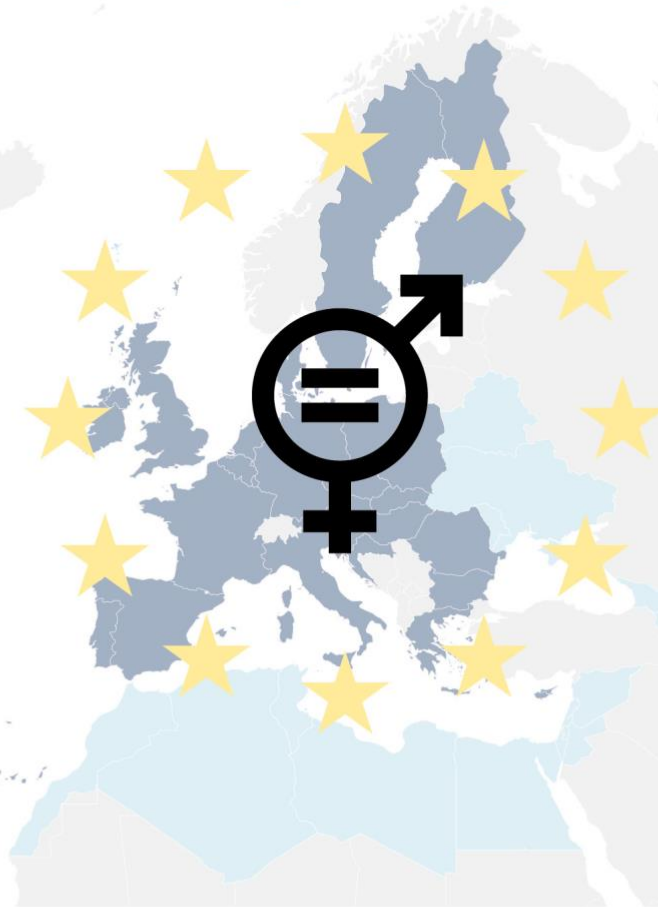


Nurturing Gender Equality in the New European Neighbourhood Policy: is the European Union a Caring Neighbour?

*An Analysis on the Transformative Potential
of the European Union Gender Mainstreaming Approach
towards its Neighbouring Countries.*



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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor Dr Marjanneke Vijge for her precious support and valuable guidance during each step of this process. She believed in my capacities and encouraged me during these unusual Covid-19 times and for that, I could not have asked for better supervision. I also would like to thank my friends and classmates, their support was precious during these two years at Utrecht University. A special appreciation to Mira and Pete for their helpful feedback. To Arjan, for his affection, understanding, and patience, he has my deepest gratitude. Finally but most importantly, I thank my family and more particularly my parents for their unfailing emotional support throughout my life. They always believed in me and they gave me everything I needed. They constantly inspired me to pursue my dreams and I would not be the person I am today without them. This thesis stands as personal advocacy for the fight for gender equality so we can hope a world in which gender does not have negative impacts on one's life.

Abstract

This research analyses the gender mainstreaming and gender framing strategies in the European Union (EU) development programme in the New European Neighbourhood Policy (NENP) through quantitative and qualitative research of policy documents at the different stages of the policy cycle. The objective is to evaluate whether the EU approach can be considered as transformative or integrationist. The former approach is an agenda-setting approach that aims at challenging and transforming well-established norms and practices that might reproduce inequalities. A transformative approach increases the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality. The latter approach does not disrupt business as usual and the patriarchal norms by providing tools for assessing gender mainstreaming and policies only once they are formulated and implemented.

Firstly, documents are analysed quantitatively by assessing the language and the budget of the programme. Subsequently, the way gender issues are framed in the NENP is assessed through a qualitative analysis. The results derived from this combined analysis demonstrate that even though there was higher gender responsiveness of the budget for the last period (2017-2020), the focus still remains largely on women. While it is crucial to underline women's issues, it is important to not victimise women. Women and civil society organisations deserve to be seen as actors of change and to get a greater inclusion in the early stages of policymaking. Besides, the major frames of the EU gender approach towards its neighbours reveal that gender is perceived as an instrumental tool to achieve economic growth and poverty reduction. It reflects more a 'box-ticking exercise' rather than the comprehensive understanding of gender issues. This indicates that despite efforts from the European Union over the years, there is still a lot to be done to successfully implement a transformative gender mainstreaming approach which will in turn achieve the objective of gender equality. This gap can be explained by the limited room for civil society organisations and women's movements in policymaking, but also the lack of integration of the contextual realities regarding gender issues in the neighbouring countries, and the use of gender as a noun rather a verb among other variables. Gender issues are not women's issues only, but concern everybody. Hence, all hands on deck are required to endorse a transformative gender mainstreaming approach in the New European Neighbourhood Policy.

Keywords: Gender equality; gender mainstreaming; frame analysis; European Union; European Neighbourhood; democratic change; good governance; policy coherence for development; civil society organisations.

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1. Introduction

*“Women will change the nature of power;
power will not change the nature of women.”
Bella Abzug, State of the World Forum 1996*

1.1. Gender Mainstreaming in Development: Mind the gap

Women, who represent the majority of the poorest populations in the world, are more impacted by climate change. Research has showed that their vulnerability has increased compared to men’s due to their disadvantages in terms of education, cultural expectations, access to resources and land ownership, but also in terms of participation in decision making (Allwood, 2013). However, there is a persistence among scholars that women should not be perceived as ‘helpless victims of climate change’ (Allwood, 2014). Yet, environmental and development policies are too often gender-blind (Allwood, 2014). Despite a growing attention to gender equality in academic literature and in policy-making, increasing knowledge on gender issues, and the expanding awareness that men have a role to play in the promotion of gender equality alongside women, progress has been stagnant in many European countries (Council of Europe, 2004). Integrating the gender perspective in development policies is a key to women’s empowerment. Indeed, one of the three pillars of sustainable development is that social development and sustainable development is never achieved when gender equality and women’s empowerment are left out (Kumari, 2019). In this regard, it can be stated that gender equality is “both a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of sustainable development” (Kumari, 2019, p.486). In general, a lot of policies are made without including gender equality in the process, which leads to negative impacts on women (Women Engage for a Common Future [WECF], 2019). The first step to avoid reproducing these impacts is to understand women’s and men’s roles and needs. WECF (2019) mentions that some tools for enhancing gender equality are more effective than others. For instance, gender-balance targets in jobs and decision-making and indicators to assess gender impacts are very useful. More particularly, the integration of gender equality measures into legislation and budget allocation is very effective. In order to fully achieve gender equality, “gender roles and norms need to be transformed” (WECF, 2019, para 2). When transformative, gender mainstreaming appears to be an effective strategy for achieving the goal of gender equality and avoiding these undesirable impacts on women. A gender mainstreaming approach is considered as transformative when it aims at engendering a change in how gender norms and structures are understood by policy actors (David and Guerrina, 2013). It does not seek to add women in a specific context, but rather to change the context itself (Bretherton, 2002). Bretherton (2002), among other scholars, have brought attention to the transformative ability of the mainstreaming approach to gender equality. The principle of gender mainstreaming has been the main method used by the European Union to pursue its commitment towards gender equality since its introduction in the Amsterdam Treaty (Debusscher, 2012b). The Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming defines gender mainstreaming as “the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making (Council of Europe, 2004, p.12). Gender mainstreaming also aims at challenging the “male

bias that characterises society and the structural character of gender inequality” (Council of Europe, 2004, p.12). This definition presents gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue relevant for all stages of policy-making.

Gender mainstreaming is important for multiple reasons. First, it enables to put people at the heart of policy-making. By placing central aspects of women’s and men’s lives on the agenda, politicians and the public opinion may pay closer attention to the broader effects of policies on people’s lives (Council of Europe, 2004). Second, it leads to better governance in the sense that when gender is mainstreamed in a policy sector, actors involved are better informed and it challenges the assumption that policies are gender neutral (Council of Europe, 2004). Gender mainstreaming enables to make gender equality issues visible in the mainstream of society. Third, gender mainstreaming pushes both women and men to get involved in the promotion of gender equality, which in turn helps to decrease the democratic deficit. This argument relates to the SDGs’ objective of ‘leaving no one behind’ which involves including all people that are affected by the policies. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming takes into account the diversity among women and men by targeting in a better way the reasons why specific equality policies have not been successful. In fact, acknowledging that women and men have different interests and different needs is crucial to implement better policies. The Council of Europe (2004) states that “this side-effect of mainstreaming as a strategy to promote gender equality is a positive one for the whole of society” (p.15). Finally, by integrating the gender dimension and taking into account the needs and interests of both women and men throughout every stage of the policy cycle, it leads to policy coherence for development, which is also a central aspect of the EU strategy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Academic literature largely agrees on the importance of gender equality as a key to sustainable development which is a cross-cutting theme of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and of the Agenda 2030. All in all, taking into account women’s and men’s needs leads gender mainstreaming to work towards achieving gender equality, sustainable democracy and good governance. As emphasized by the Council of Europe (2004), gender mainstreaming should be a “constant red thread throughout the whole policy process” and should be included even in early stages of policy-making (p.18).

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was launched in 2004 and was renewed in 2011 to become the New European Neighbourhood Policy (NENP). The NENP aims at developing a closer relationship between the EU and its neighbouring countries to the South and the East (EU, n.d.). The ENP includes Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine¹, Syria², and Tunisia for the Southern neighbourhood. The Eastern neighbourhood includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Gender equality between men and women being a ‘well-established legal principle at the European level’, the role of the EU as a gender policy entrepreneur has been disputed (David and Guerrina, 2013). From this perspective, it is expected that the EU provides directives and tools to promote the inclusion of the gender dimension in all policy sectors, thus proving

¹ *This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.*

² *The EU suspended all its bilateral cooperation with the Government of Syria and its participation in regional programmes in 2011 due to the political situation.*

its normative commitment to mainstreaming (David and Guerrina, 2013). Following this approach and by including the principle of gender mainstreaming in policies, the European institutions engaged in a discussion regarding gendering foreign policy and external relations. As an example, *The Roadmap for Gender Equality* (2006–2010) was meant to reinforce the EU broader gender equality approach. Six priorities were stated: economic independence; reconciliation between work and family life; representation in decision making; gender based violence; gender stereotypes; and promoting gender in external relations. The last three priority areas are the key starting point from previous policies, which provide the conceptual foundation of the European Union's position as an external actor for the promotion of gender equality (David and Guerrina, 2013). This research takes the European Neighbourhood Policy as its case study in order to assess the transformative potential of the gender mainstreaming approach of the EU towards its neighbouring countries. This analysis is particularly relevant in light of the recent events in Lebanon and in Belarus where women have been protesting in the streets for more rights and a change towards a democratic society. Women in Lebanon initiated peaceful movements and they were among the first ranks of protesters to manifest against the current government and the Lebanese political system. Similarly, in Belarus, women dressed in white and formed 'solidarity chains' to denounce the violence towards protesters who demonstrate against the disputed re-election of the president Alexander Lukashenko, known as the 'last dictator of Europe'.

1.2. Knowledge gap

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy for gender equality brought confusion in the academic world and no common understanding of the strategy or how to implement it has been clearly established in the literature yet. This research intends to advance the understanding of gender mainstreaming that has been adopted by the European Union and how it applies the strategy in its development programme towards its neighbouring countries by using a frame analysis. Moreover, by analysing the transformative potential of the European Neighbourhood Policy gender mainstreaming approach, this research provides empirical contributions to the theory on the transformative gender mainstreaming strategy. Besides, although a body of research has been produced over the last two decades on the numerous characteristics of qualitative gender policies and has developed and applied many concrete assessment frameworks to gender policies from across Europe, this work has focused mainly on gender policies and mainstreaming within the EU (Debusscher, 2016). EU policies outside of Europe have earned little scholarly consideration and feminist scholars have turned their lenses towards gender equality in EU foreign policy only in the last decade (e.g. Allwood, 2013, 2015; Debusscher, 2010, 2014; 2016). By taking the European Neighbourhood Policy as its case study, this research intends to contribute to the knowledge gap regarding the little focus that the EU development policy towards external countries has had until now. Besides, it appeared during the literature review for this research that no study has been assessing gender mainstreaming and its transformative potential throughout the whole policy cycle. A transformative approach requires the integration of the gender dimension at all stages of policy-making, thus it appears to be important to assess gender mainstreaming throughout the policy cycle. This stands as the main contribution of this thesis. In addition to contributing to the transformative approach of gender mainstreaming, the assessment of gender mainstreaming at the different stages of the policy cycle represents a relevant contribution to the methodology of the gender mainstreaming strategy. Indeed, by adding this feature to

the previous methodology developed in the academic literature, this research aims at providing a deeper assessment of the transformative aspect of gender mainstreaming. Finally, gaps and opportunities for a better integration of the gender perspective in future development policy formulation and implementation will be derived from the research.

1.3. Research Objectives and Research Questions

By combining normative theories on gender equality and empirical assessments of inequalities and explanatory factors of such inequalities, this research project has several objectives. Firstly, since a transformative approach implies the inclusion of gender issues at every step of the policy cycle but no according research has been conducted so far, it appears relevant to analyse the extent to which the gender issue is mainstreamed at the different stages of the policy cycle. Then, one objective of this research is to assess the level of gender mainstreaming at the different stages of the policy cycle. In a similar approach, the research also aims to assess whether the gender mainstreaming approach of the European Neighbourhood Policy is transformative or not. The second part of the analysis aims to understand the framing of gender issues in the European Neighbourhood Policy throughout the policy cycle by leading a frame analysis of gender equality. Finally, these elements lead to the last objectives which imply to develop explanatory factors for both the differences of level of gender mainstreaming throughout the different stages of the policy cycle and the various framings of gender equality in the different stages of policy cycle. In order to answer to the research objectives, the main research question has been formulated as follows:

What does the mainstreaming and framing of gender issues in the New European Neighbourhood Policy throughout the policy cycle say about the transformative potential of the EU gender mainstreaming approach?

To support the central research question, several sub-questions are developed as follows:

- 1. To what extent is the European Neighbourhood Policy gender mainstreamed throughout the policy cycle and what does it say on the transformative potential of the EU gender mainstreaming approach?*
- 2. How are gender issues framed at the different stages of the policy cycle and how does it contribute to the transformative potential of the EU gender mainstreaming approach?*
- 3. What is the rationale behind the gender mainstreaming approach of the European Union towards its neighbours and which gaps and opportunities can be derived from it?*

By assessing different aspects of the gender mainstreaming approach, these three sub-questions help to analyse the transformative potential of the EU gender mainstreaming towards the neighbouring countries. Besides, barriers and opportunities on the EU gender approach in its development policies will be developed in a discussion.

2. Theoretical orientation

2.1. The 'Transformative' Approach of Gender Mainstreaming

2.1.1. A Contested Concept

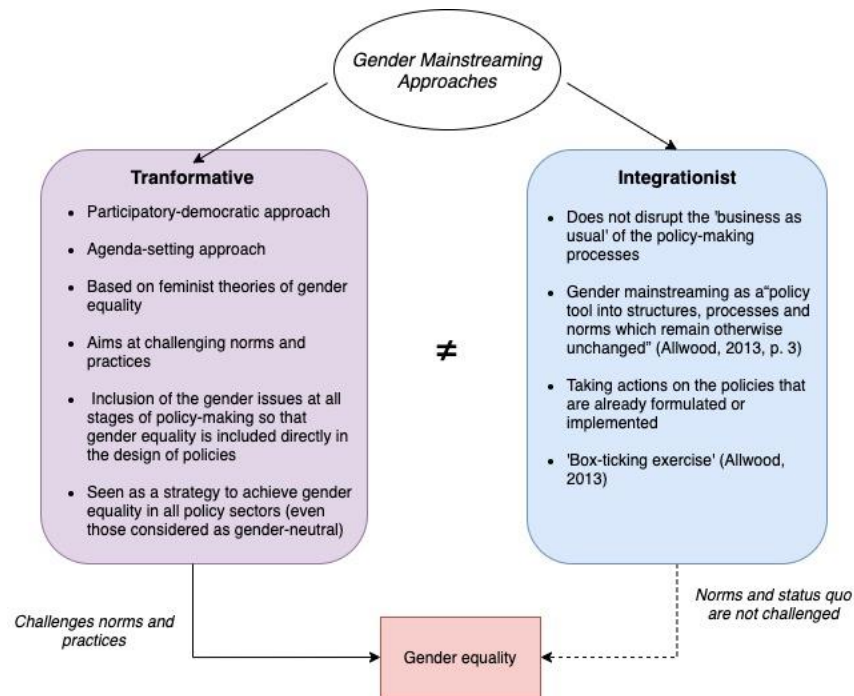
Since their introduction in EU equality policies, it has been acknowledged that the terms 'gender' and 'mainstreaming' have created confusion. It was in 1995 that the concept of gender mainstreaming was established during the Platform for Action approved at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, that was held in Beijing (China) (ILO, n.d.). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), gender mainstreaming can be defined as "the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men" (FAO, 2006, p.128, emphasis by author). By this, it means to assess the impact of policies on women and men and take initiatives to remedy issues if necessary (FAO, 2006). Before that, gender mainstreaming was commonly understood as the promotion of equality policy to a mainstream policy or the inclusion of women targeted actions in mainstream policy (Stratigaki, 2005). The Group of Specialists of the Council of Europe defines gender mainstreaming in operational terms as the "(re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making" (Council of Europe, 1998, p.12, emphasis added). This research adopts this approach of gender mainstreaming. In an akin view, Rees (1998) states that one of the main instrument of sex equality policies is 'mainstreaming equality', alongside positive action in favour of women and equal treatment legislation. Feminists and women's organisations have indicated that gender mainstreaming might be weakly implemented if the conditions for effective implementation are not gathered (Stratigaki, 2005). As stated by Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000), gender mainstreaming requires the transformation of policies in the long-term rather than law enforcement mechanisms. It is important to stress that the term gender is not transposable with women since gender refers to men and women, and the relations between both. In this regard, gender issues should include both women and men (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, United Nations, 2001). Thus defined, gender mainstreaming can be seen as a revolutionary concept that ensures the integration of the gender perspective with all EU policies (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000). However, by calling for the endorsement of the gender dimension by all the actors that are involved in the policy process, even those who have little or no experience or interest gender issues, gender mainstreaming is also a highly demanding concept (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000). Many policy documents of developed and developing nations have included the concept of gender in their policy documents through 'gender mainstreaming' policies and practices. An academic debate is ongoing regarding the usefulness of gender mainstreaming for feminist theory. One side underlines the problem of its over-use while the other side proposes to abandon it (Moi, 2001 in Bacchi and Eveline 2010). Kasic (2004) states that by over using the term gender in academics, it can occult women's needs. The political concept of 'gender' can be tracked to the Anglophone feminism with their differentiation between 'biological sex' and 'socially constructed gender'. They integrated gender in political analysis to understand the influences of masculinity and

femininity on women's lives, rather than explaining differences based on biological factors (Bacchi and Eveline, 2010). Bacchi (1990) argued that focusing on women's 'difference' maintained a male norm in which masculinity and men were considered as the standard (Eveline, 1994). Other authors such as Cockburn argued that "the institutional and organisational arrangements within which women were being asked to compete were left untouched" (as cited in Bacchi and Eveline, 2010, p.92). Furthermore, the perspective 'add women and stir' led to the representation of women as an issue that needs to be fixed, while gender was presented as an accumulation of "social attributes in which bodies did not matter" (Bacchi and Eveline, 2010).

Allwood (2013) highlighted the distinction of two types of gender mainstreaming. The first one is a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming that is associated with a participatory-democratic mode and an agenda-setting approach while the second one is seen as an integrationist policy practice with an expert-bureaucratic approach. The integrationist approach assimilates gender mainstreaming as a "policy tool into structures, processes and norms which remain otherwise unchanged" (Allwood, 2013, p.3). 'Gender' in this vision of gender mainstreaming lacks the core concepts of power and intersecting inequalities that are present in feminist and gender theory (Zalewski, 2010). Allwood (2013) refers to Stratigaki (2005) who explains that "it is therefore neither threatening nor disruptive to business as usual, but provides added value to organisations seeking to present themselves in a particular way. Instead, it refers to undifferentiated categories of men and women, and is often a shorthand for policies targeted at women or an excuse to discontinue such policies" (Stratigaki, 2005, as cited in Allwood, 2013, p.3). This approach is more a 'box-ticking exercise' that provides tools and procedures for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and measuring its assessment, lacking a substantive content (Allwood, 2013). On the contrary, the transformative approach is based on feminist theories of gender equality and was initially suggested as a means to thoroughly transform policy approaches to gender inequalities (Allwood, 2013). Within this perspective, gender mainstreaming is seen as a strategy to achieving gender equality in all policy sectors, even those that were formerly seen as gender neutral, rather than an independent policy issue. Gender mainstreaming aims at including the gender matter at all stages of policy-making in such a manner that gender equality is included directly in the design of policies, instead of taking action once policies are already formulated or implemented. Compared to the integrationist approach, the transformative version is more ominous to organizations and policy actors, which have a crucial duty in the reproduction of gender relations (Stratigaki 2005; Allwood, 2013).

