Gender mainstreaming in the European Union development policy 2011 -2015: the Tunisian case

La transversalización de género en la política de desarrollo de la Unión Europea 2011- 2015: el caso de Túnez

Sonia Sanz Ventin [1, @]

[1]Universidad Complutense de Madrid
@ Autor/a de correspondencia: sosanz01@ucm.es/soniaventin@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines gender mainstreaming in the European Union development policy to Tunisia from 2011 to 2015. The main objective of this paper is to analyse the way in which Gender Mainstreaming is included in the European Union Development policy in a strategic country such as Tunisia. In doing this, I will examine to which extent the Gender Mainstreaming integration is genuinely achieving its aim of transforming unequal gender relations. The first section of the paper develops the theoretical frame. The second section explains the research methodology. The third section explains the research results showing how the European Union has overlooked a unique opportunity that would has given the chance to integrate Gender Mainstreaming in the post-revolution European Union development policy, into the national public policies and lastly, in establishing a more inclusive dialogue with an embryonic civil society and mature feminist movement.

The paper concludes with the hope that this study will serve to guide and promote, in first place, a real integration of a transformative gender mainstreaming in the EU development policy and in second place, to boost the EU role as promoter of possible national reforms which will enable the implementation of transformative gender mainstreaming in national policies breaking once for all with the artificial neutrality of public policies.

Keywords: Gender mainstreaming, development policy, European Union, Tunisia.

Resumen

Este artículo examina la incorporación del Gender Mainstreaming en la política de desarrollo de la Unión Europea para Túnez desde el 2011 hasta el 2015. El objetivo principal de este artículo es analizar si el Gender Mainstreaming se incluye en la política de desarrollo de la Unión Europea para Túnez examinando hasta qué punto está logrando genuinamente su objetivo final de transformar las relaciones de género desiguales. En la primera sección del artículo se desarrolla el marco teórico. La segunda sección explica la metodología de la investigación. En la tercera sección se explican los resultados de las investigaciones los cuales muestran como la Unión Europea ha perdido una oportunidad única de integrar Gender Mainstraeaming en la política de desarrollo de la Unión Europea y en la nueva política nacional postrevolucionaria, así como de establecer una dialogo inclusivo con el movimiento feminista y con una sociedad civil emergente y embrionaria. Este artículo concluye con la esperanza de que este estudio pueda servir para dos aspectos. En primer lugar, para guiar y promover una integración real de la estrategia de Gender Mainstreaming en la política de Desarrollo de la UE. En segundo lugar, para promover el rol de la Unión Europa como promotor de una estrategia transformadora del Gender Mainstreaming en las políticas nacionales y así romper con la falta neutralidad de las políticas públicas.

Palabras clave: Transversalización del género, política de cooperación al desarrollo, Unión Europea, Túnez.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in the European Union

The European Union (EU) is recognized internationally for its support in the fight against gender inequality. The EU Treaty and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, set the elimination of inequalities and promotion of equality between men and women (Article 8) as well as the combat against discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, religion, age, etc. (Article 10) (EC, 2012) amongst their key objectives. Since 1995, the European Commission (EC) has committed to the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming (GM) strategy in its development policy. In the same year, the European Council declared GM in development cooperation a crucial aspect for the community and for its member states. This commitment was reflected in the Communication from the Commission to the European Council and the European Parliament "Action Programme for GM in Community cooperation to development" (European Council, 1998), establishing gender as a crosscutting theme in six areas: macroeconomic and poverty reduction, food security, transport, institutional strengthening (good governance and rule of law), trade and regional development and integration.

In 2001, the European Commission adopted the dual or "twin-tracked" approach, as they realized the need to continue implementing specific measures for women parallel to GM. This position was reflected in the official document "Programme of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Cooperation" (EC, 2001) and confirmed in 2004 through the official document " Promoting Gender Equality in Development Co-operation" (European Parliament and Council, 2004).

EC Communication to the European Parliament and the European Council on 8 March 2007, "Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation" (EC, 2007), replaces the dual approach and sets out a trifold approach, involving actions in the following three aspects: GM, specific actions and policy dialogue with partner countries (Debusscher, 2013). This three-legged approach was confirmed in the "Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women empowerment in Development Cooperation for the period 2010-2015" (EC, 2010b). This document specifies that, in the context of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), the EU supports the efforts of partner countries to promote gender equality. ENP Action Plans set the priority agenda which has been decided jointly by both the partner country and the EU. This action plan contains the commitments and the engagement of a close dialogue between both parties on the identified priorities (EC, 2010).

Finally, the EC and the member countries of the EU have signed international agreements and statements related to the promotion of gender equality and promotion of women's rights, such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979), the Action Programme of Cairo (1994), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) (1995) and the Declaration of the Millennium Development Goals (2000).

Gender Mainstreaming as a tool to achieve gender equality

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) is defined as "the (re) organization, 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: 15).

