translates into gender-responsive policy (Ibid: 54-55; Bell, 2015b).

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN PEACEBUILDING

Castillejo (2016) cites evidence that the integration of female political leaders into peace negotiations and post-conflict reforms has had positive effects in securing sustainable peace and advancing gender equality:

● A three-year study of peace processes based on 40 case studies found that if women have the opportunity and capacity to influence such processes there is a higher chance of agreements being reached and implemented (Paffenholz, 2015).

● A UNIFEM (2010) study found that the meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations results in agreements that are stronger in terms of women's rights and gender equality. One example is the participation of senior women in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation process, which led to the inclusion of women's views and interests throughout the process and in the reforms that followed.

WOMEN, POLITICAL PARTIES AND PEACEBUILDING

Despite the important role that political parties can play in peacebuilding, international actors have a limited record of engaging them on issues related to the participation of women in peacebuilding and statebuilding processes (Castillejo, 2016). When international actors do engage, they frequently lack an in-depth understanding of local political contexts and instead 'work with political parties in isolation, using blueprint approaches that assume that the weaknesses of political parties can be treated in the same way in each country' (Wild & Foresti, 2010: 2). The focus is usually on promoting electoral quotas or providing capacity development for female party members, rather than addressing the exclusionary power structures that keep women marginalised in political parties (Castillejo, 2016: 4).

Castillejo (2016) recommends that international actors adopt a broader range of measures to promote women's political influence in post-conflict settings. These measures include linking women politicians with women's civil society movements and promoting the inclusion of women in the executive, judiciary and civil service.

LESSONS FOR TWP AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

A report by Accord Insights (2013: 6-8) presents nine country case studies on the roles women have played in peacebuilding.[9] It puts forward the following strategic lessons for TWP to achieve greater representation and consideration of women's rights in the aftermath of conflict.

Consensus and inclusion. A key strategy used by women's groups is to take a non-partisan, unified and consensus-based approach to achieve influence. Women in Bougainville and Northern Ireland developed forums and networks as a way to achieve strength through consensus and unity. Similarly, the women's peace campaign in Sierra Leone in 1995 put the issue of a negotiated settlement in the public domain in a non-partisan and non-confrontational way, combining non-threatening events like prayer meetings with more direct measures such as marches and government meetings. As a result, a negotiated settlement became a respectable option for all sides involved.

Advance broader issues of social justice. Many peace processes prioritise the interests of elites and armed groups. Women's groups can broaden the range of issues on the table, promoting not just women's rights but social justice more broadly. They can therefore gain legitimacy and support by appealing to a broader constituency, and by helping ensure the interests of a wider section of the community are heard.

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9 Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Northern Uganda, Papua New Guinea – Bougainville, Northern Ireland, Angola, Sudan, Indonesia – Aceh, and Somalia.

Build peace beyond the negotiating table. Support for peace processes often focuses on formal negotiations and settlements, overlooking the significant contribution of broader, complementary efforts that may be equally important in sustaining peace. Women have contributed to stopping violence and alleviating its consequences in a range of ways: providing humanitarian assistance, creating and facilitating the space for negotiations through advocacy, and exerting influence through cultural or social means. They have also spearheaded civil society and reconciliation activities. It is essential to link efforts at multiple levels more effectively, to expand the space in which women and others excluded from formal forums work, and to give this space more recognition.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

A growing body of work looks at the politics of social protection. However, few studies reflect on the gender dimensions of social protection from a TWP perspective.

One exception is a briefing paper by Jones and Holmes (2010). This draws on multi-country research in Africa, Asia and Latin America by ODI and national partners to explore the political economy of social protection and its effects on gender relations. Their political economy analysis suggests that TWP may be important for achieving gender equitable outcomes in this sector (Ibid: 1-4):

- A wide range of actors are involved in social protection debates, with different interests and degrees of influence, and strategic alliances are critical to forge political buy-in from elites, program implementers and participants. Therefore a political economy mapping of this landscape is needed to assess the opportunities for, and obstacles to, the integration of gender in the social protection agenda.