Figure 1

Transformative Approach vs. Integrationist Approach of Gender Mainstreaming



2.1.2. The ‘Process of Gendering’ for a Transformative Approach

Following on this transformative versus integrationist comparison, Eveline and Bacchi (2010) compared the gender mainstreaming approaches in Canada and in the Netherlands. It illustrates that different understandings of gender are closely linked to different reform approaches and how certain conceptualisations of gender can constrain the effectiveness of the mainstreaming strategy. The authors argue that effectiveness can be heightened by integrating gender as a verb rather than as a noun. In this sense, it would bring the focus on the ‘process of gendering’ instead of the ‘static category of gender’ (p.90). This relates to policymaking which is also an evolving process, not a static concept. Just like policymaking is used as a verb, using ‘gender’ as a verb would acknowledge that the integration of the gender perspective throughout the policy cycle is also a process.

This comparison illustrates a common dilemma for feminist reformers. On one hand, Beveridge et al. (2000) states that by running a differences approach focusing on women’s needs, it usually leads to simply reproducing the status quo and to presenting women as ‘needy’. On the other hand, removing the asymmetrical relation of power between men and women from the analysis can lead to the necessity of meeting women’s needs for allowing their participation in a ‘man’s world’ (Eveline, 1994). Bacchi and Eveline (2010) explain that gender is “not a fixed structure, but a contingent and located social process, with specific effects of power and advantage” (p.95). For this reason, they defend the use of gender as a verb rather than as a noun. This type of analysis focuses then on “the gendering of policy, institutions and organisations, and views gendering as an incomplete and partial process in which bodies and politics are



always becoming meaningful” (p.97). Formulating gender as a verb could help to acknowledge that no policy is gender-neutral and then gender mainstreaming is justified (Bacchi and Eveline, 2010). This leads to the belief that gender mainstreaming must be maintained as long the policymaking process continues.

The Canadian approach is a ‘gender-integrated’ approach that focuses on the ‘relational nature of gender differences’ (Status of Women Canada 2001: 49). This approach recognises that women and men are different rather than treating differently women’s issues and needs apart from men’s. Yet, this approach depends on fixed differences and shifts away from power relations which can be seen as a shortcoming. Because their gender-based assessment (GBA) does not take into account the gender processes, they tried to include new frameworks and materials to counter this lack (Eveline and Bacchi, 2005). Their first intervention relates to the distinction between an integrationist approach and a transformative approach. The integrationist view includes equal treatment and different treatment between men and women. The patriarchal norms which still represent the status quo are not challenged. Despite making the difference between ‘practical’ and ‘strategic’ needs (Status of Women Canada 2001: 50) which seeks to translate a comprehensive understanding of gender into policy terms, it is still not enough to surmount the conceptual issue of their approach (White 1994). In the direction of tackling these conceptual problems, Canadian GBA advocates developed training that sets policymakers on a path of three interesting frameworks Eveline and Bacchi, 2005). The first framework considers that all people are affected by policies in similar ways and is called ‘gender-neutral’ (Status of women Canada 2001: 18). However, this framework does not make it possible to cope with societal issues such as gender, ethnicity and cultural differences, and disability. The ‘gender-specific’ framework is proposed as a means to draw attention to women and is composed of ‘proactive measures necessary to overcome system bias’ (Status of Women Canada 2001: 49). Finally, the ‘gender-integrated’ framework developed as a reaction to the inequalities that occur or are exacerbated by the ‘gender-specific’ approach and is ‘based on the relational nature of gender differences’ (Status of Women Canada 2001). Yet, these supplementary measures also lead to the inability of representing the gendering process. In this regard, it is crucial to understand how gendering is being ‘done’ in practice and in legislation in order to develop policies that achieve transformative change, and challenge norms and practices that (re)produce gender inequalities (Eveline and Bacchi, 2005).

The Netherlands adopt another approach to gender mainstreaming. Gender relations represent the basis of their framework which is built on environmental impact assessment (EIA) and are defined as ‘structurally unequal power relations between women and men’ (Verloo 2000). This gender mainstreaming methodology is known as Emancipation Impact Assessment (EER) and encompasses three aspects that are: “a) locating the structurally unequal power relations between women and men; b) highlighting the processes or mechanisms that produce and reproduce those unequal power relations; and c) providing criteria for evaluating the data which allow for the inclusion of ‘unequal power’ – namely equality, autonomy, and diversity/pluriformity” (Eveline and Bacchi, 2005, p.102). In this view, the concept of equality is understood as equality before the law or equal treatment.

Contrarily to Canada, the Netherlands does not wish for women to be included in the status quo but rather that the working conditions change to become suitable for women’s differences. In this regard, the overall objective is to dispute the patriarchal norm in organisations (Eveline and Bacchi, 2005). The Netherlands model views gender as a political process alongside the social relations approach. The power relations are

important in the analysis and were made possible due to an established statement in Dutch policies that there were 'unequal power relations between the sexes', illustrating the running conflict between the state and Dutch feminism. The necessity of a policy strategy to provide a thorough study of not only the solutions but as well as the problem-definition itself is emphasized by Dutch change agents (Verloo, 2000). Besides, they also notify policymakers to avoid to classify women as 'vulnerable victims' in order to not perpetuate the 'myth of gender-neutral policy' (Verloo, 2000). The Dutch approach provides a valuable perspective on unequal power ties between men and women as well as raising awareness on the way policy itself is involved in establishing the issue of the understanding of gender (Eveline and Bacchi, 2010). However, Eveline and Bacchi (2010) underline the fact that the Netherlands approach would still need some adjustment when it comes to translating insights on gendering into effective policy practice. As a conclusion of their analysis, Eveline and Bacchi (2010) defend that using gender as a noun denies the "do-ing of asymmetrical power relations and the gendering of policy itself" (p.104). In this regard, they advocate to use the term 'gender-awareness-mainstreaming' rather than 'gender mainstreaming' since it would reveal the importance of analysing the conceptualisation of gender at an early stage of the mainstreaming process. Using gender as a verb might be able to tackle the explanatory inadequacy faced by the Canadian approach and the adversity of applying a viable solution in the Netherlands. This has shown that different understandings of gender are connected to different reform approaches. Eveline and Bacchi (2010) state that the concept of gendering is an ongoing process, that is always incomplete, which explains why gender analysis should not be treated as a planned end date policy but rather as part of a long-term agenda. Using gender as a verb corresponds to the need of mainstreaming gender at every stage of the policy cycle, which refers to the need of a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming.

2.1.3. The Effectiveness Criterion of Gender Mainstreaming and the Relevance of Policy Cycle-Wide Assessment

Following on the debate of the transformative approach of gender mainstreaming and the relevance of using 'gender' as a verb, this sub-section develops the implications on the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming produced by its conceptualisation. Depending on how gender is defined, it can either reproduce male and white privilege or reduce some inequalities. Overall, not only the meaning of gender is debated, but the utility of the mainstreaming strategy is also questioned (Bacchi and Eveline, 2004; 2010). The conceptualisation of gender, and thus the understanding of gender, is a political matter. Gender analysis and gender mainstreaming are rather incomplete or 'unfinished business' as Bacchi and Eveline (2010) describe them. Given the rapid development of gender mainstreaming approaches and strategies, it is crucial to understand and reflect on the understanding of gender itself. However, it is important to underline the weight of the context - solutions that work in one situation may not be the ideal solution for another situation. Alongside gender mainstreaming, 'gender awareness' also needs to be mainstreamed as a 'new kind of policy practice' (p.88). Further work has addressed gender mainstreaming effectiveness criterion and it underlined that gender mainstreaming can be accomplished in the multilevel configuration of the EU polity only if it is planted at all levels of decision-making. In this regard, the gender dimension should be incorporated at all levels of policy-making, which underlines the need for a transformative approach. Besides, to a large extent, knowledge-based incentives such as elite

learning and new governance instruments developed in the EU can facilitate its successful transfer to national and regional levels (Liebert, 2002). In a comparative study between gender mainstreaming in the EU and Norway, the significance of the women's participation in politics (both in numbers and influence) was underlined as the main way to counter the regular administrative and institutional resistance (Havnør, 2000). There is the need for mainstreaming gender to be integrated at high political levels such as the European Commission or the national level. Mainstreaming is not only about increasing women's participation, but it also implies integrating the knowledge, experience and interests of women and men in the agenda so that both men and women can participate and influence policy-making and decision processes (ILO, n.d.). Efforts have to be made at all levels of decision-making to enhance women's participation and having gender analysis to be carried out amongst other principles (ILO, n.d.).

Gender mainstreaming aims at integrating the gender dimension within all the policy stages and at shifting a policy from 'equal opportunities for both sex' to a gender equality method, while positive action integrates it only in the implementation phase (Stratigaki, 2005). Even though the inclusion of the gendered perspective within all policies may seem more radical than positive action, the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming cannot be guaranteed without undertaking both gender inequalities and reinforcing gender specific policies. Gender mainstreaming and positive action should not be regarded as competitive, rather as complementary since they reinforce each other while reducing the distortions of gender regimes in both the EU and its partner countries. In fact, while gender mainstreaming "enlarges the scope of gender equality policies and limits its compartmentalization in target groups" (Stratigaki, 2005, p.169), positive action improves the visibility of women and facilitates gender equity without being overshadowed or distorted by other policy concerns.

Previous studies on gender mainstreaming in EU Structural Funds disclosed barriers in the European Commission services. It revealed that the "European Commission is stronger on policy formulation than on developing accompanying arguments, procedures and instruments for translating policy into practice" (Braithwaite, 2000 as cited in Stratigaki, 2005, p.168). This underlines the need and the relevance to assess gender mainstreaming throughout the whole policy cycle to verify this statement and to investigate whether the European institutions are capable of translating the policy they formulate into practice. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that progress was reliant on 'certain people in the right positions at the right moment' because of rivalry among services regarding power (Stratigaki, 2005). The vast majority of gender mainstreaming assessments recognises the complementarity of the gender mainstreaming strategy with gender-specific equality policies such as positive action and equal treatment legislation, but it does not replace them. Indeed, gender equality policies are an indispensable precondition for the success of the implementation of gender mainstreaming (Council of Europe, 1998: 21). Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming can be formulated and enforced as a substitute to positive action in policy settings that are hostile to gender equality like patriarchal structures of institutional organisations or the predominance of policy aims opposed to gender equality and utilized to minimize the ultimate overall objective of gender equality (Stratigaki, 2005). In these situations, the major inventive aspect of gender mainstreaming that attempts to transform policies by "expanding the scope and relevance of gender equality to all policies" turn into its main shortcoming, that is to say the withdrawal of gender equality policies (Stratigaki, 2005, p.169). Stratigaki (2005) adds that this risk is enhanced in contexts where gender

equality policies have already been implemented in such a favourable way that it questioned the patriarchal power and the gender unbalanced allocation of economic resources. Overall, the several criteria developed in this section illustrate that a transformative approach appears to be better in terms of effectiveness. Besides, there is more chance that a policy that is considered effective is adopting a transformative gender mainstreaming approach. Moreover, because the strategy of gender mainstreaming requires the integration of gender at every step of the policymaking, it appears relevant to assess the gender mainstreaming approach of a policy throughout the whole policy cycle, which also indicates its transformative potential.

The idea of conceptualising the policy process in stages was first put forward by Lasswell in the 1950s. Although this vision has been contested, the model itself became a ‘basic framework’ in policy studies and the model developed by Aderson and the one of Jenkins are the most adopted ones (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). As of today, the stages of agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making (adoption), implementation, and evaluation (and eventually termination) represent the conventional way to introduce the process of policy-making (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). The agenda-setting stage is the one of problem recognition and problem selection, then the formulation stage aims at transforming expressed problems, proposals and demands into government programs. It includes the role played by (scientific) policy advisers. The decisions are then adopted in the decision-making stage. The implementation phase represents the stage where an adopted policy is being enforced by the responsible institutions and organisations. This implementation does not always strictly follow the objectives of policy makers, and the policies are often changed and modified, and sometimes their implementation is delayed or blocked on purpose due to contradictory objectives between the policy makers and the institutions responsible for the implementation. At last, the evaluation stage aims at assessing the outcomes produced by the policy. The termination stage appears only when a policy problem has been solved thanks to the policy measures adopted or when the later seem to be ineffective or inappropriate to deal with this issue. This stage appears to be rather difficult to be enforced in the real-world conditions of policy-making (Jann and Wegrich, 2007).

The stages still represent an ‘ideal-type of rational planning and decision-making even though the real world decision-making does not always follow this specific sequence of stages (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p.44). By combining this model with the one of input-output model by Easton, it became a cyclical model, known as the policy cycle. It acknowledges that there are feedback processes between outputs and inputs of policy-making, which leads to the continual perpetuation of the policy-making process (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). Colebatch (2020) explains that when talking about policy, it usually refers to the subject of the policy such as health policy, energy policy, development policy, etc. The attention is then on the object of the policy: “what is the problem, and how is the government trying to address it?” (Colebatch, 2020, p.1). Thus, it is not surprising that the process of policy itself gets less attention and is seen as complicated. However, it appears relevant to focus on the policy process itself since a transformative approach implies the integration of gender matters at each stage. The policy cycle model represents another reason for assessing the transformative aspect of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) gender approach. Besides, it is also important to comprehend how gender is framed at each stage to see whether the framing of gender issues remains the same throughout the policy process or if it is different

among the stages. Finally, as explained earlier, ‘the process of gendering’ has to be done since the early stages of policymaking, this reinforces the need to assess every step of the policy cycle.

Overall, the concepts developed in this section are all interlinked. In fact, a transformative gender mainstreaming approach requires the incorporation of gender issues at all stages of policymaking, thus the assessment of gender mainstreaming should be done throughout the whole policy cycle. Besides, using gender as a verb rather than as a noun illustrates that gender mainstreaming is an ongoing process like the policymaking process. By combining these concepts, this research aims at demonstrating the necessity of, first, adopting a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming for the effectiveness of the programme, but also that assessing the gender mainstreaming approach of a policy and its transformative potential throughout the policy cycle brings a deeper level of analysis.

2.2. Gender Mainstreaming as a Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality and Broader Objectives

2.2.1. Gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality

According to the Council of Europe (2004), gender equality implies “equality visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life” (p.8) and intends to advocate for the full participation of men and women in society. For decades, de jure equal rights, equal opportunities and equality treatment in all areas of life and in all spheres of society were considered as the definition of gender equality. However, it has been acknowledged that equality de jure does not necessarily bring equality de facto (Council of Europe, 2004). The differences in living conditions between women and men have to be recognised and should be seen as a means to providing an equal share of power in different areas such as in economy, in society but also in policy-making because these differences should not impact negatively the living conditions of both men and women and should not be contribute to discrimination against them (Council of Europe, 2004).

All in all, gender equality does not signify likeness, nor it establishes men’s lifestyles and conditions as the norm (Council of Europe, 2004). There is an increasing consciousness of the importance of considering gender at the political and institutional levels. Indeed, it is necessary because policies and institutions play a crucial role in shaping life conditions, and in doing so, they too frequently institutionalise the perpetuation and reproduction of gender as a social construction. Through daily practices and policies, a tradition of discrimination is unintentionally written up. Besides, as a social construction, gender also defines the relationship between the sexes, which usually implies male domination and a female subordination in many areas of life. In fact, male roles and values are often valued higher than women’s. It is now well established that society is dominated by this male norm, which is also mirrored in policies. Indeed, policies usually unintentionally reproduce gender inequalities (Council of Europe, 2004). Gender equality signifies accepting the differences between women and men - which relate to social class, political views, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation - and acknowledging the various roles they play in society

(Council of Europe, 2004). It also means to reflect on the possible changes in society that can eliminate the unequal power relationships between the sexes which in turn help to achieve a better balance between women's and men's needs and priorities. Like all the other human rights, gender equality must continue to be fought for, but also promoted and protected. The objective of gender equality achievement is an ongoing process that should be continually debated and redefined. Presently, the major targets for gender equality encompass the following facets: the recognition and full implementation of women's rights as human rights; the improvement of representative democracy; the economic independence of individuals; education to transfer knowledge, norms and skills (Council of Europe, 2004). Finally, both women and men should acknowledge the necessity of eliminating societal inequalities and most importantly, that they share responsibility in doing so (Council of Europe, 2004).

As highlighted by the Council of Europe (2004), gender mainstreaming is a 'means to an end', not a goal in itself. Mainstreaming aims at equal opportunity for both women and men through a long-term shift of the EU policy process (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000). At the European Union level, the Council of Europe stated that actors that are involved in policymaking should be responsible for mainstreaming the gender perspective. The EU requested that guidelines were developed to establish a dimension for equal opportunities in all policies of the EU. Gender mainstreaming appears to be a strategy that includes multiple levels of governance and various shifts in governance. Indeed, it does not only include national and regional levels, but supranational and international levels as well. Moreover, the strategy involves a broad range of actors from different policy areas (Council of Europe, 1998). This leads one to wonder how multi-level governance influences the 'development and implementation' of aforementioned strategy (Verloo, 2005). The feminist literature analysed the gendered consequences that policies have in various areas, and their work disclosed that policies like agriculture energy and trade, which appear to be gender-neutral, still have gendered impacts and lie on gendered assumptions (Allwood, 2013). It may be predicted that gender consequences may be challenged by the EU since the Union is dedicated to gender equality as a 'fundamental value' and that it combines gender mainstreaming with gender specific responses as a means of attaining it. However, this did not occur yet, partially due to reasons associated with gender mainstreaming itself but also because of the interference of policies in different sectors, which weakens development policy (Allwood, 2013).

2.2.3. Gender Equality as a Step Towards Democratic Change and Good Governance

As mentioned earlier by Stratigaki (2005), gender mainstreaming did not come to be introduced in connection with gender relations, gender related instruments or gender analysis, but it was connected to concepts broad enough to alter equality debates such as the 'new partnership between women and men', or 'democracy'. One of the main targets of the European Neighbourhood Instrument is: "Fostering human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, equality, sustainable democracy, good governance and a thriving civil society" (The European Neighbourhood Instrument, 2015). This illustrates that the concept of gender equality - assuming that it is endorsed within 'human rights' and 'equality'

objectives - is directly connected to sustainable democracy, good governance and civil society. Similarly, in her analysis of the European Neighbourhood Policy (2002-2013), Petra Debusscher (2012b) found out that the third major frame of the policy documents associates gender equality with democracy, good governance and human rights.

The conceptualisations of the terms 'gender in' and 'equality' led to the discussion on who has and should have a say in the political debate on the notion of gender equality and possible solutions for gender inequalities. Throughout academic literature, the major emphasis was on the conflict between expertise and democracy, which revealed to be of importance for gender mainstreaming implementation (Beveridge et al. 2000; Walby 2005; Verloo 2005a). One side of the literature defended that women's voices have to be represented in the policymaking process since gender equality is a democratic mechanism (Walby 2005). On the other side, it should be carried out by politicians and bureaucrats, in intermittent consultation with experts on gender issues because gender equality policy is seen as a technical process' (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007). Several authors agree to say that gender expertise is necessary for advancing in gender equality policies since policymaking is driven by gender knowledge and that effective gender equality policies have higher chances to be implemented by policy actors who are more aware of gender issues (Beveridge and Nott 2002 as cited in Verloo and Lombardo, 2007; Walby, 2005). Nevertheless, the 'depoliticization' of gender matters might lead to several shortcomings (Squires, 2005). Indeed, considering gender equality measures as technical procedures will to the exclusion of feminist voices and then results in having no political conflict in the policymaking process (Squires, 2005; Verloo, 2005). Besides, the limited consultation to gender experts' causes democratic problems to the extent that women's concerns that are not included in experts' knowledge will not come to light in the policymaking process. However, in some cases the two sides are not explicitly opposed, even though this 'technocratisation' of gender mainstreaming also produces its fair share of shortcomings such as resources or timing questions (Donaghy 2003 as cited in Verloo and Lombardo, 2007). Yet, contemporary protests for political voice (Black Lives Matter; Women2030) illustrates that the inclusion of excluded policy actors in the public debate is crucial to make their voice heard in the framing of a policy issue and to influence the public policy processes. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that women's inclusion in the political debate will make a significant difference because the expansion of democratic participatory structures is restricted by the present public space. It seems that this debate remains at a normative level and it can reproduce this false dichotomy between experts and civil society who could see each other as allies instead of opponents (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007).