GM is more than a concept, it is a process and a change that has different approaches, limitations, potential and both positive and negative effects. Due to the complexity of the gender issues and that GM has been designed as a tool to achieve greater equality between men and women, several international and national institutions and academia have attempted to define the whole spirit and the nature of the issues in one concept. Thus, even though it has been observed that there are a variety of concepts for GM that do not always have the same implications, they share the main idea of the importance of the existence of a gender perspective in all areas and public policies governing our societies.

While there is an international consensus on GM, its implementation shows challenges, difficulties and obstacles to overcome to incorporate a gender perspective as a crosscutting issue and transformative tool of unequal gender roles (Verloo, 2005; Rees, 1998). The lack of competences and awareness, the tendency to technocracy as several studies have shown (Squires, 2005; Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007; Walby, 2005), makes GM implementation in third partner countries a complicated task for the European Commission, the External Service and its delegations (independent entities with a separate legal status).

Integrationist vs Transformative approach of the Gender Mainstreaming

Various academic studies on the issue, from a conceptual and operational point of view, as well as the overall strategy of GM and the definition of the Council of Europe, indicate that GM has or may involve several different approaches, potentials and limitations. It may be noted that the concept of GM presented by the Council of Europe has been perceived as an integrationist strategy in its impact, meaning the introduction of gender into existing policies, but also as a potentially transformative strategy of unequal gender roles.

Firstly, the integrationist approach involves the introduction of a gender perspective in all policies, whether public transport, social or environmental, but this approach is not a transformative one, regarding its impact on the unequal gender roles. There is not a breakdown of the social model considered as patriarchal, which is the one causing gender inequality and the subordinated position of women. The integrationist approach is understood as the institutionalization of the gender perspective, but lacks impact analysis of the policies. Therefore, it produces only an introduction of the gender perspective in the public policies without changing them in their essence and especially in their impact.

Secondly, the transformative approach of the unequal gender roles is one that could produce a meaningful

change, a revolution in the struggle towards gender equality. Following the theory of Verloo (2005), in order to be transformative, GM must contain two aspects, one of "displacement / transformation" and one of "empowerment". The displacement component explained in the theory of Judith Squires (2005), is based on the destruction of the opposition and debate between same and different, and the destruction of the gender dichotomy, thus valuing diversity. The displacement component implies that the goal cannot be fixed, as the strategy cannot be accurate. This means that for GM to be a transformative strategy of the gender roles, it must challenge the goal itself, as it may be conditioned by a patriarchal vision. Thus, the policy should not have a predetermined and fixed target, but on the contrary, the aim should be continually analysed to see whether it is still conditioned by patriarchal values.

Empowerment is also an essential aspect that should complete this strategy, as it is based on the opening of public spaces for feminist debates on gender equality and strengthening the capacities of women to acquire their own voice and their own autonomy to direct their life projects.

In this line of study and in the framework of our investigation, it is interesting to mention the theory of Jahan (1995), who points out that the strategy of GM has been focused on institutionalizing the gender perspective, which in some cases has forgotten the agenda of women´s needs. Thus, she considers, such as Verloo, that GM should focus on the "agenda-setting" approach more than the "integrationist" approach. For Jahan, the focus on "agenda-setting" would be the one that meets the real needs of women and implies an impact assessment to correct and refine the policies, which would thereafter spark a transformative effect on the unequal gender roles. Moreover, Jahan completes the Verloo theory mentioning that the "agenda-setting" approach, in their terminology of "transformative" approach, needs leadership represented by women and women Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) as well as a structural change in policy making to be more inclusive.

How to achieve a GM strategy that is transformative of unequal gender roles?

Lombardo and Meier (2006) indicate that as radical as the GM agenda is, it still has the potential to challenge gender roles if used as a transforming tool of gender inequality. From a feminist perspective, GM should challenge traditional gender roles that keep women subordinated, to achieve real equality and have a transformative effect of unequal gender roles. These authors identified five changes that will allow to transform the gender concept, as "open signifier", into a concept that reflects the concerns and challenges of the feminist agenda. The first change should occur in public policy decisions. GM must involve a shift to a broader concept of gender equality, which explicitly challenges the patriarchy in its many and interconnected facets and in the different areas in which it permeates into (work, family, politics, sexuality, cultural and gender violence). It also requires a focus on gender and not only on women, requiring a change in behavior and in the lives of the men. The second change should be mainstreaming gender (as a crosscutting issue) in the political agenda (Jahan, 1995), which would imply rethinking, from a

feminist perspective, the objectives and meanings of policies keeping gender as the main priority. The third change should be an equal political representation of women and men, at least in number. Institutional and organizational culture of decision processes requiring changes in the mechanisms and actors involved in the decisions would be the fourth change. The fifth and final change requires "displacement" and "empowerment" as well as participation and inclusion of CSOs.