- Elites often initiate social protection programs to further their institutional aims, or try to harness the impact of such programs to advance their political interests. Whilst gender equality may be a secondary concern, there are examples from Ethiopia, India, Latin America and Indonesia of governments taking credit for social protection policies' progressive gender outcomes.

- The interests of government agencies affect the trajectory of social protection. There is generally more scope for a focus on gender inequalities when programs are led by ministries of social welfare, women and children than by ministries of rural development.

GENDER, POLITICS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN VIETNAM

Jones and Thi Van Anh (2012) use findings from research by ODI and the Institute of Family and Gender Studies (IFGS) in Hanoi to explore the intersection of gender relations and TWP in social protection programs in Vietnam. They argue that although policy momentum for social protection has grown, the political economy dynamics of decentralised policy and program implementation need to be addressed to ensure the gender awareness of social protection interventions. This requires an understanding of institutional blockages, actors' interests and incentive structures (Ibid):

- **Institutional blockages**. Implementers' capacity to tailor programs to specific local vulnerabilities is constrained in Vietnam by limited political decentralisation and limited coordination among government agencies. Inter-sectoral coordination is especially important given that social protection and gender equality are cross-cutting policy issues. However, in practice government agencies engaged in social protection programming remain in silos (Ibid: 7).

- **Actors' interests.** The evidence points to a mixed level of commitment to the promotion of gender-sensitive social protection among political leaders in Vietnam. Many leaders lack gender awareness or access to gender expertise (Ibid). This limited interest in tackling gender inequalities is perpetuated by a general perception that the Women's Union has sole responsibility for 'women's issues' and that other government agencies are absolved of professional responsibility.

- **Ideas**. There is a relatively common misperception in Vietnam that addressing gender inequalities leads to gender bias or the neglect of other vulnerable social groups (Ibid). In the context of traditional gender roles and a shrinking of the Vietnamese state from public sphere provision, gendered poverty and vulnerability is seen as a private family issue, rather than a concern for the state.

5 TWP IN POLICYMAKING AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

This final section looks at cases where TWP and gender equality have been incorporated into more general policymaking and political processes, some of which involve developmental leadership and reform coalitions. These examples are then used to support a series of recommendations in the concluding section for how the resources of the TWP community can be used to develop engagement strategies for gender equality, and to identify directions for future research.

Some authors have used political settlements analysis to explore the politics of gender-related policy-making in developing countries. For example, Ahikire and Mwiine (2015) use the framework to investigate women's rights and gender equity in Uganda. They look at the Domestic Violence Act of 2010 and the promotion of girls' education in the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy instituted in 1997. Their analysis follows the typology set out by Levy (2014), which suggests that different kinds of political settlement generate specific incentives for political action and policy options. In Levy's model, Uganda fits the 'dominant party' political settlement, given that there is little chance of power alteration, a relatively stable ruling coalition, and a highly personalised approach to public bureaucracy.

Ahikire and Mwiine (2015) argue that the dominance of the president in this system may facilitate quick, short-term dividends through particular policy choices, but often in ways that constrain a long-term, progressive approach to gender equity in state processes. The authors note that the implementation of girls' basic education, as located within the broader UPE policy initiative, has progressed much further than the DVA. They argue that this directly reflects the fact that UPE was closely aligned with the dominant interests and ideas of powerful players within the ruling coalition. On the other hand, although domestic violence has been ruled illegal in Uganda, the government has shown only limited commitment to implement this law and has resisted more extensive measures to advance women's equality in the domestic sphere.

A key difference between the two policy initiatives concerns their relevance to the leadership's use of clientelism to secure constituents' loyalty. The successful implementation of UPE is partly due to the fact that it has been cast as a presidential gift of patronage, rather than as a citizens' right. By contrast, alongside other strategic problems, the implementation of DVA has been weak because it does not fit with the dominant interests and ideas of the ruling coalition and cannot easily be characterised as a good that is dispensed by the ruling elite to maintain loyalty (Ahikire & Mwiine, 2015).