2.2.3. The Role of Gender Mainstreaming in European Development Policies

Development policy is one of the core actions of the EU's external policies. The European development policy aims at eradicating poverty, encouraging sustainable development and protecting human rights and democracy, but also at fostering gender equality and resolving environmental and climate change issues. Presently, the EU carries out projects in 160 countries globally, with a special focus on African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, but also on aspirant countries to EU membership, on the EU's Neighbourhood partners, and on the East and on the South, and on Asia and Latin America (Treviño, 2019). The EU is the world's largest donor for development and operates internationally and a close cooperation

with EU Member States and the convergence with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is necessary to deliver aid effectively (Treviño, 2019). The 2030 Agenda was adopted in September 2015 with the aim of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. Following on from the Millennium Development Goals, it covers a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that focus on the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainability and on governance goals that should be achieved by 2030 (Treviño, 2019). After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the EU committed to a new version of the 2005 European Development Consensus which was signed in June 2017. The Consensus lays forth the key values of the SDGs and a plan to achieve them, which will direct the EU and its Member States to gather their internal and external efforts for the development policy for the next decade. Besides, the current programme of 2014-2020 of the EU's development policy adheres to the EU Agenda for Change that was endorsed in 2012 by the Council of Europe with the objective of making the repercussion of the EU development policy greater. The EU Agenda for Change "establishes 'the promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance' and 'inclusive and sustainable growth' as the two basic pillars of development policy" (Treviño, 2019, para 9).

Gender mainstreaming was introduced in the EU policies several decades after equal treatment policies and positive action policies in the labour market (Stratigiki, 2005). In fact, legislation on equal pay and equal treatment was incorporated in the Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome. Since 1977, equal opportunities for women in the labour market have been sponsored by the European Social Fund (EDF). Besides, equal opportunities between women and men was introduced as a specific measure under Objective 3 of the EU Structural policy (Council Regulation 4255/88). The addition of 'men' in the title was innovative as well. Moreover, a chapter on women's employment was integrated in the annual report called Employment in Europe in 1989 because the European Commission recognised the importance of women's employment for the European labour market analysis (Stratigiki, 2005). Two variations of the definition of gender mainstreaming were included in the programme (Stratigiki, 2005). The first one is: "to take into account an equal opportunities dimension and the particular problems encountered by women in all relevant policies" and the second one is: "to integrate equality into the general mainstream policy" (CEC, 1990:3). The European Commission first used the term gender mainstreaming in 1991 in the Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities, but the concept was not accomplished yet (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000). Regardless of taking sectoral interventions in favour of women and endorsing the principle of gender mainstreaming for the Beijing Conference, the Commission did not undertake the creation of a bureaucratic structure for the integration of the gender dimension into all EU policies throughout this time (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000).

Despite the use of 'gender' as an aspect of gender mainstreaming, the structural aspect of the term was neglected and it restricted the interpretation of the issue to 'differences in opportunity' as a justification for women's specific problems (Stratigiki, 2005). These definitions reflect the period in which EU gender equality policies shifted from a 'women's dimension' to a 'gendered dimension' (Booth and Bennett, 2002). Following the 1995 United Nations Beijing Conference, the paradigm of 'Women in Development' was internationally replaced with a 'Gender and Development' paradigm with gender mainstreaming at its core (Debusscher, 2012). Yet, this new paradigm kept women as its main subject through the recognition that an analysis of the relations between women and men is necessary for improving women's

conditions (Debusscher, 2012). As highlighted by the Council of Europe (1998), both women and men have to share the responsibility in eliminating societal inequalities. The Communication 'incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all community policies and activities' which was adopted in February 1996 represented a ground breaking policy document in the European Union (CEC, 1996 as cited in Stratigaki, 2005, p.175). Yet, the Communication failed to explain the crucial link between gender mainstreaming and women's participation in decision-making (Stratigaki, 2005). Overall, gender mainstreaming lost its strategic sense regarding gender equality and became a more abstract principle, which was commonly used interchangeably with the principle of equality.

The gender narrative has been extended in the EU policies. Indeed, while gender equality used to refer exclusively to women's integration into the labour market, it now involves aspects of family politics and body politics (MacRae, 2010). Yet, this progress has been limited since these were usually non-binding measures. Besides, legislation remains focused on non-discrimination of women in the workplace despite redefinition of gender equality by the EU institutions (MacRae, 2010). Despite efforts made by the EU, the gender narrative only changes too slowly. The explanations behind the adoption of a gender mainstreaming policy by the EU can be found in the literature on social movements. Progressively, social movement theorists focused on the significance of framing processes, that can be defined as follows: "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996, p.6 as cited in Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000, p.435). At the beginning, Snow and his peers argued that strategic framing could be used by social movement organizations to 'strategically frame issues' so it suits the current preeminent frames held by diverse actors. Presumably, these actors are more inclined to accept and integrate new frames that are similar to theirs rather than conflicting frames (Snow and Benford 1992: 137 as cited in Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000). If frames represent deep cultural and institutional definitions, policy actors are restricted in their ability to move beyond hegemonic discourses and deliberately form frames to achieve a specified goal (Lombardo and Forest, 2012).

In her article on the EU gender equality policy, Heather MacRae (2010) explains that the EU's gender equality myth concentrates on two features of the EU's gender policies. The first one is the incorporation of gender equality as a fundament of the European project and the second is the continuous relevance of the gender perspective in the EU work. Even though these aspects are set in political fact, the Commission's presentation of the gender project overstates and embellishes the weight of gender equality. In official documents and legislation, but also in public statements, the Commission stresses regularly that since the start gender equality has been included in the project of EU integration (MacRae, 2010). The crucial role of the EU institutions in shaping economic, political and social equality for women in Europe has been acknowledged among scholars (MacRae, 2010). A definite culture of equality was developed by a coalition of actors that includes women's organization and diverse institutional actors, in order to create a unique 'European project of equality for women and men within the EU institutions' (MacRae, 2010). In this regard, the EU has been an important advocate of a gender equality policy, but it would be an amplification to say that the EU was committed to gender equality 'since the beginning'. It has been more of a gradual progress over the decades to include an amount of new areas and commitments (MacRae, 2010).

2.3. Framing of Gender Equality

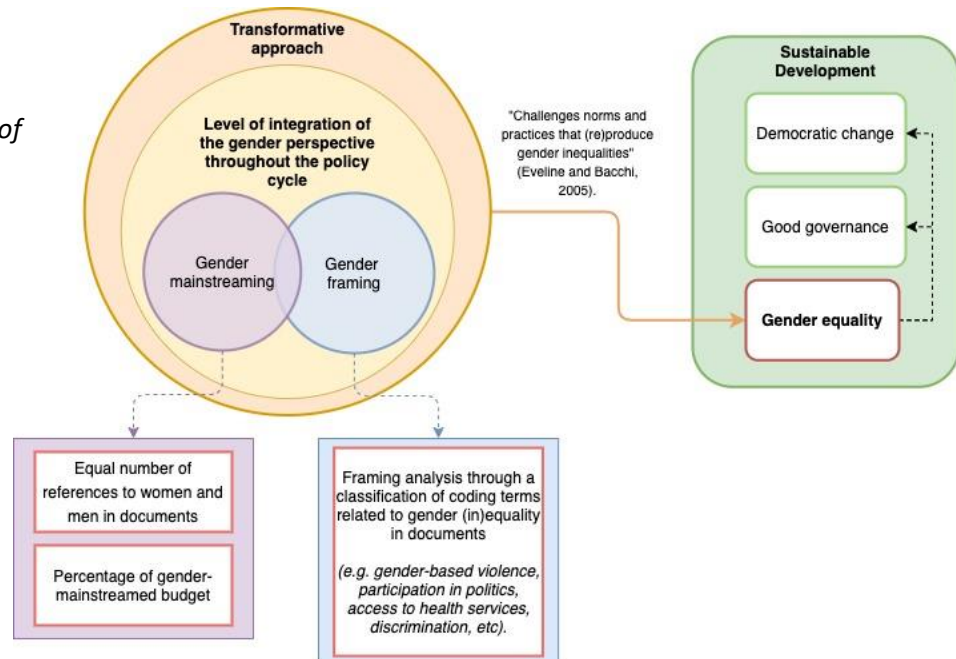
As explained previously by Eveline and Bacchi (2010) in their comparison of the gender mainstreaming approaches in Canada and in the Netherlands, different conceptualisations and framings of gender can have an influence on the effectiveness. The effectiveness can be improved by using gender as a verb rather than as a noun. Using 'gendering' could also lead to a more engaging framing in the sense that it could be an incentive for the institution to see gender as a process itself, and incorporate it in more aspects and areas of policy. According to Woodward (2003), gender mainstreaming has a transformative potential because it can "permanently transform the language and images of policymaking to become more inclusive and sensitive to diversity beginning with sex. Reaching this place ironically requires a strategic usage of the practices and existing language of politics and government, including building alliances to create contexts where gender awareness is a given and equality is a constant goal" (p.84). Here, Woodward mentions gender awareness which relates to the advocacy of Eveline and Bacchi of using 'gender-awareness-mainstreaming' rather than 'gender mainstreaming' since it would underline the interest of analysing how gender is conceptualised and framed at an early stage of the mainstreaming process and of the policy process. The framing appears even more important since Sonia Mazey (2000; 2002) highlighted the importance of challenging cultural values and policy frames in order to reach an effective gender mainstreaming implementation. According to her, it is therefore comprehensible that women's organizations persist in being committed to integrating gender equality in legislation (Mazey, 2000; 2002). The concept of gender equality can fit into different existing policy frames and it can happen that sometimes, frames compete among each other and one takes over another (Verloo M., 2007; Lombardo and Meier, 2008). Verloo (2007) defines a policy frame as an "organising principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included" (pp.32-33). This reflects the multiple dimensions of a policy problem. A frame can be described as an "interpretation scheme that structures the meaning of reality" (Goffmann, 1974 as cited in Verloo, 2005c, p.32). In this sense, policy frames do not describe reality, but are precise constructions that shape the understanding of reality and give it a meaning (Verloo, 2005c). Policy frames emerge in discursive consciousness to the extent that actors can discursively describe why they use these frames and what they mean to them. Policy frames also emerge in practical consciousness in the sense that they derive from routines and rules that are commonly used in specific contexts without being consciously aware that these and rules and routines and that they can be changed (Verloo, 2007). In both discursive and practical consciousness, policy frames have consequences that will set the stage for future behaviour and realities (Verloo, 2007).

While questioning the gender dimension in policy discourses, it is also relevant to include the dimension of 'voice' in policy discourses (Walby, 2005). There is a difference of opinion between 'expertise' and 'democracy' which lead to the scholar debate on who has/should have the legitimacy to have a voice regarding gender equality and what should be done to solve the issue of gender inequality (Verloo, 2007). Integrating the 'voice' dimension in a policy frame brings a critical aspect to the frame analysis methodology. Indeed, it helps to understand which voices tend to be more included or excluded from the policy framing process. Besides, there is a tendency of policy discourses to assign different roles to different actors (Verloo, 2007). It is particularly relevant to discern who is perceived as the problem,

and who is seen as the norm of reference which defines the others as problematic. Verloo (2007) takes the example of gender violence to question if it is rather a women’s issue, a men’s issue or a society’s issue. Another example is gender inequality in politics: are women the main problem holders or is it seen as a men’s problem? Who should (or should not) be involved in solving this issue? Who are the targets of the actions? This is why it is relevant to understand how roles are distributed among the various actors in order to characterise a policy frame (Verloo, 2007). The discourses that are developed in policies express specific depictions of the gender inequality issue and the potential solutions to this problem.

The analysis on gender framing in the EU-political discourse from 1995 to 2008 by Emanuela Lombardo and Petra Meier (2008) revealed despite the broadening onto various policy areas, this did not lead to a deeper framing of gender equality issues. A deeper framing of gender equality implies an understanding that “challenges gender power mechanisms and the norms and practices associated with it from a gender perspective” (Lombardo and Meier, 2008, p.106). A frame analysis enables the detection of minor frames from the major framing, which can disclose a transformative gender mainstreaming approach. By this, it involves checking if there is a focus on women, on men, or on gender; if the gender norms and standards are questioned; and what are the types of gender equality that are mentioned (Lombardo & Meier, 2008). This means that preconceived gender relations and patriarchal structures are being challenged while including women’s voices in the gender mainstreaming strategy. Besides, it entails that the strategy goes beyond gender and aims for diversity by also taking into account race, religion, disability, class, or sexual preference for instance. A frame analysis enables to understand the similarities and differences on the conceptualisation of gender (in)equality across the New European Neighbourhood partner countries and of the European Union. It also helps to reveal the dominant frames in the NENP regarding gender equality and who is included or excluded from the framing processes. Finally, the detection of inconsistencies throughout the policy cycle stages and the consequences of these inconsistencies is possible (Verloo, 2005c). The conceptual model was developed from the theoretical background and is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2
*Conceptual Framework of
the Research*



3. Methodology

As shown in figure 3, the research began with a literature review on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in development, which contributed to the conceptual framework. Subsequently, data on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was collected. The data was analysed to assess the level of gender mainstreaming in the ENP, comprehend how gender issues are framed within the programme at the different stages of the policy cycle, and analyse whether the EU approach can be considered as transformative or not. Finally, conclusions were drawn and barriers and opportunities for the gender mainstreaming strategy in development were developed.

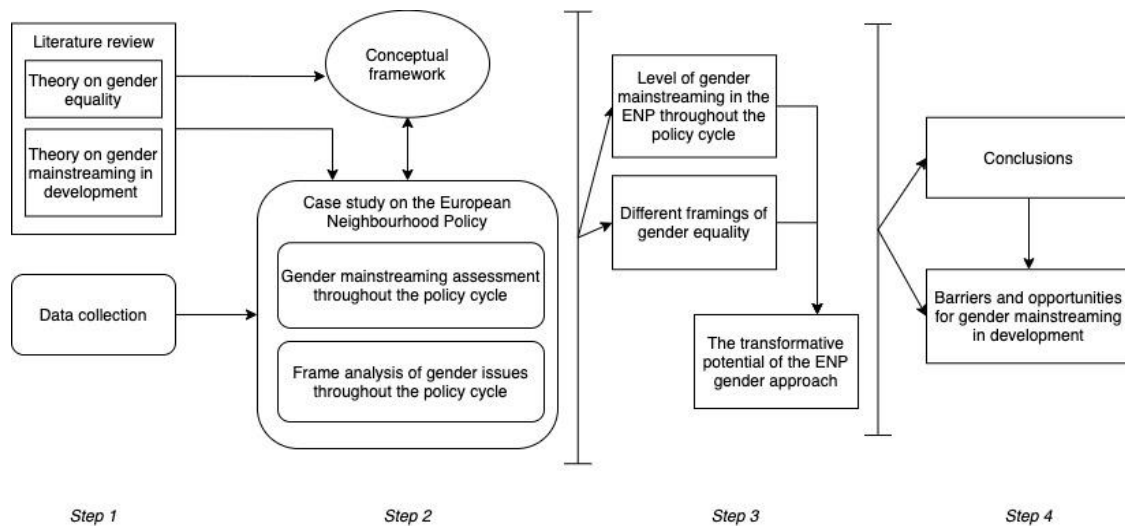


Figure 3: Research Framework

3.1. Case Study Selection

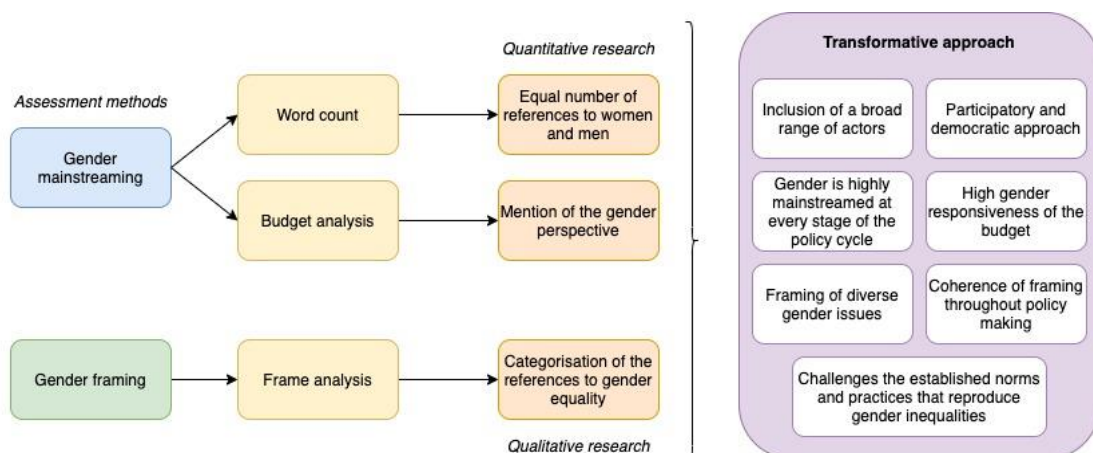
Since the EU Development Policy is very broad and covers many programmes and countries all around the world, it would not have been possible to cover the EU Development Policy in its entirety. Focusing on a specific development programme allows to cover most of the documents of the programme and avoid a random selection of documents. In this regard, the analysis itself and the results can be more specific and representative. This research takes the European Neighbourhood Policy as its case study. In terms of budget, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) is the second most important EU development instrument after the Development Cooperation Instrument with a budget of 15.4 billion euros (European Parliament, 2019). Also, previous studies have focused on the ENP before, which enables a comparison of the results. Besides, as mentioned by David and Guerrina (2013), the European Neighbourhood Policy “provides a useful starting point for the analysis of external relations, particularly given its links to enlargement and the power relations that define the relationship between the EU and third countries” (p.54). At last, the planning documents of the EU stress the necessity to develop gender issues and gender equality as focal points. This necessity applies to the EU Action Plans for the ENP, the ENP Country Progress Reports, and the budget documents for the periods 2014-2017 and 2017-2020.

3.2. Operationalization

This research analyses the extent to which the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has been mainstreamed and how the gender (in)equality issues are framing to determine the transformative potential of the EU gender mainstreaming approach. ‘Gender’ is acknowledged to be a complex concept and can be understood in multiple ways and was usually linked to women rather than both sexes, which restricts the transformation of gender relations. In this sense, it is crucial to comprehend how gender is framed in the documents as it constitutes a part of the gender mainstreaming strategy of the European Union. A transformative strategy is reflected by a participatory-democratic mode and an agenda-setting strategy that challenges norms and practices that might (re)produce gender inequalities (Allwood, 2013; Eveline and Bacchi, 2005). Based on the theoretical orientation, a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming is indicated by a high level of gender mainstreaming at the different stages of the policymaking process (reflected by a high number of mentions of gender issues) and by high gender responsiveness of the budget (with gender being integrated into objectives and indicators). Besides, a gender mainstreaming approach is inclusive when it comes to the range of actors that have a voice in policymaking, which contributes to the participatory and democratic feature of a transformative approach. Furthermore, when gender is framed in a diverse set of issues, with a focus on both women and men instead of women only, but remains coherent throughout the policy cycle, this adds to the transformative potential of the gender approach. All in all, the transformative character of a gender mainstreaming approach intends to gather all the necessary conditions for challenging the well-established norms and practices that can reproduce gender inequalities within the policymaking process. Here, the gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the EU towards the NENP partner countries is considered as fully transformative if the references to women and men are equally shared, if the gender dimension is included in all budgetary sectors, if gender issues are included at every stage of the policymaking, and if the framing of the gender issues appear to be coherent throughout the whole policy cycle but also includes a framing of diverse gender issues in the documents. Figure 4 illustrates this operationalisation of a transformative approach as understood in this research.