Finally, in order to evaluate EU GM more specifically and answer the main research question, to what extent can the EU GM strategy in Tunisia be considered "transformative" of the unequal gender roles? it is important to mention that GM in EU bilateral cooperation from 2011 to 2015 will be discussed through the following criteria, in relation to the above mentioned five changes: i) the subject of gender, ii) the decision-making process, and iii) GM in text content. The subject of gender means the heterogeneity of the collective subject which should introduce dimensions (Rigat-Pflaum, 2008) as ethnicity, race and sexual orientation among others, to challenge the crossed inequalities (intersectionality). At the same time, the text should mention both genders, since the impacts are different for men and women. Transformative GM should aim to include masculinity, with all its diversity within a gender analysis. As for its relationship with the decision-making process, the process should be participatory and inclusive, led by women and women organizations (Jahan, 1995). Achieving a comprehensive action would be necessary to coordinate the various actors in a less hierarchical and bureaucratic way, coordinating horizontal cooperation of the various agency networks (Rigat-Pflaum, 2008). Regarding the contents of GM, there must be a rethinking, from a feminist perspective, of the objectives and meanings of policies / actions and furthermore, these objectives should be the main priority.

What are the possible potential factors for a Transformative Gender Mainstreaming?

It must be highlighted that the application of GM can be favored by several factors or specific contexts that have been studied by different authors. For example, Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) have reported that the combination of political opportunity -such as changes in the political structure- with an active social movement can motivate and facilitate the demand for gender in the political agenda of a country or an institution. They also note that the strategic framework, called framing process, can intervene positively in the integration of GM in the policies. The strategic framework can be defined as a "way of selecting, organizing, interpreting and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading, and acting" (1993:146). In their article, Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000), explain that the acceptance and implication of GM, however, depends in practice on the resonance or "fit" between the proposed policy frame and the dominant frame.

Thus, the fall of the Ben Ali regime, in the Tunisian case in the selected period (2011 – 2015), can be considered a political opportunity for new approaches and negotiations on previously banned topics such as human rights or supporting CSOs. In fact, this political event has led to the

emergence of hundreds of new civil society actors who have demonstrated an active participation during the last transition years and could also push for gender equality, as Donaghy (2003) suggests. This potential positive impact of the participation of Civil Society Organizations in the policy-making must be accompanied by a governmental will and an active public discourse and mobilization, which could open a window of opportunities towards GM (Donaghy, 2003). Resource mobilization, as a change in the political structure, is also important in the Tunisian case. In this regard, it must be mentioned that the Official Development Assistance (ODA) doubled and in some cases tripled, after the revolution.

The importance of the strategic framework process in our specific case can be illustrated in the conflict between the proposed strategic framework of the EC in the development policy as global actor and the key "strategic framework" of people working in the EU Delegation. The conflict between the "dominant" and "proposed" strategic framework could be between the EC headquarter instructions and the EU Delegation staff preferences or even the resistance mentioned by authors such as Mergaert and Lombardo (2014). In addition, the conflict can be seen when comparing the proposed strategic framework of the civil society organizations with the "dominant strategic framework" of national and international institutions. Therefore, it seems that OSC are pushing to have greater gender inclusion at national and international level.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research has opted for the case study method, focusing on a current phenomenon - GM in the EU development policy in Tunisia from 2011 to 2015- and seeks to understand an event in its singularity rather than as a causal explanation for generalization. This perspective is maintained during the research process and during the presentation of the results (Bolívar, 2002).

The main task of the researcher has been to observe the GM integration and the people involved in this process (EU Delegation staff and civil society organizations). The researcher has asked the persons involved in the process to tell their own stories and trajectories about the GM implementation to understand the entire process and answer the main research question - to what extent can the EU GM strategy in Tunisia be considered "transformative" of the unequal gender roles? -.

The selected time frame (2011 -2015) has been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, due to the EU delegation policy formulation process, which covers three years and secondly, for the historical and political situation marked by the Arab spring on 14 January 2011.

For the study, a document review and analysis, semi-structured interviews and the exhaustive analysis of both primary and secondary sources of information have been carried out. On one hand, the primary information has been obtained through six semi-structured interviews conducted on the week of June 22, 2015 in Brussels (three interviews) and three interviews in Tunisia during the week of August 5, 2015. On the other hand, additional primary information has been obtained through the EC official documents for critical analysis of EU policy bilateral cooperation. Regarding

secondary source information, political documents and articles in the media for case contextualization have been used. The collection and analysis process has been conducted to first establish the political lines of the EU gender agenda and, secondly to deepen the specific actions carried out by the EU Delegation in Tunisia in relation to the integration of the gender perspective during the study period, which coincides with a historical period characterized by political and social transformation in the country. In this sense, policy guidelines for the period after the revolution / Arab Spring 2011-2015, strategic and methodological documents which have been published by the EC and the guidelines for bilateral cooperation and the EC gender guidelines have been analyzed. The selection of these documents has been made based on their importance and the period of study and the analysis has been done in terms of content and based on the following criteria: i) the presence of gender, ii) policy-making process, and iii) the gender as a crosscutting issue.