Repila (2013) also looks at how gender objectives can be promoted through a savvy understanding of political incentives and policy options, in an evaluation of Oxfam's Raising Her Voice (RHV) program. From 2008-2013 the program worked in diverse countries to create more effective governance systems by ensuring that women's voices influenced decisions about services, investments, policies and legal frameworks, at community, regional and national levels. RHV is characterised explicitly as a political program. According to Repila (2013), RHV partners have shown a strong understanding of how power works, where it lies and how to influence it to promote positive gender objectives. The program's case studies provide strategic lessons for TWP to encourage gender equality:

Innovative and diverse political strategies to engage policymakers. In Nigeria, successful advocacy for the passing of the 2013 Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill included hiring a former legislator to navigate the corridors of power, text message barraging of ministers and highly publicised mock tribunals. Pre-election campaigns in Nigeria, Mozambique and Pakistan used slogans such as 'Vote for the Domestic Violence Bill or We Won't Vote for You!' to push for legal reform in the face of continued impunity for rights violations.

Many projects also engaged directly with political parties. In South Africa and Honduras, RHV women's networks signed agreements with newly elected councillors to ensure that representatives delivered on commitments made on priority issues (Ibid: 6).

Coalitions for change. The greatest leverage has been achieved through building broad-based coalitions and alliances. In South Africa, the development of a multi-sectoral approach to the way in which women experience poverty, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence has changed how RHV partner and coalition members work (Ibid: 5).

Signing up the powerful. Forging constructive relationships with influential male opinion leaders and shapers has been crucial for supporting change. RHV Nepal rewarded male champions through media coverage. In Nigeria, influential individuals in the media joined project steering groups and acted as core campaign partners (Ibid).

DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP AND COALITIONS

TWP is at the heart of the research carried out by the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP). A significant component of that agenda has focused on gender and women's leadership, and coalitions[10] working for change in gender relations and associated policy. This body of research exploits the overlaps in literature between leadership, gender, development, political economy analysis, thinking and working politically and sexuality studies. It includes Hodes et al.'s (2011) study of a women's rights coalition in South Africa, Tadros' (2011) comparative analysis of women's coalitions in Egypt and Jordan, and work by Fletcher et al. (2016) and Denney and McLaren's (2016) on gender-focused coalitions in the Pacific.

Fletcher et al. (2016) propose that coalitions are more likely to successfully work politically to affect gender norms and promote transformational change if they are formed in response to local events and critical junctures; are locally driven and owned; share common interests and sometimes values (or can navigate conflicting values); and have adaptive and distributed leadership, which is regularly renegotiated. Other DLP studies do not explicitly focus on women's coalitions but have a gender focus – because women's organisations played a key role in bringing about change and/or because the reforms considered had a significant impact on gender equality (Dasandi, 2014; Maclean, 2014).

This sub-section identifies a number of core TWP messages illustrated in recent DLP research on developmental leadership and coalitions: the importance of informal politics; the multifaceted nature of power; that change often occurs through the interaction of local actors and international institutions; the significance of local ownership; and the need to create space to galvanise strategic political and social action. This is followed by a summary of DLP messages on the role of donors in thinking and working politically with local coalitions and leaders, and then a closer look at the way TWP principles have been used successfully by two coalitions working for gender objectives in the Pacific.

INFORMAL POLITICS

In virtually all DLP case studies involving female leaders working to challenge gender power relations, it was found that effective leaders were highly networked and actively engaged in informal or backstage politics. Hodes et al. (2011) find that backstage politics can be just as effective in influencing gender relations as formal channels of engagement, particularly when closed policy environments undermine the potential for collective action. This is supported by six case studies presented in Tadros (2011). In circumstances where the formal political space is closed to gender groups, Tadros finds that opportunities for influencing policy can still be found through negotiation and mediation behind closed doors.

TWP, GENDER AND POWER

Fletcher et al. (2016: 2) draw on Miller et al.'s (2006: 13) conceptual framework of types of power to analyse how coalitions in the Pacific are working politically to challenge norms and gender power relations:

- *Visible power:* The 'rules, institutions, decision-making structures, policies and laws' that can reinforce or challenge inequalities.