Figure 4

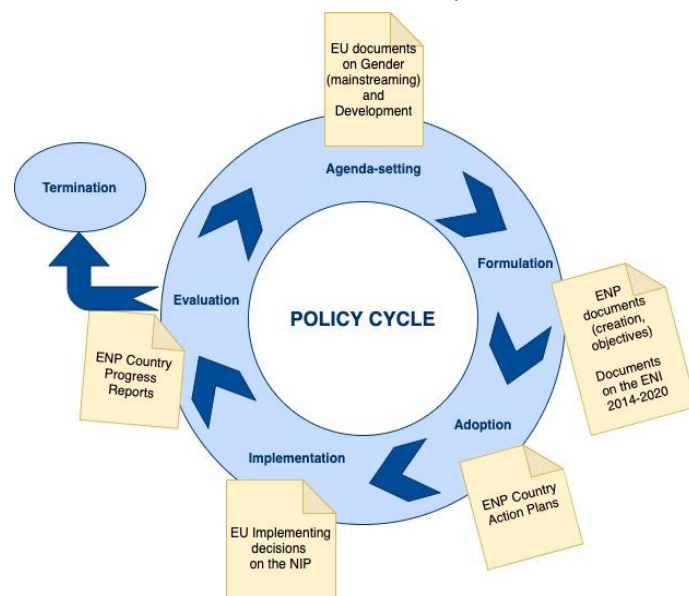
Operationalisation of the Concept of a Transformative Gender Mainstreaming Approach



3.3. Data Collection

Various fields of literature were covered to comprehend the state of gender mainstreaming in the ENP. These fields include the gender mainstreaming literature which mainstreaming represented an important source of information for developing the theoretical background, the literature on gender equality in Europe, the literature on development studies, and on public policy. The data collection for this research project was done through a document review - mainly from the official websites of the EU institutions. For each stage of the policy cycle, different types of documents were carefully selected depending on their relevance to the stage. The agenda-setting stage was assessed through documents that represent the milestones of the broader EU objectives on development and gender. Key documents such as the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, the *New European Consensus on Development "Our world, our dignity, our future"* but also regulations on promoting gender equality in development cooperation and on establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation were included. As for the formulation stage, specific EU documents on the objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy were selected, which are communication documents from the EU institutions such as *A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy*, and regulations on the ENP and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). Programming documents of the ENI for the period of 2014-2020 were also included. Gender mainstreaming in the adoption stage was assessed through ENP Action Plans³ and documents on the Adoption of the Neighbourhood Investment Platform. The implementation phase has been analysed through EU Implementing decisions on the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) and project documents. Finally, EU Country Progress reports were used to assess the evaluation stage of the policy cycle. Figure 5 below is a visual representation of the data collection of this project. In total, 81 documents were analysed. The complete list of the documents used for this analysis can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 5
Data Collection Throughout the Policy Cycle



³ Several countries did not have an Action Plan. The European Commission stated that it will pursue its work on the implementation of its Association Agreement with Algeria. For Syria, the Commission is preparing a future contractual relationship through financial cooperation, despite no association agreement has been signed yet. At last, discussions were instructed for an agreement with Libya, and efforts are ongoing with Belarus to arrange what could be offered to the country under the ENP (European Commission, 2007a).

3.4. Measuring Gender Mainstreaming and Analysing Gender Framing

The assessment model was based on the one of Petra Debusscher (2012), with modifications to fit this project. Through both quantitative and qualitative research, this research aims at evaluating the transformative potential of the EU approach towards the neighbouring countries. The quantitative research includes the assessment of gender mainstreaming level at each stage of the policy cycle in the NENP and the gender responsiveness of the budget. The qualitative research consists of a frame analysis to comprehend how gender issues are framed throughout the policy cycle.

3.4.1. The Quantitative Analysis: The Gender Mainstreaming Approach Towards the EU Neighbourhood

The quantitative analysis is made of a word count to disclose if the focus of the discourse is on gender rather than mainly on women. A ‘transformative’ gender mainstreamed approach is indicated by an equal number of references to women and men. If there is an imbalance, this means that one sex is considered as the norm while the other is viewed as an issue (Debusscher, 2012b). References exclusively related to women, such as *women, woman, girl, mother, and female*, references exclusively related to men like *men, man, boy, father, and male*, and references liked to both sexes, for example, *gender, gender equality, and sex* were be counted⁴.

Subsequently, an analysis of the budget was carried out using the scoring system developed by Petra Debusscher (2012b) to estimate the percentage of the budget that is gender mainstreamed. The bilateral programme documents from the *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020* were used for the budget analysis. Every sector linked to a budget is categorised according to its inclusiveness towards gender. Since every bilateral programme budget includes a set of objectives and performance indicators to monitor the success of the programme, it is fair to assume that the incorporation of gender indicators correlates to have gender equality related development objectives in practice (Debusscher, 2012b). These gender indicators can be either specific for measuring gender equality or reduced inequalities (a decrease in the gender pay gap for instance) or broken down by sex (such as representation of women and men in national parliaments). The usefulness of gender related indicators has been extensively acknowledged by the international organisations and the EU (European Commission, 2007). The scoring system ranks as follows:

- “not mentioned at all” (no gender mainstreaming; -)
- “a one-sentence reference to gender equality” (gender mainstreaming possible; +/-)
- “two to three concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results” (gender mainstreaming likely; +)
- “four or more concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results” (gender mainstreaming very likely; ++)
- “gender is integrated in one or more performance indicators” (gender mainstreaming achieved; +++) (Debusscher, 2012b, p.185).

⁴ It is important to note that the Action plan for Morocco, the Country progress reports for Tunisia and Algeria, and few project documents were in French, thus the terms ‘*femmes*’, ‘*genre*’, and ‘*hommes*’ were searched.

3.4.2. The Qualitative Approach of Gender Framing

The extent to which gender issues are integrated into the different policy documents were analysed through a frame analysis by scanning them for references that are linked to gender (in)equality in the coding programme NVivo. In this research, a transformative gender mainstreaming implies that the perception of gender is more inclusive than only focusing on women. Every single time the terms *gender*, *women*, *men*, *sex*, *female*, and *male* was mentioned, it was put into one of the following frames:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ▪ Bilateral assistance | ▪ Mainstreaming |
| ▪ Civil society organisations | ▪ Monitoring |
| ▪ Discrimination | ▪ Parity |
| ▪ Donor Coordination | ▪ Policy Coherence for Development |
| ▪ Education | ▪ Policy dialogue |
| ▪ Employment – labour market | ▪ Poverty |
| ▪ Equal rights | ▪ Promotion of gender equality |
| ▪ EU Gender Action Plan | ▪ Public health |
| ▪ Gender (pay) gap | ▪ Social exclusion |
| ▪ Gender disaggregated data | ▪ Sport |
| ▪ Gender equality | ▪ Stereotypes |
| ▪ Gender equity | ▪ Sustainable democracy |
| ▪ Gender issues | ▪ Threats and hate speech |
| ▪ Gender responsiveness budget | ▪ Transgender |
| ▪ Gender-sensitive policies | ▪ Vulnerability |
| ▪ Gender-based violence | ▪ Women as actors of change |
| ▪ Governance | ▪ Women’s needs |
| ▪ Human trafficking | ▪ Women’s autonomy |
| ▪ Implementation of gender equality | ▪ Women’s empowerment |
| ▪ Institutions | ▪ Women’s participation in decision-making |
| ▪ Integration of the gender perspective in policy-making | ▪ Women’s political participation |
| ▪ Justice | ▪ Women’s rights |
| ▪ Legislation | ▪ Women’s role in society |

The categorisation into these frames was developed based on both previous studies and literature on the topic, and has been extended while proceeding to the coding of the documents⁵. One reference to these terms can be coded into one or several nodes (frames). For instance, in the following sentence (from the Action plan of Egypt) the frames *gender equality*, *discrimination*, *gender-based violence*, and *legislation* are represented, thus the sentence is coded into these frames:

“Support Egypt’s efforts to promote gender equality and reinforce the fight against discrimination and gender-based violence, including strengthening the activities of the National Council for Women including its periodic review of the relevant existing legislation and recommendations for new legislation” (European External Action Service, 2015b, p.7).

⁵ The description of each frame can be found in Appendix 2

4. Case study: The New European Neighbourhood Policy

4.1. History of a Relationship Between Neighbours

*“No women, no development, no dignity”
Neven Mimica (European Commission, 2019).*

The European Union has special relations with its neighbouring countries of the East and the South that are illustrated by shared founding principles such as cooperation, peace and security, mutual accountability and a shared commitment to the universal values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights (The European Neighbourhood Instrument, 2015). With a budget of 15.4 billion euros, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) is the second most important EU development instrument after the Development Cooperation Instrument (Treviño, 2019). The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was launched in 2004 and was renewed in 2011 to become the New European Neighbourhood Policy (NENP) which aims at bringing the EU and its neighbouring countries to the South and to the East to a closer relationship (EU, n.d.). The Southern countries include Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine⁶, Syria⁷, and Tunisia. The Eastern countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Since its creation, the European Neighbourhood Policy has been adjusted several times to counter the critiques. The name ‘neighbourhood policy’ was chosen due to concerns regarding the colonial connotations that the initial ‘Wider Europe’ name could carry (Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2017).

The European Neighbourhood Instrument

The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) plays a crucial role in supporting the NENP by turning political decisions into actions in practice and it provides assistance for the implementation of the political initiatives (The European Neighbourhood Instrument, 2015). In effect from 2014 to 2020, the ENI aims at unifying financial support and agreed policy goals, ensuring shorter and more dedicated programming to make it more effective (The European Neighbourhood Instrument, 2015). Among its six targets, the first one focuses on ‘Fostering human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, equality, sustainable democracy, good governance and a thriving civil society’ (The European Neighbourhood Instrument, 2015). Besides, a list of priority areas has been developed among which civil-society engagement, climate change action, gender equality promotion will receive high priority. The ENI supports programmes for partner countries in three ways. Bilateral programmes provide support to one partner country; multi-country programmes address common challenges to either all the partner countries or a number of them, and regional and sub-regional cooperation between at least two partner countries; and Cross-Border Cooperation programmes between Member States of the European Union and partner countries that take place along their mutual external border with the EU (The European Neighbourhood Instrument, 2015).

⁶ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

⁷ The EU suspended all its bilateral cooperation with the Government of Syria and its participation in regional programmes in 2011 due to the political situation.

Policy Framework

Development cooperation falls under the shared competences of the EU, which means that the Union is able to implement a common development, as long as it does not restrain Member States from pursuing their own competences in the area. Often, the Member States' development agencies carry out EU-funded programmes because of the close collaboration between the EU and its Member States in the development policy area (Treviño, 2019). Regarding the legislative and financial framework, the new 2021-2028 EU multiannual financial framework will probably have an impact on the EU's financing instruments for external action. In June 2018, the European Commission launched a proposal for a Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) that regroups the vast majority of the existing instruments (Treviño, 2019).

4.2. The EU Gender Perspective in the European Neighbouring Countries

This sub-section discusses the New European Neighbourhood Policy approach to gender, which helps to understand what the gender mainstreaming strategy is based upon. Equality of opportunity is a well-established legal principle of the EU and among the most developed areas of European social policy, the EU is then expected to act as a powerful 'norm entrepreneur' in its development policy (David and Guerrina, 2013). The New European Neighbourhood Policy allows the EU to be present in the neighbouring countries and be involved in mainstreaming gender equality in this policy area. The NENP was introduced after the Arab Spring in order to affirm its support and assistance based on the contributions a nation has already made. The NENP is described as follows by the European Commission:

"The policy is based on new features, including a 'more for more' approach, the importance of mutual accountability between the EU and its partners, the need for partnerships not only with governments but also with civil society (e.g. NGOs [non-governmental organisations], businesses, academia, media, unions, and religious groups) and a recognition of the special role of women in reshaping both politics and society." (European Commission, 2012, para 2).

A major change of the NENP is the focus on women and gender equality (Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2017). Indeed, NENP documents include a clear spotlight on gender equality and women's rights promotion as illustrated in the objective: "Building sustainable democracy also means ensuring gender equality and increasing the participation of women in political and economic life" (European Commission, 2012, para 7). Besides, the allocation of financial resources and more specifically the gender-specific NENP budget was also increased through the new 'Spring forward for women' with €7 million. Since 2011, the transformative potential of women was disclosed through several projects aiming at "aligning the policies and institutions of neighbouring states with EU gender equality standards" (Kunz & Maisenbacher, 2017, p.127). Additionally, the EU demonstrated its advocacy for 'deep and sustainable democracy' (European Commission, 2011, para 3).

In her analysis of the European development policy toward the European Neighbourhood from 2002 to 2013, Petra Debusscher (2012b) explains that gender was genuinely mainstreamed potentially transformative in terms of the substantial aspects but policies mainly refer to women. Then, the shift from

'Women in Development' to 'Gender in Development' was not been made (Debusscher, 2012b, p.339). The gender perspective was not integrated in more than 75% of the budgets and when it was, the focus was still on women. Moreover, gender equality was mostly framed in an instrumental way and was depicted as a means for achieving economic growth or for reducing poverty, and women are seen as an economic resource to development (Debusscher, 2012b). Her analysis also describes the importance of giving a voice to civil society organisations and women's organisations in policy-making because they have proven to be competent in thinking of transformative and inclusive solutions which involve both women and men. She states that despite progress made towards gender equality in the ENP, the EU still has to make efforts in order to create a 'substantially transformative approach' (Debusscher, 2012b). Table 1 below shows the Global Gender Gap scores and ranks of the European Neighbouring countries. These scores illustrate the performance of the countries regarding the gender gap, which can contribute to understand the differences between countries in the analysis. According to the ranking for 2020, Moldova has the highest score with 0.757 among the NENP partner countries, followed closely by Belarus with a score of 0.746. On the contrary, Syria has the lowest score of the group with 0.567, which can be explained by the actual ongoing war in the country.

Table 1

The Global Gender Gap Ranking 2020 for the European Neighbouring Countries⁸

<i>Country</i>	Global Gender Gap Score	Rank	<i>Country</i>	Global Gender Gap Score	Rank
<i>Algeria</i>	0.634	132	<i>Lebanon</i>	0.599	145
<i>Armenia</i>	0.684	94	<i>Libya</i>	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	0.687	98	<i>Morocco</i>	0.605	143
<i>Belarus</i>	0.746	29	<i>Moldova</i>	0.757	23
<i>Egypt</i>	0.629	134	<i>Palestine</i>	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Georgia</i>	0.708	74	<i>Syria</i>	0.567	150
<i>Israel</i>	0.718	64	<i>Tunisia</i>	0.644	124
<i>Jordan</i>	0.623	138	<i>Ukraine</i>	0.721	59

Based on the literature review and on the New European Neighbourhood Policy, this research brings empirical results for comparison with previous research but it also conducts a unique approach of gender mainstreaming assessment by analysing both how gender is mainstreamed and framed throughout each stage of the policy cycle, which represents an important methodological contribution for future analyses of gender mainstreaming.

⁸ The maximum score that a country can reach is 1. The closer the score gets to 1, the higher is the country's achievements in terms of gender parity). Data for Libya and Palestine were not accessible due to the current political situation of the countries. Information retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf.

5. Analysis: Nurturing the Gender Dimension in the New European Neighbourhood Policy

5.1. Part I: Gender Mainstreaming and gender budgeting towards the neighbouring countries

In this chapter, the analysis of gender mainstreaming in the European Development policy towards the Neighbouring countries was conducted according to the methodology as discussed in chapter 3 based on the model of Debusscher (2012). The first part of the analysis unfolds the quantitative aspects of the analysis results. The first subsection breaks down the assessment of gender mainstreaming at the different stages of the policy cycle. In the second subsection, the gender responsiveness of the budget for the bilateral programmes is analysed. Finally, the quantitative results of the gender framing analysis disclose the major frames of each policy stage.

5.1.1. Mainstreaming Gender Throughout the Policy Cycle

The level of gender mainstreaming of the European Neighbourhood Policy throughout the policy cycle has been assessed by a word count of the terms related to *gender* and *sex*, the terms related to *women* only and the terms related to *men* only. Table 2 illustrates the results of this gender mainstreaming analysis. On the left side of the table, the percentages represent the percentages of each stage of the policy cycle for the terms *gender/sex*, *women* and *men*. The percentages on the right side indicate the proportion that the terms *gender/sex*, *women*, and *men* each represent within the policy stage. A detailed version of this table which each type of documents within the stages can be found in Appendix 3.

Table 2

Gender Inclusiveness of the European Neighbourhood Documents at the Different Stages of the Policy Cycle

Policy stage	Gender/sex		Women		Men		Total number of references per policy stage	Gender/sex		
	n	%	n	%	n	%		%	%	%
Agenda-setting	134	26%	135	18%	25	26%	294	46%	46%	9%
Formulation	258	51%	234	31%	14	14%	506	51%	46%	3%
Adoption	27	5%	107	14%	26	27%	160	17%	67%	16%
Implementation	33	6%	124	16%	5	5%	162	20%	77%	3%
Evaluation	57	11%	164	21%	28	29%	249	23%	66%	11%
Total	509	100%	764	100%	98	100%	1371	37%	56%	7%



In total, there were 1387 mentions related to gender equality throughout the policy cycle, either mentioning gender and sex, women or men. Among these references, 509 of them referred to the terms *gender* and *sex* in the documents across the whole policy cycle, which accounts for 37% of the total references. The references to *women* exclusively represent more than half of the total number of references (56%) while references to *men* only account for 7% of the total references. When looking at the references to gender and sex throughout the policy cycle, it appears that most of these references are located in the agenda-setting and formulation stages. Indeed, with respectively 26% and 51% of the references to gender throughout the policy cycle, they account for almost three quarters of the references to *gender* and *sex* in total. Throughout the policy cycle, the references to *women* represent the higher percentage of references with the exception of the formulation stage. Indeed, at the formulation stage, the references to *gender* represent 51% of the references for the formulation stage, which is slightly higher than the references to *women* which represent 46%. This illustrates that at the formulation stage, the focus tends to be slightly more on gender rather than on women. Yet, it is also relevant to note that the formulation stage of the European Neighbourhood Policy has the highest number of documents analysed. However, the references to *men* remain relatively low throughout the whole policy cycle, representing only 3% of the references of the formulation and of the implementation stages, and with a maximum of 16% in the adoption stage. It is also interesting to note that references to *gender* (compared to *women* and *men*) are higher in the early stages of the policy cycle (agenda-setting and formulation), which represent almost half of the total references, while from the adoption stage the percentage of references to gender drops around 20% (17%, 20% and 23% respectively for the adoption, implementation and evaluation stages). On the contrary, references to *women* represent around half of the total references in the agenda-setting and the formulation stages of the policy cycle, while they account for more than 60% of the references in the adoption, implementation and evaluation stages.

In the Action plans which were analysed as part of the adoption stage of the policy cycle, Israel is the only country that does not mention women or men in its Action plan, but it mentions gender only. On the contrary, Armenia and Georgia are the only two countries that do not mention gender in their Action plan document. Jordan and Tunisia mention both gender and women but they do not mention men. Like in the Action plans, the term *women* is mentioned four times more than *gender* and *men* in country progress reports. In this case, references to *women* are accounted for four times more than to *gender* and *men*. However, the Country progress reports that were included for assessing the evaluation stage mentioned the terms *female*, *male* and *sex*, while the Action plans did not.

As a general observation, the term women has been mentioned way more than men and gender which displays the depiction of women as the problem while men are perceived as the norm when discussing gender equality issues. Since the references to women and men are far from being equal, this means that the gender equality discourse is more focused on women rather than both women and men. Besides, it seems that while the references to gender and women are equal in the agenda-setting and formulation stages of the policy cycle, the focus appears to switch more towards women only in the adoption, implementation and evaluation stages. In this regard, it indicates that the gender mainstreaming approach of the European Neighbourhood Policy is not fully transformative despite efforts of the EU institutions to mention gender.

5.1.2. Gender Responsiveness of the European Neighbourhood Instrument

The gender responsiveness of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) was assessed based on a scoring system developed by Petra Debusscher (2012b). The budgetary sectors were classified into categories depending on their integration of the gender perspective in their objectives and performance indicators⁹. The table below illustrates the results of the gender budgeting analysis of the bilateral programmes, covering two periods (2014-2017 and 2017-2020). The comparison between the two periods of bilateral programmes enables to see the evolution of the different NENP partner countries during these two periods regarding the inclusion of the gender dimension in their budget.

Table 3
Gender Budgeting Analysis of the Bilateral Programmes of the European Neighbourhood Policy per Country¹⁰

Bilateral programmes	2014-2017	2017-2020
<i>Algeria</i>	+/-	+/-
<i>Armenia</i>	+/-	++
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	+/-	++
<i>Belarus</i>	+	n.a.
<i>Egypt</i>	-	+++
<i>Georgia</i>	+	+++
<i>Jordan</i>	+/-	++
<i>Lebanon</i>	+	++
<i>Libya</i>	+	n.a.
<i>Morocco</i>	+++	n.a.
<i>Moldova</i>	+	++
<i>Palestine</i>	+++	+++
<i>Tunisia</i>	+++	+++
<i>Ukraine</i>	n.a.	+++

⁹ As a reminder, the different categories have the following definitions:

- Not gender mainstreamed: “not mentioned at all” (-)
- Perhaps gender mainstreamed: “a one-sentence reference to gender equality” (+/-)
- Likely to be gender mainstreamed: “two to three concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results” (+)
- Very likely to be gender mainstreamed: “four or more concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results” (++)
- Fully gender mainstreamed: “gender is integrated in one or more performance indicators” (+++)

¹⁰ No comparison was possible between the two periods since the document for Ukraine for the period of 2014-2017 was not accessible. Besides, the documents for the period of 2017-2020 were not accessible for Belarus, Libya and Morocco, which made the comparison for these countries impossible.