The strategic and methodological documents analyzed are: i) Country Strategy Paper (CSP) (2007-2013) by the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, EC; ii) National Indicative Plan (NIP) 2011-2013 (Tunisia) by the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, EC; and iii) Cadre Unique d'Appui pour l'appui de l'UE pour la Tunisie (CUA) (2014-2015), by European External Action Service, EC.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Brussels and Tunisia, providing an in depth understanding of the GM process and the experiences of different people. More specifically, the head of cooperation, the civil society and human rights expert as well as the public finances expert of the EU Delegation to Tunisia and two representatives of Tunisian feminist organizations (AFTURD and AFC) were interviewed.

THE CONTEXT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN TUNISIA

Tunisian Political context

On December 17th, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi immolated himself in the city of Sidi Bouzid, south of Tunisia, to protest the police action that confiscated his fruit trolley in the street. This event and the bourgeoning change in popular reactions in the streets sparked a domino effect in the whole North African region known as "Arab Spring", which supposedly opened the possibility for the establishment of democratic regimes. As by Martinez Fuentes (2015) mentioned 2011 was the beginning of a political transition to democracy that required an authoritarianism deconstruction and democracy learning. However, as Szmolka (2014) points out, the political transformations in the region have not always led to the expected establishment of democratic regimes.

Tunisia's political transition can be explained, in the frame of this study, through the following three stages identified in the Civil Society Report (COWI and EC, 2012): The first period, from the "Independence (1956) until 14 January 2011," characterized by a dictatorial political regime ruled by Bourguiba (1957 -1987) and a single ruling party (RDC) created in 1988 by the dictator Zine Ben Ali (1987 – 2011). In short, concerning the last years close to the "Arab

spring" which are the relevant for this article, Ben Ali built a control apparatus and spread informers throughout the social network which together with the repression, the paternalist tradition and propaganda, led to believe that the regime was indefinite and a dynastic extension. The second period, the "January 14, 2011 until October 23, 2011," marked by the departure of President Ben Ali until the legislative elections, is characterized by a lack of political legitimacy, the return and creation of different political forces and an emerging civil society (more than 90 political parties and 1700 associations were created in a period of 10 months). This period is marked by political instability, government deposition, establishment of a technocratic government and the active participation of civil society in the Committee on Political Reforms and Democratic Transition, the High Council for the realization of revolution's objectives and finally the Higher Instance for Elections. The third and last period, is the "post October 23, 2011," characterized by the establishment of a Troika government formed by the Islamist party (Ennahda), the center-right party (Congrès pour la République) and the social Democratic party (Ettakatol). The country experienced considerable progress thanks to the establishment of the "national dialogue", launched in October 2013, and the adoption of a Constitution in 2014 guaranteeing democratic principles, fundamental freedoms and the equality of all citizens (EC, 2015).

It is evident that the current situation offers a window of opportunity to consolidate the "acquis" of the years 2011-2014 in terms of democratic progress and continuation and implementation of new, needed reforms to ensure real equality between men and women. The struggle for dignity, equality, freedom and democracy must continue today. Tunisians, with the support of the international community, must however still deal with the social consequences of political instability during this transition period (five governments in three years) and fiercely protect the achieved women rights so that they do not get undermined and fight to include LGTBQI++ rights[1].

The political change's effect on women in Tunisia

During the government (1957-1987) of its first president Habib Bourguiba, the Personal Status Code adopted in 1956 was the cornerstone of a modernization program called "bourguibista". The Personal Status Code integrated women rights in the family rights section to facilitate women's participation in public life. Thanks to the Personal Status Code and the integration of some innovative aspects, Tunisia has been considered during decades the most advanced country in personal status terms in the Arab region (Pérez Beltran, 2011). Among the achievements and innovative aspects reached during this time, the following can be pointed out (ODI, 2014): i) abolition of polygamy and repudiation (clause 18); ii) a minimum age of marriage for women and men at 15 years and 18 years respectively (clause 5)[2]; iii) consent of both spouses became a requirement for marriage and the

right of a guardian to five a woman in marriage without her consent was abolished (clauses 3, 10); iv)Registration with civil authorities became a requirement for a marriage (clause 4); v) obligation to divorce to take place in court (clause 30); vi) equal rights with respect to filing for divorce (clause 31) and liability for compensation (clause 30); vii) in cases of divorce, reconciliation attempts by the court became mandatory (clause 32) . However, despite the application of the Bourguiba, full equality was not achieved, as the right of succession could not be modified because it directly affected patriarchal interests (Bernabéu, 2012) among other aspects that cannot be developed in this article. This first wave of reforms was conceived as part of the construction of a new independent national state based on a patriarchal network of clans and tribal groups (Charrad, 2011). During the dictatorial regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, reforms continued but they were more "top-down" reforms, by which women of higher social status benefited, leaving out poor and rural women (Charrad and Zarrugh, 2013).