- *Hidden power:* 'who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda'

- *Invisible power*: 'socio-cultural norms and values, practices, ideologies, and customs' that label individuals, groups and behaviours as 'normal' or 'abnormal'

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10 DLP research defines a coalition as 'an association of groups and organisations working to resolve specific problems or to achieve specific goals that are beyond the capacity of any individual member of the coalition to achieve' (Leftwich & Hogg 2007: 5).

Fletcher et al. (2016) use this model to look beyond the work undertaken in the dimension of visible power – such as law reform – and uncover other strategies that may contribute to challenging gender power relations. For example, they look at a coalition in Fiji which brought together feminists and LGTBI activists to work on sexual rights. This coalition engaged with 'invisible power' by reframing socio-cultural norms through reflection and story-telling (Fletcher et al., 2016).

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DRIVERS AND LINKS

DLP research finds that the ability of local leaders and coalitions to advance gender equality often relies on their political engagement with both local and international institutions, organisations and actors. In all case studies of coalitions undertaken by DLP, links existed between international and national actors. Tadros (2011: 5) found that 'Strategies based on international blueprints are awkward to implement and sometimes backfire. However, local leaders do and can borrow strategies from their exposure to international experiences and ideas, and they learn to adapt them appropriately to local conditions.'

LOCAL OWNERSHIP

The principle of local ownership is a central tenet of TWP. DLP research highlights that in the context of gender and women's leadership, local ownership of movements, issues and coalitions is crucial. Tadros (2011: vi) argues that any proposal presented by external actors needs to reflect the 'vision, internal division of roles and planned activities of the key leaders of the coalition'. However, Fletcher et al. (2016) note that the importance of local ownership doesn't imply that a uniform or a one-size-fits-all articulation of values, interests and strategies should necessarily be expected to emerge from coalitions.

SPACES FOR DIALOGUE, REFLECTION AND CONTESTATION OF IDEAS

A theme repeatedly emerging from DLP case studies is that individuals and coalitions often require appropriate space, either within existing power structures or beyond, for dialogue, reflection and contestation of ideas. The importance of safe places in which women can gather, share experiences and reflect on injustice is highlighted by Brimacombe (2015), who identifies the important connection between the creation of safe places and the subsequent potential of creative expression to bring public visibility to gender equality issues.

Tadros (2011) uses a conceptual framework developed by Coelho and Cornwall (2006), who argue that relationships between government and citizens can be examined through the kinds of spaces that emerge for engagement. A similar message is contained in an ODI study by Domingo et al. (2015b). They argue that one of the most important factors shaping Colombia's process of increasing gender equality since 1990 has been that 'political and institutional reform processes have created both political space and opportunities, sometimes through critical junctures or key moments of political change that served to galvanise strategic political and social action' (Ibid: 21). In the Colombian context this included the creation of formal spaces such as the women's caucus in Congress, where gender advocates and policy-makers could shape policy and legal reform for women's rights and gender equality agendas.

Donors and other development practitioners can often play an important role in creating 'openings' that enable individuals and coalitions to emerge from a particular event, activity, funding stream or initiative (Tadros 2011). In case studies discussed in more detail below, Denney and McLaren (2016) look at how Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) staff worked formally and informally behind the scenes to create space to convene local stakeholders to develop locally feasible ideas, or to enable local leaders to host spaces to capitalise on their political and clan relationships.

THE ROLE OF DONORS

Fletcher et al. (2016), Denney and McLaren (2016) and Tadros (2011) all conclude that donors have an important role in convening or brokering relationships and interactions between local actors. Fletcher et al. (2016) call on external actors to create events or processes of 'coming together' that question social norms and are appropriate to the social and political contexts.