Based on the results of the gender mainstreaming analysis, the levels of gender budgeting are higher than expected. Indeed, the levels of gender mainstreaming being relatively low, one could have expected the budget to follow a similar path. However, out of the eleven documents for the period 2017-2020, four budgets (Egypt, Palestine, Tunisia and Ukraine) were considered 'gender mainstreamed' (+++) which indicates that the budget is gender mainstreamed with one or more performance indicators. As a comparison, only Morocco and Tunisia integrated the concept of gender in at least one performance indicator for the period 2014-2017. As a general observation, the gender perspective has been more included in the budget of the NENP countries during the period of 2017-2020, except for Algeria, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

Despite mentioning the objective of gender equality, most of the bilateral programmes documents for the period 2014-2017 does not operationalise the concept (see table 4). For both periods, all the documents mentioned the following statement: *"Specific attention will be devoted to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment"*. However, left alone, this statement does not provide any type of information regarding the following steps that should be taken to implement gender equality and enhance women's empowerment. In this sense, countries mention gender equality on paper, but specific indicators and objectives also need to be developed and explained in order to put the concept of gender equality into practice. Besides, since gender equality is often mentioned as a cross-cutting issue in the documents, it would be coherent to integrate it in every sector of the budget. For most of the documents, the gender rights are among the objectives for human rights or in 'governance and democratic state'. The bilateral programme for Ukraine for the period 2017-2020 was the document mentioning the most gender. Also, the budget for Ukraine (2017-2020) integrated gender into performance indicators and expected results, not only vaguely in a few sentences of overall objectives like other documents did. On the contrary, the budget for Azerbaijan and Armenia were categorised as 'very likely to be gender mainstreamed' because they only mention the Global Gender Gap Index in their indicators.

Table 4

Level of Gender Mainstreaming for the Budget of the Bilateral Programmes of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (in Millions of Euros and in Percentage of the Total Budget)

Level of gender mainstreaming	2014-2017		2017-2020		Total	
	In Millions of €	%	In Millions of €	%	In Millions of €	%
Not gender-mainstreamed	€ 345,5	15%	€ -	0%	€ 345,5	10%
Perhaps gender-mainstreamed	€ 569,825	24%	€ 12	1%	€ 581,825	16%
Likely to be gender-mainstreamed	€ 871,350	37%	€ -	0%	€ 871,350	24%
Very likely to be gender-mainstreamed	€ -	0%	€ 351,87	29%	€ 351,867	10%
Fully gender-mainstreamed with indicators¹¹	€ 586,225	25%	€ 829,19	70%	€ 1 415,42	40%
Total	€ 2 372,90	100%	€ 1 193,06	100%	€ 3 565,96	100%

Note. The allocation of each sector has been analysed and classified into the five categories mentioned previously. For instance, the total budget for Algeria for the period of 2014-2017 was between 121 000 000 and 148 000 000 Euros and it appeared that gender was mentioned once in one sector (gender mainstreamed possible; +/-) which represented 25% of this total budget. By taking the average of 121 000 000 and 148 000 000, which is 134 500 000, and calculating 25% of 134 500 000, it was deduced that 33 625 000€ of the budget for Algeria was mainstreamed. The equation is as follows:

$$(121\,000\,000 + 148\,000\,000 \div 2) \times (25 \div 100) = 33\,625\,000$$

Subsequently, the amount of budget for each category was calculated by adding up all the sections of budget that have been mainstreamed referring to this category for each country. For instance, the amount of budget falling into the category 'likely to be gender-mainstreamed (+)' for the period 2014-2017 was calculated by adding the 30% of the Belarus budget in which two to three concrete references to gender equality were mentioned, the total of the budget for Georgia and the total budget for Libya because each sector mentioned gender equality two to three times, and 15% of the total budget for Lebanon. The equation is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &(((71\,000\,000 + 89\,000\,000) \div 2) \times 30 \div 100) + ((335\,000\,000 + 410\,000\,000) \div 2) + \\ &((53\,000\,000 + 65\,000\,000) \div 2) + ((130\,000\,000 + 159\,000\,000) \div 2) \times (15 \div 100) \\ &= 871\,350\,000 \text{ €} \end{aligned}$$

Finally, the percentages were calculated by dividing the budget of each category by the total budget and then multiplied by one hundred. For instance, for the not gender-mainstreamed budget of 2014-2017, the equation was:

$$(345\,500\,000 \div 2\,372\,900\,000) \times 100 = 15\%$$

¹¹ As a reminder, the different categories have the following definitions:

- Not gender mainstreamed: "not mentioned at all" (-)
- Perhaps gender mainstreamed: "a one-sentence reference to gender equality" (+/-)
- Likely to be gender mainstreamed: "two to three concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results" (+)
- Very likely to be gender mainstreamed: "four or more concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results" (++)
- Fully gender mainstreamed: "gender is integrated in one or more performance indicators" (+++)

The total budget analysed was of €3 565 959 750, with €2 372 900 000 for the period of 2014-2017 and €1 193 059 750 for the period of 2017-2020. Despite a decrease of budget, these data (see table 5 above) suggest that gender is becoming more important in both the budget and in the concrete programming phase of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Indeed, since almost all the budget (99%) was very likely to be gender-mainstreamed, it appears clearly that there is a significant increase in specification on how gender is mainstreamed, with an increase of specific measurement indicators of the development programs.

In the first period (2014-2020), 15% of the budget was not gender mainstreamed (see table 4 above) which means that gender has not been mentioned once in the objectives, expected results or performance indicators. According to the methodology of Petra Debusscher (2012b), this signifies that it has not been gender mainstreamed in practice either. The other 24% indicates that gender was mentioned only once in the documents which signifies that there is a small chance for the budget to be gender mainstreamed during the implementation process, but it remains very unlikely to happen. A quarter of the total budget (25%) was fully gender mainstreamed by including at least one performance indicator among the references to gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

In the second period (2017-2020), there is a clear change of the level of gender mainstreamed budget. Here, every section of all the budgets refers to gender equality at least once. Indeed, 1% indicates that gender mainstreaming is possible ('perhaps gender-mainstreamed') while 29% of the total budget is likely to be gender mainstreamed and 70% of the total budget is categorised as 'gender mainstreamed' with indicators. This signifies that 99% of the total budget includes four or more concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results. It indicates that gender mainstreaming is incorporated in the planning phase and became more important in comparison to the first period of 2014-2017. The analysis of the budget for the bilateral programmes between 2014 and 2020 reveals the commitment of the European Union to integrate gender mainstreaming in practice.

5.1.3. Quantitative Results of the Gender Framing Analysis Throughout the Policy Cycle

This last subsection introduces the quantitative results of the gender framing analysis per policy stage. Table 6 shows the differences of framings between the policy stages. This analysis indicates that gender equality represents the main frame of the agenda-setting with 11% of the references of the agenda-setting stage, the frame relating to the economic sector and the labour market was the major frame for the formulation stage (13%) and for the adoption stage (13%). It is important to note that this economy related frame is among the main frames throughout every stage. In fact, it represents 4% of the total references of the agenda-setting stage, 3% of the implementation stage references, and 8% of the references for the evaluation stage. Besides, the fact that the main frame of the evaluation stage refers to legislation seems to reveal that the EU is conscious that its legislation needs improvement regarding gender equality. At last, another interesting aspect is the presence of the frame on transgender people in

the evaluation stage. Since the documents are more recent, they seem to incorporate transgender in their texts as well, which is certainly an important step towards a more inclusive NENP.

When looking at the total results throughout the policy cycle (last section of the table), the three main frames that are employment - labour market (11%), gender equality (9%), and gender disaggregated data (7%) reveal that gender inequality in the NENP is mainly depicted as an unemployment issue. The third frame 'gender disaggregated data' only mentions the terms *gender*, *sex*, *women* and *men* in relation to statistics or indicators, which highlights that although progress has been made, it seems that the EU is for the most part still following a 'box-ticking exercise'. Indeed, it looks like the gender equality and gender mainstreaming concepts are included but not truly operationalised with specific indicators. On the other hand of the classification, women's empowerment and women's participation in decision-making, which can be seen as more specific, are the bottom frames with 3% each of the aggregate number of coding references. Nevertheless, the percentages of the gender framing analysis reveal that in each step, the scope of framing gender issues appears to be broad. Indeed, most of the frames represent only a few percentages of the total references. This indicates that the framing of gender issues is not only one-sided, which adds to the transformative potential of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Finally, the differences between at the different stages of the policy cycle could be explained by the fact that gender equality and the strategy of gender mainstreaming are understood in various ways depending on the actors involved and on their interests. This diversity of actors in the policymaking stages could impact the policy coherence but also its effectiveness.

Table 5

Quantitative results of the Gender Framing in the New European Neighbourhood Policy per Policy Stage

Agenda-setting			Formulation		
Frame	<i>n</i>	%	Frame	<i>n</i>	%
Gender equality	29	11%	Employment - labour market	103	13%
Women's empowerment	17	6%	Gender disaggregated data	83	10%
Mainstreaming	16	6%	Gender equality	72	9%
Institutions	13	5%	Women's rights	42	5%
Promotion of gender equality	13	5%	Legislation	34	4%
Discrimination	12	4%	Mainstreaming	34	4%
Education	12	4%	Discrimination	32	4%
Employment - labour market	12	4%	Violence against women	29	4%
Women's rights	12	4%	Women's empowerment	23	3%
Gender disaggregated data	8	3%	Dialogue with civil society	22	3%
(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)
Total	273	100%	Total	803	100%



	Adoption		Implementation		
Frame	<i>n</i>	%	Frame	<i>n</i>	%
Employment - labour market	22	13%	Violence against women	29	21%
Discrimination	16	9%	Civil society organisations	20	14%
Gender equality	14	8%	Discrimination	9	6%
Legislation	14	8%	Justice	9	6%
Women's participation in decision-making	14	8%	Access to services	8	6%
Human trafficking	11	6%	Domestic violence	8	6%
Women's rights	10	6%	Women's rights	7	5%
Women's role in society	10	6%	Legislation	6	4%
Equality of men and women	8	5%	Employment - labour market	4	3%
Violence against women	8	5%	Sexual violence	4	3%
(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)
Total	170	100%	Total	140	100%

	Evaluation		Total of the policy cycle		
Frame	<i>n</i>	%	Frame	<i>n</i>	%
Legislation	17	11%	Employment-labour market	141	11%
Women's rights	16	10%	Gender equality	116	9%
Gender equality	15	10%	Gender disaggregated data	93	7%
Employment - labour market	12	8%	Violence against women	72	5%
Discrimination	10	6%	Women's rights	71	5%
Violence against women	9	6%	Discrimination	66	5%
Women's participation in decision-making	9	6%	Legislation	59	4%
Domestic violence	8	5%	Mainstreaming	54	4%
Transgender	6	4%	Women's empowerment	41	3%
Freedom of expression	4	3%	Women's participation in decision-making	38	3%
(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)
Total	154	100%	Total	1380	100%

5.2. Part II: Gender Framing in the EU Development Policy Towards the Neighbouring Countries

Following the quantitative analysis, this section tries to comprehend how gender issues are mentioned in the main frames of the European Neighbourhood. The section is divided in three subsections: the first subsection develops the framing of the terms *gender*, *women* and *men* separately. The second one develops the five major frames throughout all the documents of the European Neighbourhood Policy that have been integrated in this analysis. Finally, the third subsection refers to the broader frames of the European Neighbourhood which are also linked to gender equality issues, such as democratic change and good governance, and the role of civil society organisations in the NENP.

5.2.1. Framing of the terms *gender*, *women* and *men*

The word count in the section 5.1. revealed that the term *women* was mentioned more than seven times more than the term *men*. It is then interesting to analyse how the terms *gender*, *women* and *men* are framed in the New European Neighbourhood Policy to understand in which way gender but also both sexes are represented. The frame analysis on the terms *gender*, *women* and *men* also serves as a transition to the next subsection that analyses the framing of the gender issues in the NENP.

Gender

Out of the 81 documents, 66 mentioned gender at least once. In this regard, this is a positive indicator that gender is being integrated in the policy documents at every stage of the policy cycle. This could signify that the EU institutions are taking a step towards a transformative approach. However, when gender is mentioned it is only mainly to mention gender equality. Indeed, gender equality is only mentioned among other key issues or challenges. As showed by the following quotes, gender equality is stated as one of the benchmarks of the Action plan for Lebanon and falls under the category of employment and social policy in the Action plan for Moldova:

“Enhancement of municipalities' value for citizens, and strengthening of their engagement in communities through partnerships with local civil society organisations, taking into consideration gender-equal opportunities and efficiency”
(European External Action Service, 2015d, p.15).

“Engage in a dialogue on employment and social policy with a view to develop an analysis and assessment of the situation and to identify key challenges and policy responses (social and civil dialogue, health and safety at work, gender equality, labour law, employment policy, social protection and inclusion) gradually moving towards EU standards in this field.” (European External Action Service, 2015e, p.16).

The Action plan for Azerbaijan specifies that their aim is to have closer standards to the EU regarding social policy: *“Ensure a closer approximation to EU standards in the area of social policy (gender equality, labour law and health and safety at work).”* (European External Action Service, 2015a, p.19).

This could reveal a transformative effort, yet, despite a relatively high number of mentions of the term gender, it appears that no operationalisation of the term does not happen. The references to gender remain vague and even when gender issues are specified (such as domestic violence for instance), no precise indicators or further step is detailed in the documents. This corresponds to the quantitative results of this research. Indeed, in table 2 (see section 5.1.1.) it has been demonstrated that the term gender was mentioned way more in the early stages of the policy cycle (134 references in the agenda-setting stage and 258 in the formulation stage) than in the rest of the policy cycle (27 references in the adoption stage, 33 references in the implementation stage and 57 in the evaluation stage).

Women

The term women has been mentioned in most of the documents since the term was present in 68 documents out of the 81 documents that have been analysed. An important aspect of the framing of women is that they are often included in relation to vulnerability or included among vulnerable groups such as in the following quotes:

“Particular attention will be paid to support vulnerable groups such as women, youth and people with disabilities, internally displaced people and persons belonging to minorities.” (European Commission, 2015c, ENP Progress Report Georgia, p.5, emphasis added).

*“Violence against women and their **overall socio-economic vulnerability** remained challenges for Palestinian society.” (European Commission, 2015f, ENP Progress Report Palestine, p.6).*

*“Legislative, regulatory and other frameworks should be fully revised in order to take account of gender issues, more particularly **the vulnerability of women.**” (Assaf, G., 2011, EuroMed Justice III Project, p.77, emphasis added).*

The following quote is calling out because it specifies that “vulnerable groups are defined by their very nature”. Besides, because vulnerable groups are impacted by ‘special legislation’ which govern them, legislation is needed for vulnerable groups to facilitate their access to justice. Here, it appears that the problem that vulnerable groups face could be solved by putting into force legislation that ensures them access to justice:

“Vulnerable groups are defined by their very nature. Special legislation governs certain of them in most of the ENPI southern Mediterranean countries (disabled persons, children, women, victims of human trafficking, victims of terrorism, migrant workers and those in extreme poverty).” (Assaf, G., 2011, p.69).

The bilateral programme for Morocco 2014-2017 states that the country has for objective to reinforce the legislation, gender equality culture, institutionalisation of the gender perspective and the participation of women in the political, social, economic and cultural aspects of life:

“In the field of the promotion of women's rights and equality between women and men, in continuity and complementarity with previous interventions: legal protection



*for women is strengthened, a culture of equality is promoted, **institutionalization of the gender perspective is consolidated and the participation of women in political, social, economic and cultural life is strengthened***¹² (European Commission, 2014c, p.12, emphasis added)

In its Action plan already, Azerbaijan was mentioning that the country needs to “*continue efforts to ensure the equality of men and women in society and economic life*” (European External Action Service, 2015a, p.11) for ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In its Country Progress report, the necessity to continue the implementation of gender equality and women’s rights despite efforts developed by the EU:

“Despite these positive measures and steps taken, a national action plan still needs to be drawn up to further safeguard women’s rights, including combating violence against women, improving gender equality through appropriate administrative and legal measures.” (European Commission, 2015a, p.7).

As a general observation, women are depicted among the vulnerable groups, which include diversified groups, yet, this diversification does not occur when speaking of gender equality. Similarly, the analysis of Petra Debusscher (2012b) revealed the ‘victimisation’ of women. In a sense, although the focus seems to remain mainly on women, the way they are presented does not contribute to the transformative potential of the EU gender mainstreaming approach.

Men

When men are mentioned in the New European Neighbourhood Policy documents, it is mainly in numeral terms. For instance, referring to the percentage of boys/girls in schools or men are mentioned in a more general sentence that refers to equality between men and women. As an example, men are mentioned in relation to equality in the *Strategic Plan 2016-2020 of the DG International Cooperation and Development*: “*Equality between men and women is at the core of values of the EU and enshrined in its legal and political framework*” (European Commission, 2018c, p.35). Besides, men are also mentioned as the ‘norm’ in the economy and the society. Nevertheless, the *EU GAP II* mentions that progress has been made regarding the understanding of gender equality and the role of men in the promotion of gender equality. It is mentioned as follows:

“Important GAP II successes so far include a better understanding of the underpinnings of gender equality, including the role of men in ensuring gender equality and promoting women’s empowerment”

(Ioannides, 2017, p.8; p.72, emphasis added).

Moreover, some documents such as *The Regional South Multiannual Indicative Programme (2018-2020)* mention the necessity of men to be involved in solutions for peacebuilding:

¹² This quote is a personal translation from the French document and does not pretend to be an official translation of the European Neighbourhood Policy or of the European Union.



*“The EU needs to continue its strong engagement with **young women and men to promote youth agency and peacebuilding**, including through intercultural dialogues involving young people from both the EU and the Southern Neighbourhood” (European External Action Service and European Commission, 2018b, p.2, emphasis added).*

Among all the documents analysed, the *EU GAP II* is the only document to devote a section to the integration of men in EU gender equality programmes. It explains the necessity of the participation of both men and women to change women’s position and the need of a shared responsibility for the implementation of solutions for gender equality:

*“The participation and commitment of men is thus fundamental in the gender mainstream paradigm to change the social and economic position of women. Even if policies are directed at women only, the gender mainstreaming approach stresses that in order to remove imbalances in society **both women and men must share the responsibility**¹³. This means **involving and engaging men in gendering efforts**. (...) It systematically takes into consideration **the role of men as actors able and needing to contribute to the solution**, nor only as a measure of comparison for identifying the gender gap. (Ioannides, 2017, p.31, emphasis added).*

While this document is the only one to have such a section dedicated to the role of men in gender equality, it highlights the limitedness of the role of men and boys in women’s empowerment in the EU discourse on gender mainstreaming despite the progress made during the last decades:

*“Before the review of GAP I, the EU did not conceive gender as a relation between men and women, but simply as a ‘women’s issue’¹⁴. While this has changed in GAP II, **the role of men and boys in EU financed programmes on women’s empowerment remains limited.**” (Ioannides, 2017, pp.62-63, emphasis added).*

All in all, when men are mentioned in the NENP documents, it is either referring to equality between men and women or in numerical terms. Nevertheless, *the GAP II* is the only document that mentions men more than thirty times, while the rest of the documents usually mention it a few times and in reference to equality between men and women. It explains masculinity and the role of men and boys in gender equality and women’s empowerment, which is important as well. Indeed, since men are usually non mentioned, it reveals that men are seen as the norm, they are not part of the problem and except in the *EU GAP II*, they are usually not included in the solutions developed to achieve gender equality. This illustrates that despite progress and efforts from the European Union, the focus is still on women’s issues for the most part. In addition, it recognises that because of the extensive nature of the issues mentioned, the development of specific operationalisation with precise indicators is difficult. Hence, the monitoring of solutions and their outcomes appears to be even more complicated. Measuring progress in a precise way seems to be confronted with obstacles due to the very nature of gender equality issues.

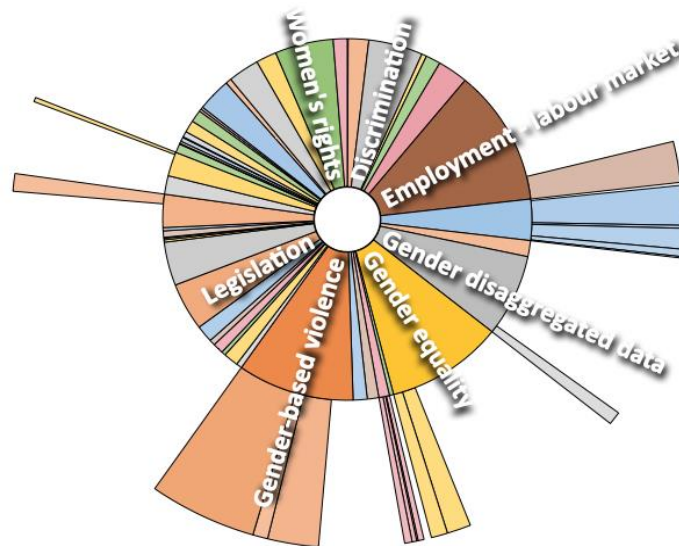
¹³ Debusscher, P. (2011). ‘Mainstreaming Gender in European Commission Development Policy: Conservative Europeanness?’, *Women’s Studies International Forum* 34, pp.39-49.