During the revolution, women participated in all phases. They took to the streets calling for the departure of the dictator Ben Ali. Gender equality became a central issue in the political agenda, especially regarding the new constitution and the representation of women on electoral lists. As for parity in electoral lists, despite the pressure from feminist organizations of the Tunisian civil society, the law was unclear and the representation of women in the lists was unsuccessful (Charrad and Zarrugh, 2013). Another key topic during this last period was the clause of "complementarity of women to men" that the Ennahada government (Islamist) wanted to introduce in the new Constitution. Thousands of Tunisians took to the streets on August 13, 2014, National Women's Day, to protest this clause which was finally removed. The Constitution now recognizes equality between men and women.

The latest development on gender equality[3] issues took place on April 23rd, 2014 when the Tunisian government informed the United Nations about its desire to withdraw the reservation to the CEDAW. This could lead, in the future, to legislative reforms which could, for example, allow equality in the heritage (this aspect is still highly polemic and discussed in the Tunisian society) and the abolition of the article 230 which forbids homosexuality among other issues.

A mature Tunisian feminist movement

The Tunisian feminist movement could be divided into the period before the revolution and after the revolution of January 2011. As to the period before the revolution, like Bernabéu (2012), Perez Beltrán (2018) and Mahfoudh (2014) point out, the feminist movement was basically based on the action of two different types of organizations: independent feminist organizations (Ganmi 1993) such as "Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates" (ATFD) and the "Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Récherche et le Développement" (AFTURD) and official / para-official organizations such as the National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT), "Femmes pour le Développement Durable" and the "Association Tunisienne des Mères" closely linked to the

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1 The article 230 of the Tunisian penal code criminalize the homosexuality. This issue is not covered in this article even though the importance of this aspect is highly recognized by the author.

2 This was increased to 17 then 18 years for women in subsequent revisions (1964 and 2007).

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3 Until the time this article was written (2016).

single party RCD and Ben Ali's wife and others such as the Collective Maghreb Égalité 95 (CME95). The work carried out by both groups of organizations was very different, the first ones focused on publishing, organizing round tables, seminars and conferences, while the latter focused on "diversifying" the associational landscape and promoting the advancement of women, but from a very elitist point of view, without reaching most of the Tunisian population (rural and poor) (CSO Representative, August 6, 2015).

As for the post-revolutionary period, the militants of AFTURD and ATFD were aware of the dimension of the challenges to be addressed. Along with the joy and enthusiasm sparked by the fall of the dictatorship and after the difficult initial moments, the defense of women's equality and secularism were claimed as an identifying sign of the revolution and the feminist movement. Activities were initiated by the feminists after the fall of the dictatorial regime of Ben Ali; they organized meetings, debates, public statements and manifestos (Bernabéu, 2012). These activities lead to achievements such as: i) the recovery of the campaign on the review of the law on inheritance; ii) the manifest of women for equality and the exercise of citizen rights; iii) the memorandum on the participation of women in the electoral process; iv) the report of the ATFD on the development of the pre-campaign and electoral campaign; and v) the fight against gender violence with the approval of the new law 2017/58.[4]

In addition to the militants of the ATF and the AFTURD and other new secular feminist organizations such as "Association Femme et Citoyenneté" (AFC) and the "Ligue des Electrices Tunisiennes" (LET), there are other women's groups linked to Islamist parties that advocate for a new femininity in accordance with Islam. We know very little about this last group as they tend to act in closed circles relating to the mosque, but their strength and social pressure is noticeable and could be a negative force for the achievement of equality between men and women. (CSO Representative, August 7, 2015).

European Union bilateral cooperation to Tunisia 2011- 2015

The EU, through the EC and EU delegations, manages and executes the development cooperation policy of the EU. The Directorate General (DG) for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid is responsible for the development policy and EU Official Development Assistance (ODA) worldwide. DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid brings together the two former general directorates for Development and EuropeAid since 2011. 139 EU delegations around the world, with their own legal entity and status, are the executive arms of the EU in the partner countries. They are responsible for identifying, monitoring and evaluating the relevance and implementation of projects and assessing the outcomes of projects and programs. EuropeAid, based in Brussels, ensures the overall coherence of all interventions.