Hodes et al. (2011) argue that donors need to be less 'project-oriented' and more 'goal-oriented'. This might mean taking a longer-term view of funding social change and advocacy, rather than focusing on specific projects within specific timeframes. In some circumstances, rather than funding constituent organisations – which may unintentionally create a competitive environment and undermine collective goals, values and interests – donors should consider funding a coalition itself as a means of fostering cohesion (Hodes et al., 2011).

DLP research also highlights the importance of donors and external supporters taking the time to understand the local context, history and networks around the politics of gender in the countries in which they are operating. Tadros (2011: vi) warns against international actors creating local or artificial coalitions:

> *'When international donors seek to 'create' local coalitions, and are seen to do so, these coalitions can often be perceived by the public as 'creatures' of the donors or as being driven by financial or professional incentives rather than commitment to the cause. Their work and legitimacy can hence be severely undermined by questions regarding their integrity and commitment to the cause.'*

Tadros (2011) argues that successful donor support for coalitions often makes a number of diversions from the typical project cycle, which is also noted by others including Denney and McLaren (2016) and Domingo et al. (2015a). Tadros (2011: vii) highlights 'diversions' that include:

- Ongoing investment in, and commitment to, the process of building internal cohesion and organisational and political capacity, rather than focusing solely on the delivery of outputs.

- A recognition that coalitions need time to discuss the division of roles, appropriate strategies, their relationship with stakeholders, etc., and consequently do not function well within three- to five-year funding cycles.

- A conscientious effort on the part of donors to remain low key and neither claim the formation of the coalition as their 'success', nor any policy change to which the coalition has contributed.

- A willingness to think outside the box and take risks in supporting unconventional forms of collective agency and leadership: in other words, a focus on actors and partnerships, rather than the project.

- An appreciation of the complexity of policy-influencing processes and the fact that while local actors can and do have an impact in many instances, there is not necessarily a linear, causal relationship between a coalition's actions and policy change itself.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE PACIFIC

Two examples of the successful integration of TWP and gender equality in the area of developmental leadership and coalitions are provided by Denney and McLaren (2016), who discuss the experience of reform coalitions supported by the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP).[11]

Women in Shared Decision-Making (WISDM), Vanuatu. Women's political participation at all levels in Vanuatu has been limited since independence in 1980. WISDM was formed in 2011 and has focused on increasing women's political representation. WISDM is a coalition with loose membership boundaries, which has been led by the Director of Vanuatu's Department of Women's Affairs (DWA). The DWA Director set and framed the agenda and controlled the campaign, using lobbying and networking to mobilise key coalition members. She received training on adaptive leadership methods, which she noted enabled her to identify and engage stakeholders and build networks to push for change (Denney & McLaren, 2016: 6). The program was successful in increasing the formal political representation of women. Vanuatu's parliament passed legislation in 2013 confirming a temporary special measure (TSM) reserving between 30% and 34% of municipal seats for women. Efforts are under way to attain similar results at the provincial and national levels.

From the perspective of TWP, one notable aspect of the WISDM strategy concerns its narrow membership base, composed of individuals from the public service and parliament. While civil society organisations played a role earlier

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11 PLP is a governance initiative of DFAT that works with developmental organisations and coalitions in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. See: http://www.plp.org. fj/

in the campaign, they were not involved in the coalition that eventually brought about the electoral reforms. This appears to have been part of an explicit strategy acknowledging that legislative change only needed government support to be passed (Ibid: 14). As a general lesson, this indicates that TWP may call for the shape of a reform coalition to be adapted to suit the particular kind of reform being pursued.

Simbo for Change. Based on a remote island in the Solomon Islands, this coalition develops niche agricultural exports to increase the economic empowerment of women and their families. It is led by a local woman and a Samoan sustainable livelihoods organisation. The project has facilitated the start-up of new export industries and a process to register the area as the country's first organic island. It has stimulated co-operation among men, women and community leaders, and enabled conversations to begin about child protection issues.

Denney and McLaren (2016) draw attention to several aspects of this case study that resonate with core TWP messages:

- In certain fora the woman leader who drove the Simbo for Change process asked her husband to speak for her. Rather than a sign of submissiveness, this can be interpreted as a politically informed way to exercise soft influence within established gender roles and norms (Ibid: 13).