¹⁴ Debusscher, P. (2011). ‘Mainstreaming Gender in European Commission Development Policy: Conservative Europeanness?’, *Women’s Studies International Forum* 34, pp. 39-49.

5.2.2. The Main Frames of the New European Neighbourhood Policy

As described in the methodology section earlier, each document has been coded in NVivo through a text search of the terms *gender*, *women*, *men*, *female*, and *sex*. The categorisation of frames in NVivo enables the identification of the prominent themes in the project when some nodes have more coding references than others. Figure 6 below is a visual representation of the major frames in all the European Neighbourhood Policy documents that have been analysed in this project: employment and labour market; gender equality; gender disaggregated data; violence against women; women’s rights; discrimination; and legislation. Each of the five major frames will be developed separately in this subsection to comprehend the framing of gender issues in the NENP and what it says about the transformative potential of the EU gender mainstreaming approach.

Figure 6
Sunburst of nodes compared by number of coding references



‘Employment and labour market’ Frame

The main frame concerns employment of women and the labour market with 141 references which accounts for 11% of the frames throughout the policy cycle of the European Neighbourhood Policy throughout the whole policy cycle. Gender equality in the labour market is only framed as an economic development tool. In education, it is seen as a better preparation for the labour market. In this regard, the goal of gender equality is framed as an economic goal, not as a social goal to enhance women’s rights or women’s empowerment per se. Indeed, Debusscher (2012) states that the main emphasis is on the market and the employers’ needs rather than on the needs of women and men (p.333). Both employment and education are mainly framed in an instrumental way to first achieve economic goals and reduce poverty, and to a much lesser extent, as a basic human right. Gender equality in employment is not framed

as a way to bring gender equality into the personal sphere, but only in the professional and societal spheres. Women must be educated and trained, but only if their skills match the labour market demands as mentioned in the Action Plan for Jordan:

“Improve matching of skills and demands on the Jordanian labour market and improving efficiency of the labour market with particular consideration of youth and women” (European External Action Service, 2015c, p.18, emphasis added).

Likewise, in the formulation stage, the objective of empowering women in the private sector is mentioned, when specifying that this empowerment will contribute to the promotion of economic and social development:

“Contribution to the provision of skills and adequate accreditation standards to better match the current and future needs of the labour market (...), especially among youth and women” (European Commission, 2017a, Single Support Framework to Egypt 2017-2020, p.10, emphasis added).

“Specific actions to empower women in the private sector, and in their role for promotion of economic and social development in Palestine, will be implemented.” (European Commission, 2014d, Single Support Framework to Palestine 2014-2016, p.13).

As depicted in some documents such as the bilateral programme for Azerbaijan (2018-2020), women have to be educated and included in the labour market in answer to the aim of contributing to inclusive growth:

“In the context of diversification of the economy and given the country's demography, support to (women and youth) employment and social measures will ensure that the population and especially vulnerable groups can adapt to changes in the labour market, paving the way for inclusive growth. (...) A particular challenge is the mismatch between the skills supplied by the education system and those demanded by the economy; this seriously affects the labour market and is the reason for productivity constraints.” (European Commission, 2018b, pp.4-6, emphasis added).

In her in-depth analysis of two generations of the EU programming documents for the ENP from 2002 to 2013 and concluded that gender inequality is mainly presented as an employment issue or low female-participation rates. The comparison between the work of Petra Debusscher and this project helps to realise that despite the years and bigger international interest on gender and development issues, the documents of the New European Neighbourhood Policy continue to have the same focus when it comes to gender equality and mainstreaming gender in policy-making. In this regard, the goal of gender equality is strategically framed economically in the employment and education sectors, as a tool to reduce poverty or as a preparation for the labour market. However, it is important to remember that women's role in society goes way beyond going to school and having a paid job (Debusscher, 2012b).



Gender equality Frame

The frame 'gender equality' includes the sub-frames 'equality between men and women' and 'equality of men and women'. It is the major frame in the agenda-setting stage of the policy cycle. In this sense, it could seem that the EU is working towards a transformative gender mainstreaming approach by integrating the term 'gender equality' in the early phase of policy-making. Yet, the text included in this frame remains vague in the sense that it does not indicate concrete actions or expected results. In line with the previous section on gender, the references in this frame only mention gender equality as a broad outcome or as a cross-cutting issue, but does not specify anything more as illustrated in the *Single Support Framework for EU support* documents of several countries:

"The importance of mainstreaming cross-cutting issues, notably civil society engagement, youth, gender, a rights-based approach, social inclusion, environment and climate change, and of employing confidence building measures in potential and post-conflict situations". (European Commission 2017b Moldova, p.5; European Commission, 2017b, Georgia, p.3; European Commission, 2017e, Tunisia, p.17; European Commission, 2017d, Ukraine, p.4;).

In the end, despite the high number of references, the vagueness regarding the concept of gender equality lower the transformative potential of the gender mainstreaming approach adopted for the NENP. This also decrease the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to implement gender equality. Vagueness regarding gender equality leads to a lower commitment on the implementation of gender issues. It seems that since gender issues are required to be formally incorporated, governments and the EU try to 'tick the box' by mentioning gender equality (Allwood, 2013). For instance, in the Action plan for Ukraine, gender equality is integrated within the overall objective of social cooperation: *"Enhance practical measures in the area of gender equality with the aim of reducing the gender pay gap"* (European External Action Service, 2013, p.23). Here, gender equality is mainly seen as a means to achieve other goals.

Gender Disaggregated Data Frame

In this research, the frame gender disaggregated data represents 7% of the frames' references which also refers to low female-participation rates, just like Petra Debusscher highlighted in her article. The frame 'gender disaggregated data' only mentions the terms *gender*, *sex*, *women* and *men* in relation to statistics or indicators. Relying on the fact that gender is not further operationalised, this can be described as a 'box-ticking' approach as the following example illustrates it:

"Including a gender perspective in monitoring and statistical capacity building, by supporting the development and dissemination of data and indicators disaggregated by sex, as well as gender equality data and indicators" (Council Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 on establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation, 2006, Article 12).

Many documents integrate the gender perspective in their indicators by simply adding the following sentence: *"NB: indicators will be disaggregated by gender as much as possible"* (European Commission,

2017b, *Single Support Framework to Georgia 2018-2020*, p.10) or adding gender disaggregated data as follows: “*Proportion of teachers who are licensed (disaggregated by gender)*” (European Commission, 2017c, *Single Support Framework to Jordan 2017-2020*, p.8; European Commission, 2014c, *Single Support Framework to Morocco, 2014-2017*) and “*Whenever relevant the indicators will be broken down by gender.*” (European Commission, 2014b, *Single Support Framework to Libya 2014-2016*, p.31). This illustrates the ‘box-ticking’ aspect of the gender mainstreaming approach of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

As a conclusion for the frames ‘gender equality’ and ‘gender disaggregated data’, gender equality is mentioned in most documents and more specifically in the indicators and/or in the objectives. If the gender disaggregated data mentioned in the NENP were more specific and more operationalised, this could have reflected a transformative potential, but this is not the case here. The references remain vague which seems demonstrate a ‘box-ticking’ approach rather than a transformative approach. The effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming approach seems to be compromised by this superficial focus reflected by the vagueness of the references to gender equality and of gender disaggregated data.

Violence Against Women and Discrimination Frames

Violence against women and discrimination are among the main frames, which corresponds to the fact that women are often presented as victims or as a vulnerable group of the society. Even at the project level, it is mentioned that the European Union aims at combating violence against women, which often include domestic violence too. By mentioning violence against women in general, it helps to not disregard all the different forms of violence. Examples can be found in the *EuroMed Justice III* document (implementation stage) and in the *Strategic Plan 2016-2020 for DG International Cooperation and Development* (formulation stage):

“The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – aims to protect women against all forms of violence. The Convention creates a legal framework to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence.” (Assaf, G., 2011, p.25).

“The EU will also continue to play a leading role in contributing to end violence against women and girls worldwide. (...) Gender equality and women's empowerment will be promoted through the implementation of the GAP II, as well as with the Spotlight initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, which will fully integrate the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’.”

(European Commission, 2018c, p.8 and p.34).

The Bilateral programme for Tunisia 2014-2016 mentions the diminution of violence and discrimination based on gender: “*Decrease in gender-based violence and discrimination*”¹⁵ (p.15). Besides, the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was mentioned in several

¹⁵ This quote is a personal translation from the French document and does not pretend to be an official translation of the European Neighbourhood Policy or of the European Union.

documents such as the Action plan for Lebanon (European External Action Service, 2015d); the Action plan for Morocco (European External Action Service, 2015f); the Action Plan for Palestine (European External Action Service, 2015g); *European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy* (European Commission, 2004); the Council Regulation (EC) No 806/2004 on promoting gender equality in development cooperation (2004), and *The New European Consensus on Development* (Council of the European Union, 2017) for instance.

A final point is the difficulty of operationalising the issue of discrimination against women as stated in *The EU GAP II*:

“Instead, what seems to be lacking in GAP II – not only regarding the specific issue of discrimination against women – is specific activities against measurable indicators. The broad nature of the proposed activities make it difficult to track real progress and to ensure that these will lead to specific results. (...) It is difficult to see how these can be operationalised to bring concrete outcomes and how the EU contribution can be measured.” (Ioannides, 2017, p.57).

The importance of this frame contributes to the representation of women in the documents. On one hand, the high number of references to violence against women is a good step for the recognition of this crucial issue. On the other hand, too many references to it might also restrain the representation of women to victims of violence only, which could be counterproductive. This frame is an indication that, consciously or not, the EU still depicts women as vulnerable and needy for help. In gender equality, everything is a question of finding the right balance. Naming the gender issue of violence against reflects the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming and helps to challenge the existent gender and power relations. However, to achieve its transformative potential, it would require women or women's organisations to be involved in participating and analysing in policymaking in order to empower women. Here, despite naming violence against women as an important issue in the neighbouring countries, the inclusion of women at the early stages of policymaking is still lagging behind. Hence, this frame reflects the limited transformative potential of the NENP gender mainstreaming.

Women's rights Frame

Like the frame violence against women, the frame women's rights represents 5% of the references of the frames. At the agenda-setting stage, the *Strategic Plan 2016-2020* - DG International Cooperation and Development*, the role of the EU as a promoter of gender equality and of the defence of women's rights is highlighted throughout the document:

“The EU aims at a world where the rights of girls and women are claimed, valued and respected by all, and where everyone is able to fulfil their potential and contribute to a more fair and just society for all. (...) This includes support to partner countries to establish a more enabling environment for the fulfilment of girls' and women's rights and to achieve real and tangible improvements on gender equality.” (European Commission, 2018c, p.32).



“As regards gender equality, the EU is at the forefront of the protection and fulfilment of girls’ and women’s rights, and vigorously promotes them in its external relations.”
(European Commission, 2018c, p.35).

The necessity of promoting human rights of vulnerable groups, women included, is also mentioned in the Bilateral programme documents:

“To promote a rights based approach encompassing all human rights with particular attention to the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, youth, people with disabilities and minorities” (European Commission, 2017b, Georgia 2017-2020, p.9).

At the adoption stage, women’s rights are mainly mentioned within the objectives of the Action plans, for instance: *“Progress in protection of women’s and children’s rights”* (European External Action Service, 2015d, Lebanon, p.6); or *“Establishment and strengthening of mechanisms and structures for the promotion and protection of women’s rights.”*¹⁶ (European External Action Service, 2015f, Morocco, p.15). The Action plan for Palestine is more specific and links women’s rights with discrimination issues in legislation, and violence against women:

“Protect women’s and girls’ rights, eliminate all discriminatory provisions in national legislation and provide regular information on the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on combating violence against women, on the implementation of CEDAW and on the Istanbul Plan of Action.”
(European External Action Service, 2015g, p.17).

As an example, Lebanon mention its progress concerning women’s rights by introducing new legislation to protect women from all types of violence as mentioned in its Country progress report:

“Lebanon made some progress with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular in the area of rights of women and children. New legislation was adopted to protect victims of domestic violence and fighting parental violence (...), and to protect women and other family members from domestic violence.”
(European Commission, 2015d, p.3 and p.6).

Yet, there are still many areas in which progress is needed regarding women’s rights such as in the right to pass their nationality to their children for instance but also in terms of social, economic and political participation (European Commission, 2015d). When looking at other Country progress reports and documents analysed in the evaluation stage, it is revealed that despite the efforts made throughout the decades, women’s rights have not always been respected and they are still at danger:

“Despite these positive measures and steps taken, a national action plan still needs to be drawn up to further safeguard women’s rights, including combating violence against women, improving gender equality through appropriate administrative and legal measures.” (European Commission, 2015b, Azerbaijan, p.7).

Other documents such as the Joint Communication on the *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2014* also states that women’s rights remain an important issue in many of the

¹⁶ This quote is a personal translation from the French document and does not pretend to be an official translation of the European Neighbourhood Policy or of the European Union.

ENP partner countries: *“The rights of women and children remained problematic in most partner countries.”* (European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015, p.5).

The women’s rights frame supports the previous frame on violence against women. These two frames are closely linked since as long as violence against women will remain a crucial issue in these countries, the fight for improving women’s right will have to continue. The EU solution to these critical issues seems to be the legal way, which involves developing better legislation to protect women against any type of violence and to ensure that their rights are protected. Here, the social aspects of gender equality are more highlighted and aspire to reach the objective of gender equality itself, and not for broader goals such as economic objectives.

5.2.3. Broader Frames of the New European Neighbourhood Linked to Gender Equality

5.2.3.1. Gender equality as a Means for Achieving Democratic Change and Good Governance

In their analysis on women in the neighbourhood, Kunz and Maisenbacher (2017) explain that gender equality and women’s empowerment are associated with the processes of democratisation. They noticed that in the New European Neighbourhood Policy, more attention was given to gender equality and women’s participation in the political life when previous ENP documents mainly presented gender equality one European value among others (Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2017). Kunz and Maisenbacher (2017) also noted that alongside political activists and civil society participants, women’s role in the promotion of democracy is key and in most recent documents, women are perceived as necessary actors for change. The authors detected that the southern neighbourhood received more emphasis regarding women’s empowerment and gender equality. This can be explained by the role that women had during the Arab Spring. The European Commission stated that women are key participants of the Arab Spring and they should benefit from the subsequent shifts. For this reason, the EU had for objective to keep on supporting women’s rights in the southern neighbouring countries and to assure the promotion of gender mainstreaming in all activities (European Commission, 2012, p.17). Like women in the southern neighbouring countries, feminist activism has a long-standing legacy in eastern countries. For instance, gender equality legislation as favourable divorce laws or abortion rights have been adopted thanks to the call of feminists during the communist era (Snitow, 2006 as cited in Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2017). Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement concerning gender equality in the East as well. In some cases, the EU has this tendency to present gender equality “as a model on which its own identity is based and that is not yet completely realised in the eastern neighbourhood” (Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2017, p.137). Some initiatives present the EU as ‘a model of social virtue’ that aids Eastern countries’ women who need help from the EU as they cannot speak for themselves. This narrative does not recognise the variety of feminist movements and their achievements in Eastern European countries (Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2017). Several bilateral enterprises have been initiated regarding the special role of

women in civil society and as democracy promoters (Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2017). As examples, the EU promotes women's role as peace advocates at the Georgian border in the EU monitoring mission in Georgia. Also, within the New NENP, the EU brought financial support to the establishment and development of women civil society organisations like the Armenian 'Women Resource Centre'. Likewise, Debusscher (2012b) stated that despite the transformative potential of the frame that 'connects gender equality with human rights, democracy, and good governance', it is rare to come across elaborated solutions that are translated into performance indicators (p.334). Indeed, women's role is depicted as a precondition for democratisation and good governance, but more specific indicators and objectives need to be developed.

Women's participation in every area of society and in political decisions is primordial for the sake of not only gender equality, but also for democracy and good governance. It is interesting that when looking at a broader perspective on gender equality, it seems that in some documents, women are framed as actors of change, but mainly in relation to democratisation and good governance. Nevertheless, this framing does not take place when talking about the implementation of gender equality per se. The need for women's participation for democratic change is well illustrated in the bilateral programme for Libya (2014-2016):

"The participation of women in the transition process is deemed essential in order to pave the way for a democratic society where all Libyan citizens share rights and obligations. To help achieve this objective the EU intends to mainstream Gender Equality in all policies, strategies and cooperation actions in Libya and to finance measures which directly support women's empowerment."
(European Commission, 2014b, p.23, emphasis added).

The regional South Multiannual Indicative Programme (2011-2020) also highlights the correlation between democratization, human rights (women's rights included) and good governance:

"The new generation of ENP Action Plans included detailed provisions on democracy, human rights and good governance, setting concrete benchmarks for freedom of expression, of the media, of association and assembly, and of religion and belief, and for the rights of women and girls."
(European External Action Service and the European Commission, 2018, p.6).

Similarly to Kunz and Maisenbacher's research (2017), women's role in democratisation processes is also stated, as for example in the *EU GAP II*:

"Experts on gender equality in third countries argue that no development strategy will be effective unless women play a central role. As Rodríguez Ruiz and Rubio-Marín conclude in their analysis of Europe's parity laws, the equal representation of men and women in public office is not about matching quota laws to electoral institutions, but about achieving 'a structural prerequisite of the democratic state' and 'a permanent feature of good governance'." (Isabelle Ioannides, 2017, p.9, emphasis added)



Furthermore, the Bilateral programme for Egypt (2017-2020) integrated gender equality under the objective of 'Governance, enhancing stability and modern democratic state' with one specific objective being "Gender equality and women's empowerment are fostered":

"The overall objective is to support, in line with the 2014 Constitution, Egypt's process towards increased democratic governance, structural reform and political, social and economic stabilisation. The specific objectives are: 1. To support effective, accountable and participatory governance; 2. To promote and protect the values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and gender equality; 3. To promote transparent and equitable fiscal systems and public finance management."
(p.12, emphasis added).

Gender equality is presented as a core value to be promoted alongside sustainable democratic change and good governance in the NENP main documents. The quotes show that women are also depicted as responsible for the implementation of solutions, since men are barely mentioned in solutions for enhancing democracy and good governance. However, gender equality and women's participation in politics are also introduced as necessary conditions for achieving democracy and good governance. Although this broader frame presents the most transformative potential, solutions are rarely elaborated and developed into specific indicators. It is unlikely that these broader outcomes will be fully achieved. Besides, in most of the documents, the burden of implementing the solutions was left to civil society organisations and women. Hereof, the European institutions do not carry the responsibility of integrating gender issues throughout the whole policymaking process until the implementation of objectives and projects. This argument is further developed in the following subsection. Nonetheless, Wanun Permpibul (2020, July 15) that it is important that the implementation of the solutions for gender equality is not a women's burden only. Support is needed from governments, from the local levels to the higher levels of governance. The choices, needs and voices of women have to be taken into account at every level of policy-making and there must be an ongoing engagement to include women and listen to them and engage them to build solutions. In this regard, women deserve to be involved in building and implementing the solutions for achieving gender equality, but they should not be the only ones to carry this crucial burden. Cooperation with men, civil society organisations, governments and local governments have to be built.

5.2.3.2. The Role of Civil Society Organisations in the New European Neighbourhood Policy

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are often mentioned in the documents. For instance, it appeared that in the vast majority of the budgets, a specific section is usually dedicated to the support of civil society. This can be explained by the fact that CSOs are often depicted as responsible for implementing the solutions for the whole development process, alongside women. In fact, almost all the documents that have been analysed, civil society organisations were mentioned in relation to the necessity of a stronger dialogue with CSOs, their involvement in the policy dialogue, in relation to their cooperation with governments or in relation to the necessity to develop a better environment for civil society organisations to do their work. In the EU Commission Communication *A strong European Neighbourhood Policy*, civil society organisations have a "valuable role to play in identifying priorities for action and in promoting and monitoring the implementation of ENP Action Plans" (European Commission, 2007, p.11). The presence

of hundreds of civil society representatives at the ENP Conference illustrated the Commission's will to integrate civil society in the policy dialogue. Indeed, the Commission aims at encouraging a broad range of stakeholders in monitoring the implementation of the ENP Action Plans, but will also advocate for a stronger dialogue between governments of the partner countries and local civil society and pursue a better integration of more stakeholders within the reform process. This appears to be part of the transformative efforts taken by the EU institutions. Besides this contribution, the participation of a broad range of actors such as non-governmental organisations, and interest and pressure groups improves the democratic quality of the policymaking processes (Council of Europe, 2004). Moreover, these organisations constitute a 'watchdog' in assuring the integration of gender mainstreaming as a strategy on the political agenda and of gender equality as a goal (Council of Europe, 2004). Ole Elgström (2000) demonstrates that by including gender experts (mainly women) in the early stages of the EU policymaking and keeping them involved in the rest of the policy cycle, it ensures that gender equality concerns 'are not forgotten' throughout the whole process, which in turn leads to better and more effective policies. This argument is in line with a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming. A transformative approach pleads for the inclusion of a broad range of actors, especially those who have knowledge on gender issues such as gender experts but also women's organisations.