Regarding the bilateral EU cooperation to Tunisia, it is structured around different thematic and regional

instruments providing funding to different activities as diverse as human development goals, economic growth, environmental protection, human rights, etc. and through different methods either budget support, technical assistance, twinning and service contracts and works. The European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) is the financial instrument of the European neighborhood partner countries located at the EU land and sea border. This instrument largely funds most national activities within the framework of bilateral cooperation projects. The ENI normally has a program for a period of 3 years which would fall under the scope of the comprehensive programming document not covered by other strategic documents such as the Country Strategic Paper (CSP) and the National Indicative Planning (NIP). The programme allocated 545 million euros for the period 2011-2013 and 169 million euros (EU Delegation, 2014) for the period 2014 -2015. It should be noted that the ENI budget allocated to Tunisia, within the bilateral cooperation for the period 2007-2010, was 300 million euros and this allocation was doubled just after the revolution, reaching 545 million euros for 2011 -2013. The budget allocated for the year 2014 - 2015 is 337,8[5] million euros (EU Delegation, 2017).

In addition, after the revolution, the EU decided to create a new instrument called SPRING (Support for Partnership and Inclusive Growth) which was a direct response to the regional events of the Arab Spring. Tunisia has benefited from 37% of SPRING funds, 20 million euros in 2011, followed by 80 million euros in 2012 and 55 million euros in 2013 (EC, 2011). The budget allocation of EU bilateral cooperation to Tunisia speaks for itself and illustrates clearly how the donors, including the EU, are giving high importance to this new political and social phase in such a small country.

MAIN EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Programing and dialogue with Tunisia in a transitional period

First, and as it has been mentioned before, all the persons interviewed confirmed this historical moment that cannot only be seen by the increase in the funds but also by the opening of new fields of work. "Since 2011, the aid focus has changed radically, we were able to include the civil society organization and other stakeholder such as the private sector in the negotiation, something that was impossible before the revolution" (Civil Society Expert at the EU Delegation, June 23, 2015). Therefore, this increase of funds and the opening of the society "was translated into the need to work with the strategic documents into action plans to respond to the new social demands and needs" (Civil Society Expert at the EU Delegation, June 23, 2015). The EU Delegation revised all the operation documents the civil society organizations were demanding, to include the guarantee of social and women rights among other. However, as it will be shown during the text, gender issues were not completely included in the EU Bilateral official documents.

GM, according to the EU delegation staff interviewed, was conducted through specific actions rather than through

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4 This law is not discussed in this article because it outside the time frame selected for the study. It can be noted that the approval of this law is a big step for the Tunisian society even though the law is not perfect as mentioned by Perez Beltran (2018).

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5 The amount of 337,8 million euros is the addition of the 2014 and 2015 budget (169 + 168,8 million euros).

a proper crosscutting GM. The person responsible for budget support and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) explained that "the gender perspective is reflected in specific actions such as projects that promote women entrepreneurs" (interview on June 25, 2015). "The gender dimension was not integrated as a crosscutting issue into sectoral policies as the government did not indicate so." (Budget Support Expert at the EU Delegation, 25 June 2015). Furthermore, all the EU Delegation staff interviewed gave the same response to the question on the GM: "GM is mandatory and essential. This is done through a gender checklist. Our main argument in this check list is that we have foreseen projects for women (specific actions) "(Interviews 23, 24 and 25 June 2015); "The main mechanism is a check list, which is an annex with specific questions about the crosscutting issues, environment, human rights and gender. The fulfilling of this check list is compulsory. (Interviews 23, 24 and 25 June 2015).

As far as gender diagnostic is concerned prior to the programing and formulation phase, the EU delegation interviewed answered that "there was not previous gender diagnostic until 2015 when a gender profile (EU Delegation, 2014)) was elaborated "(Interviews 23, 24 and 25 June 2015).

In this way and through the analysis of the different answers given, it can be concluded that GM is not applied correctly and in no case, is a crosscutting issue. In addition, we can observe confusion about certain terms such as sex vs. gender and specific actions vs GM.

The answer given by some of the people interviewed regarding the obstacles encountered in the GM implementation is especially relevant: "No obstacles were found because it has not been applied as there has not been any official demand from the national government" (Budget support expert, 25 June 2015). Lastly, regarding the inclusiveness of the participatory process, the EU delegation staff indicated that: "We worked a lot with groups of women activists who even acted before the revolution, they were consulted on several occasions especially on issues of gender" (civil society expert, June 23, 2015). Therefore, it is clear that the consultation takes place only on subjects related to social issues and not on other issues the GM strategy requires.

Evaporation and a cosmetic use of gender perspective in the European Union bilateral cooperation strategic documents

Bilateral cooperation programming and dialogue between the EU and the partner country are outlined in a series of strategic documents which are the result of political negotiations between the EU Delegation, the national government, EC Headquarter and local civil society.

To analyze the GM implementation in the programming and dialogue during the years 2011 to 2014, two documents have been considered: CSP 2007-2013 and the NIP 2011-2013. As for the post-2013 period, the paper studied and analyzed is the CSP 2014-2020, published in two parts. The first part is the "*Cadre Unique de l'appui pour l'appui de l'UE 2010-15*" and the second part will be a document that will cover the 2016-2020 bilateral cooperation, which has not yet been published. In the case of CSP and NIP, the study and analysis has been done in parallel with the reading of the EC GM Manual to compare the guidelines with what has really been done.