- Politically informed strategies were also used to manage relationships between tribes on Simbo island. For example, to avoid creating jealousies between communities, the partners made an explicit decision to expand the project from a single tribe to all tribes on the island.

- A further key tenet of TWP is that developmental change is best led not by donors but by local reformers who have the knowledge and networks necessary to achieve change. This is borne out by the Simbo for Change case study, where assistance provided by a Samoan organisation was accepted and seen as natural in the context of historic exchanges of missionaries between Samoa and Solomon Islands (Ibid: 19).

In addition to the case study material discussed above, Denney and McLaren (2016: 2) provide general observations on how PLP has successfully thought and worked politically to promote positive developmental change. They note that PLP has:

- *Emphasised knowledge of the local context and political dynamics.* PLP staff are almost entirely composed of Pacific Islanders and make extensive use of their personal networks to obtain information and build relationships.

- *Used this knowledge to identify potential partners and inform ways of working*. Rather than call for grant applications, PLP approaches groups or individuals that have been identified by the networks and by the local knowledge of program staff.

- *Worked formally and informally behind the scenes.* PLP ensures that reforms are locally led by maintaining a low profile and allowing local actors to spearhead reform efforts. PLP works behind the scenes by also using family, school and church networks to build relationships and get things done.

- *Taken an open-ended 'purposive muddling' approach to developmental change.* Reflecting a core message of adaptive development, PLP avoids starting with pre-determined solutions and appreciates the need to make incremental changes through learning during a project's lifespan. It takes a relatively informal approach to learning and adaptation. Rather than rely solely on inbuilt learning and adaptation processes, it encourages flexibility through informal conversations with partners, internal discussions and knowledge-sharing across program areas.

6 CONCLUSION

This report has looked at the degree to which the literature on TWP has engaged with gender-related issues and objectives. It began by reviewing how common tools for gender analysis approach power and politics, to establish why paying close attention to gender inequality should be a key part of efforts to improve political analysis and practice within aid agencies that are recommended in TWP literature. It has gone on to show that, despite areas of overlap and common points of emphasis, there is only limited – albeit growing – evidence of authors and practitioners applying TWP concepts and forms of analysis to gender equality issues. Nevertheless, examples can be found of political economy analysis, political settlements analysis and insights from the adaptive development community being used to shed light on the underlying drivers and informal power relations that lie behind gender-related inclusion or exclusion from political processes and outcomes, and to suggest avenues for more politically nuanced programming.

This report has also looked at how gender-related concerns and issues have been addressed through a TWP lens in literature focused on conflict and peacebuilding and social protection. The final section has reviewed cases where TWP and gender equality have been incorporated into more general policymaking and political process. These examples confirm the value of thinking and working politically to shift the institutions and power relations that sustain gender inequality. As such this review also confirms that combining these two bodies of literature and practice can help improve understanding about how politics shapes gender equality, and vice versa.

Coalitions are more likely to challenge gender norms successfully and promote transformational change if they are formed in response to local events and critical junctures, are locally driven and owned, and share common interests and values (or have the flexibility to navigate conflicting values). However, more detailed empirical research is needed on the specific factors that explain when and how coalitions, leaders and other groups are able to successfully think and work politically to shift harmful gender norms and practices.

Future research could focus on the following questions:

- What are the ecosystems of actors – including local, national, regional and international players – in different contexts and on different issues that have the propensity to address different forms of gendered power relations?

- What combinations of factors make the success of these ecosystems more or less likely? How might these help shape decisions about donor investment in the support of coalitions, as well as alternative monitoring and evaluation processes?

- What explains the significant disjunction between women's high participation in informal spaces and low participation in formal spaces, such as peacebuilding processes?

- How and where do women 'fit' within an analysis of elite bargaining and more inclusive political settlements?

- Given the potential for backlash and how this can strengthen opponents of change, should donors support contentious gender politics? If so, then how? And what diversions from business as usual might this require?

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