However, as a result of political and security developments in the region in the last two years, the conditions under which CSOs can operate changed, and significant differences developed between individual countries regarding the political and legal regulatory frameworks for CSOs and their implementation. In some countries, particularly in Egypt, Algeria and Azerbaijan where a significant number of civil society activists were imprisoned, the space for CSOs to operate shrank considerably. On the contrary, in other countries, governments paid more attention to civil society such as Tunisia (European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015). Moreover, there is no mention of the policy dialogue on gender equality precisely. Indeed, each time that this frame is mentioned, there is no specification regarding the topic of the policy dialogue. Finally, despite the fact that civil society organisations are mentioned at every stage of the policy cycle, this does not indicate that their voices have been taken into account from the beginning of the policy-making process. This implies that the focus of the strategy is still on transforming policies and practices after they have been formulated and developed, and are ready to be implemented rather than actually working on transforming gender relations and views of society on gender issues as such. A transformative approach would include civil society organisations and women's organisations from the early stages of policymaking, and give them a voice in the formulation of the policies.

As mentioned in the *EU GAP II*, the EU institutions would gain benefits by working more closely with civil society organisations and pressure groups since these actors have the capacities to "mobilise public support and solidarity and to combine development and advocacy actions anchored in the economic, social and cultural realities of people's lives" (Ioannides, 2017, p.67). It has been argued that CSOs and women's organisations have the capacity to transform mentalities by embedding ideas in the population's psyche, so that the implementation of the objective is ensured. This capacity to transform mentalities support the idea that women's organisations have a crucial role to play in the implementation

of policies by also lobbying governments and push them to take action to ensure the implementation (Ioannides, 2017).

Overall, the EU development aid toward the New European Neighbourhood appeared to remain non inclusive, as it was already explained in Debusscher's analysis on the ENP from 2002 to 2013 (Debusscher, 2012b). Gender mainstreaming has a rather limited character in the sense that the NENP development aid are 'mainstreamed' but not really transformative in practice. From these findings, it could be interesting to dig further on the question of whether leaving the responsibility of implementation to civil society organisations is the most efficient solution for achieving gender equality. Besides, it is interesting to question the reasons why governments leave this responsibility to other actors, rather than working alongside them for an even better democratisation of the policymaking processes.

5.2.4. The Rationale Behind the Framing of Gender Issues in the New European Neighbourhood Policy

Several reasons can be thought of to explain the differences of framing among the policy stages. First, different understandings of the terms gender mainstreaming and gender equality themselves can explain the variations of frames between phases of the policy process. These various understandings can in turn be explained by different priorities of the actors involved in each stage of the policy-making process. By looking into the references that have been coded into the frame 'gender mainstreaming', it can be noticed that most of the documents mention gender mainstreaming. This means that gender mainstreaming has been at least mentioned once in each step of the policy cycle of the New European Neighbourhood Policy. In most of the documents, gender mainstreaming is introduced as an objective to *"support for the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, beyond gender equality and non-discrimination, will be mainstreamed and when relevant be addressed through bilateral programmes."* (European External Action Service and the European Commission, 2017, *Regional East Multiannual Indicative Programme - 2017-2020*, p.5). Despite the fact that the definition of gender mainstreaming in the NENP is based on broader regulations and documents of the European Union such as the EU's Gender Action Plan, it appears that this concept is not being operationalised throughout the policy cycle. In fact, even at the implementation and evaluation phases, the mentions of gender mainstreaming and gender equality remain vague:

"In general, a gender perspective will be maintained ensuring that the results of the action affects positively on gender equality" (European Commission, 2018a, *programme in Support to the Improvement in Governance and Management*, p.16).

"To help achieve this objective the EU intends to mainstream Gender Equality in all policies, strategies and cooperation actions in Libya and to finance measures which directly support women's empowerment." (European Commission, 2014b, *Bilateral programme Libya, 2014-2017*, p.23).

Moreover, since there is no binding document on gender mainstreaming, the understanding and implementation of the strategy is left to the partner countries, which can have different interpretation of gender mainstreaming. For instance, the 'institutionalisation of the gender perspective' is important for

reaching a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming. However, the Bilateral programme for Morocco is the only document that refers to it:

“The dynamic of institutionalisation of the gender perspective initiated first of all made it possible to establish specific sector strategies, then a global strategy covering all sectors. The EMP should be followed by a strategy that is at least as ambitious in terms of framing actions to promote women's rights and equality between women and men.”¹⁷

(European Union, 2014c, Morocco, p.13).

This framing can be explained by the lack of competence held by the EU in these areas, the value of the policy documents, and the divergence between the actors that are being mentioned in the documents and those that actually have a voice in decision-making. In the New European Neighbourhood Policy, women's organisations and civil society are mentioned in the documents but are not integrated in the policymaking. This argument has been confirmed during the interview with Audrey Ledanois from Women Engage for a Common Future (personal communication, September 1, 2020). She explained that there is a problem of transparency from the EU in the sense that it is complicated to know how was involved in the policymaking of a specific policy.

As a summary of this in-depth analysis of NENP documents, it has been revealed that gender inequality is mainly understood as an unemployment issue. Also, it seems that the issue of unpaid work has been left out of the diagnosis of female employment issues. Unpaid work such as care work represents a considerable burden for women and despite their necessity, it remains invisible in the NENP documents. Moreover, the 'gender equality' and 'gender disaggregated data' frames highlight the 'box-ticking' character of the NENP mainstreaming approach. Although the frames on violence against women and women's rights add to the transformative potential of the NENP gender mainstreaming approach, it does not tip the scale on the transformative side since women are still depicted mainly as victims and as a vulnerable group. Overall, this victimisation of women reflects the fact that women are defined depending on how they are impacted or not by certain legislation, structures or institutions. While the few exceptions mentioned the necessity of women to be included in policy-making for achieving gender equality, the approach adopted by the NENP is far from integrating a fully transformative potential. Since the problems of gender equality seem to be focused on women mainly, the solutions derived from these issues suggest that women have to be the ones to step in and catch up in order to implement solutions, alongside with civil society organisations. In spite of the will of the EU and of the neighbouring countries, no concrete solution is developed in the documents regarding women's role in policymaking process and in fighting gender-based violence. As highlighted in the theoretical orientation, the framing of gender issues can influence the effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming approach and it seems that the framing in the NENP reduces the effectiveness of the EU approach. Furthermore, it appears that gender is still used as a noun in the NENP rather than a verb, which also impacts negatively the effectiveness of the approach.

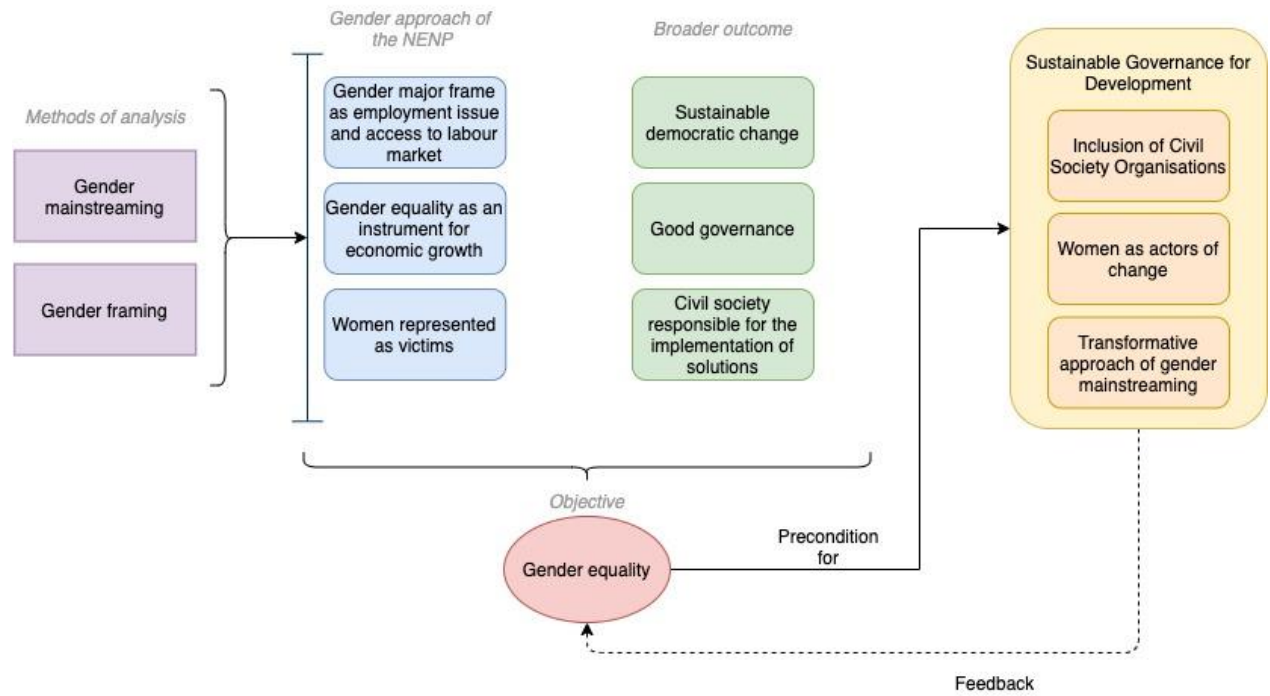
¹⁷ This quote is a personal translation from the French document and does not pretend to be an official translation of the European Neighbourhood Policy or of the European Union.

Moreover, despite mentioning women and civil society in the documents, there is no indication that these actors were including in the policymaking, which also questions the democratic feature of the approach adopted in the NENP. As mentioned by Stratigaki (2005) previously, the strategic meaning of gender mainstreaming was lost and became a more abstract principle. These arguments indicate the limited potential for a transformative gender mainstreaming approach. Finally, the integration of the gender perspective at the different stages of the policy cycle indicates that gender equality and the strategy of gender mainstreaming are understood in various ways depending on the interest and needs of the actors involved, which limits the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming.

As illustrated in figure 7 on the next page, a theory of change model has been developed based on this analysis. By assessing the level of gender mainstreaming and the gender framing of the NENP, it has been derived that the NENP approach on gender equality refers mainly to it as an employment issue and as a tool for economic growth and that in most documents, there is a victimisation of women. Besides, the broader outcomes of gender mainstreaming include sustainable democratic change, good governance and the responsibility of civil society organisations to implement solutions that are developed for improving gender equality. By presenting women as actors of change and necessary for democratic change and mentioning the need to include civil society organisations in the policy dialogue, these broader frames have the most transformative potential. Hereof, there is a mismatch between these broader objectives of the NENP (represented in green in the figure) and how gender is framed (represented in blue in the figure). All in all, while they do not have the same impacts on the effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming approach, all these outcomes intend to contribute to the objective of gender equality, which is presented as a precondition for sustainable governance for development. Sustainable governance for development involves the inclusion of civil society and women as actors of change in policymaking and a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming that enhances the effectiveness of the policies as developed in the theoretical orientation of this research.

Figure 7

Theory of Change Model Derived from the Gender Framing Analysis



6. Conclusion: All hands on Deck for a Transformative Approach

This research analysed gender mainstreaming and gender framing in New European Neighbourhood Policy to assess the gender mainstreaming level, the narrative on gender issues, and whether the EU approach can be considered transformative. Based on the model of Debusscher (2012b), “a policy is considered as gender mainstreamed, and thus potentially transformative if it contains an equal number of references to women and men, if gender is integrated in every stage of the policy cycle, and if gender issues and gender indicators were included in every budgetary sector” (p.339). The qualitative analysis revealed that a diversity of frames that include both women and men in the issues mentioned and the solutions developed in every stage of policymaking also contribute to the transformative potential of a policy.

The first sub-question referred to the quantitative analysis that evaluated the formal aspects of gender mainstreaming throughout the policy cycle. First, it appeared that the vast majority of the documents did not contain an equal number of references to women and men. Indeed, the references to women were much higher than the ones to men and gender. Moreover, the references to *gender*, *women* and *men* were analysed and they revealed that women are still represented mostly as vulnerable victims while men are barely mentioned and when they are, it is usually in numeral terms or in reference to ‘equality between men and women’. Hereof, women are represented as the problem and need to catch up while men are depicted as the ‘silent norm’. This vision of women is reinforced by the fact that women seem to be introduced as the ones responsible for the burden of solving gender issues. Yet, a transformative approach supposes that both men and women are supposed to share responsibility in reducing equalities in all aspects of life.

The budget analysis revealed a strong increase of the gender responsiveness of the budget. Indeed, for the period of 2017-2020, 99% of the budget was considered as ‘very likely to be gender mainstreamed’ or ‘fully gender mainstreamed’ while these categories represented only 25% of the budget for the period of 2014-2017. Despite this amelioration, gender equality issues still have to be further integrated in sectors with important budgets such as the economic development and economic growth sector, the social cohesion sector or the sector regarding the strengthening of institutions and good governance. Also, the narrative of the references in the budget remains mainly focus on women.

Despite the fact that the NENP is genuinely gender mainstreamed at all stages of the policymaking, the mainstreaming is higher at the early stages. Yet, it was expected that gender would be further operationalised in the implementation stage with focus on the projects’ objectives and in the evaluation stage. However, the framing of gender issues remain relatively vague in these stages too. As highlighted in the *EU GAP II*, criticisms can be developed on the disparities in the European Union between its strategic level (in which gender equality is being conceptualised) and its operational level (in which gender dimensions are incorporated into its programming). Indeed, although the EU’s highest institutional guidelines are very explicit that ‘equality between women and men’ is a central principle that must be integrated into all aspects of policies and projects, the EU’s external services in practice have a tendency to make gender issues marginalised and/or implement the strategy of gender mainstreaming in an “instrumental and limited manner” (Debusscher, 2014; Ioannides, 2017, p.59). This conceptualisation of

gender equality and of women as both problem and solutions holders are common to the internal EU policy on gender equality. In pursuing such a policy approach to development, the EU seems to undertake multiple and regularly competing objectives, in which gender equality appears to be established within an economic perspective that is principally targeted at economic growth. In this sense, gender mainstreaming policy remains 'purely formal' in practice, with only instrumental gender issues such as basic education and maternal health, while policy areas that are considered as gender-neutral such as agriculture and transport are neglected (Debusscher, 2014; Ioannides, 2017, p.60). This research illustrates that the EU still works under an expert-bureaucratic mode of implementation rather than a participatory approach. It also supports the argument that the EU institutions do a better job in terms of policy formulation than in establishing procedures, structures and tools for translating policy into practice at the final stages of policymaking. These two arguments indicate that the EU tends towards an integrationist approach that involves taking action once policies have already been formulated or implemented rather than designing policies that already contain gender issues within them.

The framing of gender issues in the NENP was questioned in the second sub-question. The frame analysis revealed that the most important frame on gender issues is the one of women's employment and their integration in the labour market. Gender equality issues in this frame are primarily framed instrumentally, as a way to achieve economic goals or reduce poverty. Furthermore, the second and third frames, respectively 'gender equality' and 'gender disaggregated data', indicate that the integration of the gender perspective in the New European Neighbourhood Policy documents seems to remain a 'box-ticking exercise'. Despite the fact that this type of approach is more likely to be accepted by institutional actors, it does not lead to a transformative approach to achieve gender equality. Nevertheless, the high number of frames implies that the understanding of the concept of gender is getting broader and more inclusive. Yet, the major frame on women's employment and their access to the labour market does not match the overall frame on gender equality which is linked to sustainable democratic change and good governance. In fact, not only are the objectives of sustainable democratic change and good governance not enough linked to gender equality in the main frames of the NENP, the representation of women is also different. Indeed, in the overall frames related to democracy, women are seen as actors of change for democratic changes and good governance. However, when it comes to frames directly related to gender equality issues, women are given the burden to implement the necessary changes while still being depicted as victims or as a vulnerable group rather than actors of change. Moreover, the connection between climate change and women deserve greater attention in the documents since women are especially impacted by climate change. In this regard, despite the broad number of gender frames in the NENP, some connections and frames are still lagging behind.

Finally, the third sub-question interrogated the rationale behind the gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the European Union towards its neighbourhood. It has been concluded that the New European Neighbourhood development aid is mainstreamed but not very transformative in nature. This research comforts previous research which stated that the approach of the EU also tends to be integrationist, even within its own borders. As an illustration, concepts such as masculinity and femininity or the gendered division of care labour are not challenged in the documents. Also, gender is still used as a noun rather than a verb, which limits the effectiveness of the NENP gender mainstreaming approach.

Using the gender as a verb - 'gendering' – would reflect that the integration of the gender dimension throughout the policy cycle is a process itself. Furthermore, civil society organisations are mentioned in the implementation of solutions but there is no mention of their participation in the policymaking processes otherwise. Their voice is not included in the policymaking, so are not women's voices. This research follows the argument developed by Petra Debusscher (2012b) that defends the necessity of including civil society since their approach is more transformative than the EU's. Also, it seems to indicate that gender mainstreaming is rather seen as a tool for contributing to economic growth instead of social justice and democracy. This can be explained by the fact that the policymaking process is complicated and consists of many stages and that gender mainstreaming policies have to pass through multiple 'needles eyes' (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000, p.437): the supranational level (the European Commission), the intergovernmental level (the Council) and the Member State level in which provisions have to be implemented in accordance with the gender understanding of each Member State. Besides, gender mainstreaming is referred to in non-binding documents and guidelines, the choice is left to Member States on whether they pursue the integration of the gender perspective in practice as well (Debusscher and Hulse, 2014). The limited transformative potential has a negative impact on the effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the EU towards its neighbours, which can provide an explanation for the lack of operationalisation of the gender issues in the implementation and evaluation stages of the policy cycle. Nevertheless, by defining gender mainstreaming strategy as a long-term strategy in order to challenge and integrate the gender perspective within the dominant frames of its development policy, the EU seems to pursue its will of endorsing a transformative gender mainstreaming approach.

As an overall conclusion, the implementation of a fully transformative strategy of gender mainstreaming remains difficult. Transformation requires a change in norms, practices and structures that are deeply rooted in discrimination, which takes time. The EU institutions provide efforts to integrate gender issues in policymaking. Hereof, the latest documents illustrate that the New European Neighbourhood Policy is working towards a transformative approach by including more transformative language in its documents and diversified solutions that contain intersectionality. As a comparison with previous studies, the NENP approach appears to have a higher transformative potential. It seems that the EU is working on gender equality ahead of the Gender Action Plan III which is scheduled for the end of this year. Nevertheless, the EU is still far from achieving its goal of including the gender perspective within all aspects of policy-making (MacRae, 2010). There are still many steps to climb to see the voices of civil society organisations and women's organisations integrated at the early stages of EU policymaking. This analysis on the EU gender mainstreaming approach towards the neighbouring countries reflects the reality of the limited role of civil society organisations and women's organisations in EU policymaking (A. Ledanois, personal communication, September 1, 2020). As highlighted throughout the whole analysis, both women and men have to share the responsibility in eliminating societal inequalities. All hands should be on deck for the simple reason that nurturing gender equality is not a women's matter only, but it concerns everybody.

7. Discussion

7.1. On the European Gender Mainstreaming approach Towards its Neighbouring Countries

Through its analysis, this research contributes to different fields of academic research. First, the empirical results of this analysis enable us to support the conclusions of previous studies such as the one of Debusscher (2012b) and of David and Guerrina (2013) regarding the transformative aspect of the EU gender approach. In fact, it appeared clearly that the major frames of the European Neighbourhood Policy, especially the main frame on employment and labour market, mismatch the broader references to gender equality that refer to democratic change and good governance. However, the narrative of the NENP on gender issues matches with the participation of the civil society organisations in the implementation phase, as developed in the results section. Second, this analysis has theoretical contributions. As a start, it helps to extend the theoretical understanding of gender mainstreaming. As explained in the theoretical background of this research, gender mainstreaming is a highly complicated concept and which brought confusion in the academic research world. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative analyses revealed that gender mainstreaming is still applied in different ways depending on the level of policy-making. Moreover, when looking at the broader scope of gender framing, one realises that gender equality as a goal is highly linked to higher goals such as sustainable democracy and good governance, which in turn leads to sustainable development. Yet, gender equality should be seen as a social goal in itself, and achieving it is crucial for the future. Gender equality is not only a women rights, it is a human rights and it requires the cooperation of everybody to make it happen. This argument refers to the transformative approach of gender mainstreaming which aims at involving a broad range of actors, and more particularly those who have knowledge on gender issues. Finally, as for the methodological contributions, this research revealed that the assessment of gender mainstreaming throughout the whole policy cycle is relevant and necessary to comprehend where the gender perspective is not integrated and thus where efforts and improvements should be made. Moreover, it is relevant since a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming implies that gender must be integrated at each stage of the policymaking processes. Despite the fact that the methodology of Debusscher (2012a; 2012b) is well elaborated, it did not include to lead the assessment at the different stages of the policy cycle. This represents the main methodological contribution of this research.