The main objective of the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) is to provide the basic framework and strategic planning of the EU in the partner country. This document is essential and should integrate GM in every step, as dictated by the EC GM manual. A CSP generally contains five sections: i) EC cooperation objectives; ii) national agenda of the country; iii) analysis of the political, economic and social situation; iv) analysis of the cooperation implementation (current and completed), and v) EU strategy in the country. Firstly, considering the presence of the gender equality objective, it appears only once in the entire document, consisting of 21 pages. The document specifies that "equality between men and women" is a crosscutting issue, which should be given "special attention in cooperation programs" (EC, 2007b). None of the five sections of the document mentions "gender equality" or the problems of inequality of women in Tunisia. This "special attention" evaporates or is completely invisible throughout the document. Secondly, and despite the GM manual explicitly citing that the CSP should include gender-sensitive indicators, there has not been a single gender sensitive indicator throughout the document. Thirdly, the objective with a more social aspect of the CSP, "education and employment", is analyzed. This objective should highlight the problem of inequality between men and women in Tunisia, as it is a problem in Tunisian society, as shown in the official statistics from the National Survey conducted by the National Office of Family and Population (ONFP) in 2010. However, the problem of gender inequality does not appear and this confirms that there is an absolute invisibility and evaporation of gender. Moreover, this could lead us to think that there has been no previous in depth study of the situation of women and men or, if it has been done, it has not been transferred to the CSP. Finally, the GM manual dictates that the data should be disaggregated by sex, age and education level, etc., but the data included in the CSP does not show disaggregation at any time in the twenty pages of the document.

The National Indicative Programme (NIP), as mentioned in the document itself, should make the analysis, the priorities identified and the findings made in the CSP operational. The NIP identifies and defines appropriate measures and actions to achieve the objectives defined in the CSP. The NIP should include a strategic analysis of the response through bilateral cooperation, thus it is important that the analysis, conclusions and selection of the CSP do not evaporate from the NIP, as well as gender issues, that are the focus of our analysis. Following the EC GM manual, the NIP should reflect that gender is a goal and it is essential for achieving other objectives. The NIP should define the objectives and expected results in each of the cooperation areas. The main indicators should be disaggregated by sex and other qualitative data categories. Gender inequality between men and women is mentioned on page twelve as a crosscutting issue in the section of priorities and objectives. However, this crosscutting disappears and evaporates throughout the document. There is only one mention to gender on page fifteen referring to the expected results of the employment and social protection programme. This programme states that one of the expected results is "strengthening the role and the capacities of the organizations supporting the socio-economic integration of women and vulnerable groups (disabled, long-term unemployed, young

people without education, etc.)". Regarding gender and disaggregated indicators, there is one gender-sensitive indicator "indicator on equal opportunities between genders" (page fifteen). In all other programs, environment, economic growth, competitiveness and justice, there is no mention to women or gender. As for the NIP, it should be mentioned that the document itself says that the drafting process should be done in consultation and in coordination with the national government and civil society organizations. The participation in the drafting meetings and discussion of the document should, according to the EC GM manual, record the number of women and men presented and even their inputs made to enable a qualitative analysis. This procedure has not been reflected at any time in the NIP (see Annex Table 5 Summary analysis NIP). It can be summarized that the NIP does not contain gender equality or specific objectives on gender in the whole document, nor does it show gender sensitive indicators or disaggregated data.

The "*Cadre Unique d'Appui pour l'appui de l'UE pour la Tunisie*" (CUA), adopted on 25 July 2014, establishes the priority sectors and indicative budget for EU cooperation to the Republic of Tunisia. This document is enrolled in the CSP 2014-2020, it is a multi-annual document created mainly with the objective to align the bilateral EU cooperation to the Tunisian national priorities and society's demands, which are experiencing transformations. It would be the equivalent of NIP discussed above. The *CUA (2014-2015)*" analyzes the needs and selects priority sectors for intervention during the years 2014 and 2015. These sectors of intervention are: i) socio-economic reforms and inclusive economic growth, competitiveness and integration; ii) consolidation of democracy; and iii) regional and sustainable development. Regarding the "socio-economic and inclusive growth reforms" section, the planned actions to improve the employability of people include the issue of women and textually says " the process integration reforms should: (...) ii) ensure a better distribution of the fruits favoring the creation of employment, particularly for young graduates and women". This sector also includes specific objectives with a gender character "supporting policies for job creation and development of human capital by promoting gender equality (...)". In the results, the importance given to employment creation in which there is a mention to both men and women must be noted. The indicators apparently become gender sensitive. In some cases, the data is even disaggregated by sex, socioeconomic status and age. In the section "consolidation of democracy", a mention of equality between men and women is included as indicated and as mentioned in the text "this is part of the "Action Plan for a Privileged Partnership between the EU and Tunisia and will remain a priority for this new period". The specific objectives of the section are: "strengthening the role of women in political processes of cultural pluralism" and objective four is: "Strengthening the role of women in society and contributing to the development and implementation of a gender policy that promotes gender equality." Two of the four results of this section aim at achieving gender equality. In terms of gender-sensitive indicators in general, it can be said that these are not gender sensitive and only the indicator included in Objective 1 "rate of women on the lists of political parties" and Goal 4 "rate of women voting in elections and evolution of gender violence cases". As for