Policy recommendations can be made for further policy-making and research on the topic. As it seems, the New European Neighbourhood Policy lacks coherence between the different stages of the policymaking, as it is also missing a common understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming and how to implement this strategy. In this regard, it would be interesting to gather representatives of the EU and of the neighbouring countries to reach an agreement on gender equality as a goal in itself and on the empirical implementation at every level. Moreover, it is crucial to develop targeted actions and clear objectives at every level to achieve gender equality. Also, there are no monitoring mechanisms so far, which are necessary to assess progress but also to hold the European Union accountable for the commitments that were made. Besides, it seems important to reaffirm the importance of policy dialogue

with civil society organisations and women's organisations and other relevant stakeholders such as local governments in every step of policymaking to guarantee that the forthcoming Gender Action Plan III will be as transformative as possible. These actors need to be recognised as important actors at all levels, with an emphasis on the local level in partner countries where they should be empowered. However, this appears to be left to the goodwill of the EU since the budget of civil society organisations and women's organisations depend greatly from the EU funds. In addition, although the EU is mentioning the need to address the issue of women's unpaid care work and domestic work, the EU has not acknowledged that this represents a crucial difficulty for women to access decent work and political participation in the NENP partner countries. Also, the connection between gender equality and climate change deserve greater emphasis in the documents, since it has wide impacts on women and girls around the world, whether for their rights or their living conditions. Finally, the connection between the adoption of a transformative approach of gender mainstreaming and the effectiveness of the strategy merits more attention since it might help the EU institutions of the necessity of a transformative approach for achieving gender equality.

Based on both previous studies (such as Verloo, 2005a; 2005c) and this research project, barriers and opportunities of the strategy of gender mainstreaming can be developed. First, the diversity in the understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming needs clarification since it has been proven that it leads to different implementation strategies. In this sense, if implementation strategies are not harmonised, this can have negative implications for policy coherence for development. Bretherton (2001) explains that gender mainstreaming needs to be institutionalised to be successfully implemented. According to him, gender mainstreaming 'swims against the tide' of mainstream ideas and it appears to be the main obstacle to its accomplishment. By developing shared understandings and beliefs, it could overcome the institutional resistance to change and be seen as an institutionalised norm, which would make it easier for actors to embrace it. This argument leads to the second one on the failure of institutional actors to include actors from women's movements in the development of the strategy. Despite mentioning the need for efforts in previous research (Kunz and Maisenbacher, 2013; David and Guerrina, 2013; Debusscher, 2012a; 2012b; Verloo, 2005c), a lot still need to be made towards a better participation of citizens and women's movements in order not to lose important expertise and implementation opportunities. More consultative and participatory techniques and tools should be used such as working or steering groups and think tanks, participation of both sexes in decision-making, and more databases. Lastly, the complicated and multi-layered EU policy-making represents another obstacle to overcome for the strategy of gender mainstreaming.

7.2. Limitations

This research acknowledges some limitations. As explained by Petra Debusscher (2016), research on the EU external policy has only started to get attention in the last decade. Yet, analysis of the gender perspective in EU external policy remains based on EU researchers with Eurocentric perspectives and this provides only one side of the story. It would have been beneficial to include points of views of policy makers from the NENP partner countries. Moreover, it would also have been interesting to look into civil society and women's organisations' documents to understand their gender approach and compare it with

the EU gender mainstreaming approach. Also, including the national strategy papers of the NENP partner countries could add another perspective on the research and on gender mainstreaming in the NENP. This analysis of policy documents is limited in the way that it does not disclose the informal decision-making that precedes the elaboration of policies or the actual implementation of the NENP, then the actual impacts of the policies could not be assessed. One of the reasons for this limitation was the difficulty to access documents at the implementation stage regarding the projects of the New European Neighbourhood Policy. In addition, with the exception of the bilateral programmes, budget documents appeared to also be difficult to access.

Furthermore, in the proposal phase of this research, it was planned to integrate interviews in the discussion section in order to get insights from civil society organisations, women's organisations and gender experts on the topic. However, the turnout was rather negative, with only one positive answer. This does not affect the results of this research but it could have integrated an interesting bonus to gather several points of view on the situation. In this sense, a more comprehensive perspective on the NENP gender approach which take into account the contextual realities of the neighbouring countries could have been developed. This in-depth knowledge and the economic, social and political contexts are necessary to develop transformative policies (Debusscher, 2016). This reproach also applies to the EU institutions which seem to not integrate the contextual realities of their policies before developing them. In fact, acknowledging and integrating contextual realities within the policies would help to broaden the frames on gender issues and thus the understanding of the complex issue of gender equality. Frame analysis in general has the advantage to generate data which appears to be suitable for comparative analyses. Yet, it was argued that this method remains too simplistic for complex societal problems such as gender equality since it might be complicated to develop categories that enable comparison (Verloo, 2005).

This research opens the path for future research to include the different stages of policymaking in the methodology for gender mainstreaming assessment. Further research could delve into the effectiveness of leaving the implementation of the New European Neighbourhood Policy to civil society organisations to understand whether this is the most effective way to implement the policy and mainstream the gender perspective at every level, and more particularly into practice. Future research could analyse how feminist theory and gender equality open up room for alternative means of communicating on current patterns of unity between people and women. In addition, including women's voices could also be taken from new social media, such as blogs and films from female activists in Maghreb so that influencer voices can be listened to and mainstreamed in policymaking. Another path for further research could also look into the discrimination that lesbian/gay/bisexual/ transgender/queer/non-binary (LGBTQ+) groups still suffer from in the most recent documents of the New European Neighbourhood Policy. It is crucial to endorse an intersectional approach by taking into account the diversity that covers the term 'gender' such as women with an handicap or suffering from racism who might be marginalised (A. Ledanois, personal communication, September 1, 2020). In this sense, one could hope that future policy-making realises the importance of inclusion and representation of everybody in policy documents so that we evolve towards a world in which gender does not have negative impacts on one's ambitions, dreams, and career opportunities.



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Appendixes

Appendix 1: List of documents coded for the analysis

Agenda-setting stage

CONCORD Europe. (2018). *Thematic programmes in the future EU external instrument*. Brussels: CONCORD Europe, European NGO confederation for relief and development. Retrieved from https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CONCORD_MFF_ThematicProgrammes_PositionPaper_September-2018.pdf

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European External Action Service and European Commission. (2014). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020. Programming document for EU support to ENI Cross-Border Cooperation (2014-2020)*. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/financing-the-enp/cbc_2014-2020_programming_document_en.pdf

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Nb: the bilateral programme for Ukraine was not accessible.

Algeria

European Commission. (2014). *Programmation de l'Instrument Européen de Voisinage (IEV) Cadre Unique d'Appui pour l'appui de l'UE à l'Algérie*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/algeria_2014_2017_programming_document_fr.pdf

Armenia

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Azerbaijan

European Commission. (2014). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Azerbaijan (2014-2017)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/azerbaijan_2014_2017_programming_document_en.pdf

Belarus

European Commission. (2014). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Belarus (2014-2017)*. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/financing-the-enp/belarus_2014_2017_programming_document_en.pdf

Egypt

European Commission. (2014). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Egypt (2014-2016)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/egypt_ssf_2014-2016_en.pdf

Georgia

European Commission. (2014). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Georgia (2014-2017)*. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/financing-the-enp/georgia_2014_2017_programming_document_en.pdf

Jordan

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Lebanon

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Libya

European Commission. (2014). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2016 - Strategy Paper and Multiannual Indicative Programme Libya (2014-2016)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/libya_spmip_2014-2016_en.pdf

Moldova

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Morocco

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Palestine

European Commission. (2014). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Palestine (2014-2016)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/palestine_ssf_2014-2016_en.pdf

Tunisia

European Commission. (2014). *Programmation de l'Instrument Européen de Voisinage (IEV) (2014-2017) Cadre Unique d'Appui pour l'appui de l'UE à la Tunisie (2014-2016)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/tunisia_ssf_2014-2016_en.pdf

Bilateral programmes for the period 2017-2020

Nb: the bilateral programmes for Belarus, Libya, and Morocco were not accessible.

Algeria

European Commission. (2018). *Programmation de l'Instrument Européen de Voisinage (IEV) Cadre Unique d'Appui pour l'appui UE-Algérie (2018-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/algeria_c_2018_2458_annex_fr.pdf

Armenia

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Armenia (2017-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/armenia_c_2017_7838_annex_en.pdf

Azerbaijan

European Commission. (2018). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Azerbaijan (2018-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/azerbaijan_c_2018_8075_annex_en.pdf

Egypt

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Egypt (2017-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/egypt_c_2017_7175_annex_en.pdf

Georgia

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Georgia (2018-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/georgia_c_2017_8160_annex_en.pdf

Jordan

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Jordan (2017-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/jordan_c_2017_7350_annex_en.pdf

Lebanon

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Lebanon (2017-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/lebanon_c_2017_7179_annex_en.pdf

Moldova

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to the Republic of Moldova (2018-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/moldova_c_2017_6091_annex_en.pdf

Palestine

European Commission. (2017). *European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017-2020. Towards a democratic and accountable Palestinian State*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/palestine_c_2017_7838_annex_en.pdf

Tunisia

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Tunisia (2017-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/tunisia_c_2017_5637_annex_fr.pdf

Ukraine

European Commission. (2017). *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Ukraine (2018-2020)*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/ukraine_c_2017_8264_annex_en.pdf

Adoption stage

ENP Action plans

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Armenia

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Armenia Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/armenia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Azerbaijan

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Azerbaijan Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/azerbaijan_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Egypt

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Egypt Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/egypt_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Georgia

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Georgia Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/georgia_enp_ap_final_en_0.pdf

Israel

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Israel Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/israel_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Jordan

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Jordan Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2013_jordan_action_plan_en.pdf

Lebanon

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Lebanon Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/lebanon_enp_ap_final_en_0.pdf

Moldova

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Moldova Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/moldova_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Morocco

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Morocco Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/morocco_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Palestine

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU- Palestinian Authority Action Plan. Political Chapeau*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/pa_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Tunisia

European Union: European External Action Service (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU / Tunisia Action Plan*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/tunisia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

Ukraine

European Union: European External Action Service (2013). *European Neighbourhood Policy. EU-Ukraine Association Agenda to prepare and facilitate the implementation of the Association Agreement*. Luxembourg, 24 June 2013. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_ukr_ass_agenda_24jun2013.pdf

Implementation stage

European Commission. (2018). *Implementing decision on the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) and the programme in Support to the Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA), part of the European Neighbourhood Wide Action Programme for 2018*, 5 December 2018, C(2018) 8223 Final.

European Commission. (2015). *Commission Implementing decision on the Individual Measure 2015 in favour of the European Neighbourhood region for the Support to the European Endowment for Democracy for the period 2015 - 2018, to be financed from the general budget of the European Union*, 30 June 2015, C(2015) 4603 Final.

European Commission. (2019). *Implementing decision on the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP), part of the European Neighbourhood Wide Action Programme 2019*, 30 July 2019, C(2019) 5866 final.

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European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. (2015). *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean Partners Report*, 25 March 2015, SWD(2015) 75 final.

European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. (2015). *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Eastern Partnership Implementation Report*, 25.3.2015 SWD(2015) 76 final.

Projects documents

Assaf, G. (2011). *Which identifies and describes possible approaches and best practices to improve access to justice and legal aid*. Euromed Justice III Project. ENPI - Euromed Justice III 2011/-269-912. Barcelona: European Union, EIPA.

Hirsch, J. (n.d.). *Good Practices Concerning the Resolution of Cross-border Family Conflicts With a Special Focus on Cross-border Disputes Concerning Parental Responsibility*. EUROMED JUSTICE III. Component II. Resolution of cross-border family conflicts.

European Commission, DG NEAR United Nations Development Programme, Energy and Environment Group. (2015). *Clima East: Supporting Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Neighbourhood East and Russia (Clima East Pilots Project)*. ENPI/2012/303-093 Annual Project Report for 2014.

European Union. (2014). *Plan stratégique de développement de la ville de Sousse en Tunisie*. Mediterranean Network for the promotion of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies (UDS) and three new UDS. Retrieved from http://www.enpicbmed.eu/sites/default/files/plan_strategique_de_developpement_de_la_ville_de_sousse.pdf

European Union. (n.d.). Urban Sustainable Development Strategies in the Mediterranean USUDS Project - Mediterranean Network for the promotion of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies (UDS) and three new UDS. Retrieved from http://www.enpicbmed.eu/sites/default/files/final_report_usuds.pdf

European Union, ENPI CBCMED (2015). *PR.I.ME - Promoting Intergenerational learning in MEditerranean countries. A Guide for new business entrepreneurs and intergenerational transfer*. II-B/4.2/0219 – ENPI CBC Med PROGRAMME. December 2015. Retrieved from http://www.enpicbmed.eu/sites/default/files/prime_guide_for_new_entrepreneurs_and_intergenerational_transfer.pdf

European Union, SIDIG-MED (2015). *Social and Intercultural Dialogue through Governance for Local development: Mediterranean Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture*. UPA Pilot Project Guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.enpicbmed.eu/sites/default/files/guidelines_for_upa_pilot_projects.pdf

Marzo A., Herreros R. & Zreik C. (Eds.). (2015). *Guide of Good Restoration Practices for Mediterranean Habitats*. Ecoplantmed, ENPI, CBC-MED.



Evaluation stage: Country Progress Reports

Note: Country Progress Reports were not available for Algeria, Belarus, Libya, and Syria. For Algeria, there is no progress report because there is no ENP Action plan in force.

Armenia

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Armenia, SWD(2015) 63 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/armenia-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Azerbaijan

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Azerbaijan, SWD(2015) 64 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/azerbaijan-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Egypt

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Egypt, SWD(2015) 65 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/egypt-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Georgia

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Georgia, SWD(2015) 66 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/georgia-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Israel

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Israel, SWD(2015) 72 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/israel-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Jordan

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Jordan, SWD(2015) 67 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/jordan-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Lebanon

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Lebanon, SWD(2015) 68 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/lebanon-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

The Republic of Moldova

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report The Republic of Moldova, SWD(2015) 69 Final*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/repulic-of-moldova-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Morocco

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Morocco*, SWD(2015) 70 Final. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/maroc-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Palestine

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Palestine*, SWD(2015) 71 Final. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/palestine-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Tunisia

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Tunisia*, SWD(2015) 73 Final. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from https://library.euneighbours.eu/sites/default/files/tunisie-enp-report-2015_en.pdf

Ukraine

European Commission. (2015). *ENP Progress Report Ukraine*, SWD(2015) 74 Final. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/2015/ukraine-enp-report-2015_en.pdf



Appendix 2: Description of the frames (codes in NVivo)

Name of the node (frame)	Description of the frame
<i>Civil society organisations</i>	Dialogue with CSOs Women's organisations
<i>Discrimination</i>	Includes the references regarding gender-based discrimination
<i>Education</i>	Includes the references concerning the links between gender and education
<i>Employment – labour market</i>	Includes the references that are linked to the labour market or the employment of women. It also includes the sub-node 'Entrepreneurship' which relates to female entrepreneurship
<i>Equal rights</i>	Includes the references regarding equal rights for men and women
<i>EU Gender Action Plan</i>	Includes the references concerning the EU Gender Action Plan
<i>Gender (pay) gap</i>	Includes the references to the principle of equal pay and to the gender pay gap
<i>Gender disaggregated data</i>	Includes the references that only mention gender, women or men in numerical terms, mainly the indicators of development
<i>Gender equality</i>	Includes the references that specifically mention 'Equality of men and women' and 'Equality between men and women' in a relatively vague way
<i>Gender equity</i>	Includes the references to the term 'gender equity' specifically
<i>Gender issues</i>	Includes the references concerning 'Freedom of expression', 'Gender-based sex selection', 'Migrants' which relate to the linkages between women and migration, and 'Military conflicts' which relate to the linkages between women and military conflicts
<i>Gender responsiveness budget</i>	Includes the references regarding the ambitions of including gender responsive budgeting in the programmes
<i>Gender sensitive policies</i>	Includes the references related to the objectives of developing gender sensitive policies
<i>Gender-based violence</i>	Includes all the references that relate to the different types of violence against women, such as 'Domestic violence', 'Sexual violence' and 'Violence against women' specifically
<i>Governance</i>	Includes the references that relate to the objective of good governance or improvements in governance
<i>Human trafficking</i>	Includes the references linked to human trafficking from which women and children are the most impacted
<i>Implementation of gender equality</i>	Includes the references that concerns the implementation of gender equality into national legislation or activities
<i>Institutions</i>	Includes the references that relate to the roles of the different institutions regarding gender mainstreaming and the awareness of gender issues in development
<i>Integration of the gender perspective in policy-making</i>	Includes the references that concern the integration of the gender dimension in policies and the implementation of measures to promote gender equality
<i>Justice</i>	Includes the references regarding the objective of better access to justice for both women and men at the national and local levels
<i>Legislation</i>	Includes the references that relate to the legal framework to prevent and eliminate all types of discrimination and violence against women, to protect the principle of equality, or to enforce women's rights and women's participation in politics for instance
<i>Mainstreaming</i>	Includes the references that mention the objective of mainstreaming gender issues and gender equality in policies, strategies and activities
<i>Monitoring</i>	Includes the references that concern the monitoring of cross-cutting issues, including gender equality
<i>Parity</i>	Includes the references that mention the concept of parity
<i>Policy dialogue</i>	Includes the references regarding the objective of reinforcing and developing the policy and political dialogue to promote cross-cutting issues such as environmental protection, democracy and gender equality
<i>Poverty</i>	Includes the references that mention the issue of poverty for women (which is often linked to the issue of social exclusion)
<i>Promotion of gender equality</i>	Includes the references that refer to 'Training and awareness' and other tools for promoting gender equality in legislation and in all areas of life
<i>Public health</i>	Includes the references that concern public health and women's health
<i>Social exclusion</i>	Includes the references that mention the issue of social exclusion for women



<i>Sport</i>	Includes the reference that state the importance of openness and fairness and the integrity of sportsmen and sportswomen
<i>Stereotypes</i>	Includes the references that mention gender-related stereotyping
<i>Sustainable democracy</i>	Includes the references that refer to the importance of gender equality for sustainable democratic change and the role of civil society in democratic change
<i>Threats and hate speech</i>	Includes the references that mention threats and hate speech towards women
<i>Transgender</i>	Includes the references linked to transgender people and transgenders' rights
<i>Vulnerability</i>	Includes the references that state the vulnerability of women in different areas of life
<i>Women as actors of change</i>	Includes the references that mention women as actors of change, as necessary actors for development
<i>Women's needs</i>	Includes the references that aim at integrating women's needs in the future
<i>Women's autonomy</i>	Includes the references that relate to the autonomy of women
<i>Women's empowerment</i>	Includes the references linked to the objective of women's empowerment
<i>Women's participation in decision-making</i>	Includes the references that mention the need for higher female participation in decision-making
<i>Women's political participation</i>	Includes the references that mention the need for higher female participation in politics
<i>Women's rights</i>	Includes the references that include women's rights in their objectives or that state the importance of enhancing women's rights for sustainable development
<i>Women's role in society</i>	Includes the references that state the diversity of roles that women hold in society and in different areas of life

Appendix 3: Gender Inclusiveness of the European Neighbourhood

Table: Gender Inclusiveness of the European Neighbourhood Documents at the Different Stages of the Policy Cycle (Detailed with the Type of Documents Analysed)

Type of documents	Gender/sex		Women		Men	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Agenda-setting						
EU documents	134	26%	135	18%	25	26%
Formulation						
EU documents on the NENP	12	2%	8	1%	0	0%
EN Instrument documents	246	48%	226	30%	14	14%
<i>Bilateral programmes</i>						
2014-2017	38	7%	82	11%	5	5%
2017-2020	147	29%	109	14%	4	4%
Total	185	36%	191	25%	9	9%
<i>Cross-border programmes</i>						
1	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<i>Regional programmes</i>						
East 2014-2017	1	0%	2	0%	0	0%
East 2017-2020	26	5%	14	2%	0	0%
South 2014-2017	1	0%	7	1%	0	0%
South 2017-2020	6	1%	11	1%	5	5%
Total	34	7%	34	4%	0	0%
<i>EN-wide programmes</i>						
26	26	5%	1	0%	5	5%
Total formulation	258	51%	234	31%	14	14%
Adoption						
Action plans	27	5%	107	14%	26	27%
Implementation						
EU implementation for the NENP	18	4%	18	2%	1	1%
NENP projects	15	3%	106	14%	4	4%
Total implementation	33	6%	124	16%	5	5%
Evaluation						
Country progress reports	57	11%	164	21%	28	29%
TOTAL	509	100%	764	100%	98	100%