the "regional and local sustainable development", there is no mention to the problems of women, gender equality, equality between men and women, etc. In the explanation of the section, the objectives included are: "contributing to local and socioeconomic development through civil society and partnership with local actors, especially women," and its corresponding result is "local development pilot actions designed and implemented with the participation of civil society and the local population, especially women". However, none of the indicators can be considered gender sensitive. Although there is an improvement in the latest document, the gender objectives are not the absolute main priority and the existence of gender in the document is not systematic and consistent. It can be indicated that the language shows a forced incorporation of gender without an impact analysis on both sexes.

Theories and Reality

The strategy of GM in the EU cooperation with Tunisia in no case can be considered as "transformative" (Verloo, 2005) of gender roles, but on the contrary, can be considered as an "integrationist strategy" (Verloo, 2005), bureaucratic (Squire, 2005; Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007; Walby, 2005) and plastic as it has a "cosmetic use of gender" (Benería, 2005). Moreover, the GM achieved is not a crosscutting issue with transformative potential of unequal gender roles, but is rather based on a technocratic-bureaucratic approach. First, it is apparent that the gender perspective is included partially and only as a cross-cutting issue in the section with the same name. The attention to the equality between men and women evaporates and disappears (Moser, 2005; Moser & Moser, 2005) through the lines of the documents and appears discontinuously in different sectors. Therefore, it can be concluded that the approach has a focus on the inclusion of women in certain policies or certain sectors of the policy of bilateral cooperation, confirming the integrationist approach that authors like Verloo (2005) and Jahan (1995) have indicated in their studies. Second, the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators is performed discontinuously and randomly, there is not a systematization of the type of indicators that could be considered gender sensitive. A slight improvement is seen in the last years: the first document presents zero indicators, the second presents a gender sensitive indicator, or some that mention women, and the third, in the field of socio-economics, reforms the indicators to include at least disaggregated data on sex, socioeconomic status and age. Regarding the appearance of men and women, none of the three documents analyzed presents this feature, perhaps because gender issues are seen as a women's issue and not a social and structural problem, which could indicate a confusion between gender and specific actions for women pointed out by Daly (2005) and Alonso (2015). Fourth, regarding the participatory and inclusive approach, it can be noted that the approach taken is partially inclusive, as the list of civil society organizations consulted is not included in any case, and this consultation process could be questioned because the selection criteria is not clear to the participants. This conclusion is obtained due to the lack of a list of participants and comments from the key actors. It is especially important to mention that the

main gender problem, in the three documents analyzed and in the responses by the EU delegation staff is the exclusion of women (integrationist approach) and not the problem of gender inequality in the society caused by the patriarchal culture of the country.

Considering the study of the five changes defined by Lombardo and Meier (2006) and whether they have emerged in the GM of the EU Development policy to Tunisia, we can conclude that: The first change in public policy decisions towards a concept of gender equality explicitly challenging patriarchy is not observed; there is a lack of the mention of men in documents and interviews and an absence of the issue of gender inequality in areas such as environment or economic reforms and it is only mentioned in social sectors. The second change, "challenging the goals itself from a feminist perspective". It has been found that gender equality was included in some documents as an objective, but it cannot be said this seemed to be the main priority. The last three changes, regarding equal inclusion of men and women, are clearly not happening in the first two documents studied. The institutional and organizational change process has not been studied, since it was outside of the scope of this research, but I am aware that this is happening because there is now a focal gender point which did not previously exist.

in the EU delegation. However, this focal point is only involved in planning and programming of civil society and women issues, confirming the conclusion of the interview about the confusion between gender and specific actions (Daly, 2006 in Alonso, 2015). The latest changes of "displacement and empowerment" mentioned by Verloo (2005) as well as participation and inclusion, mentioned by Jahan (1995), have also occurred in a comprehensive and systematic way, but only partially, as shown by the lack of a participant list and the lack of an objective selection criteria.

The difficulties and obstacles of GM have been made clear through the analysis of documents and interviews with various key people in the dialogue process and formulation of EU bilateral policy to Tunisia. Firstly, political difficulties related to the lack of budgetary allocation were noted. Secondly, there has been great operational difficulty marked by a bureaucratic administrative process of "ticking in the box" (Mazey, 2002), which has been downplaying this social priority. Hence, during the interviews, the lack of training and awareness of the gender issues and more specifically to the integration of GM was brought to light. As for the social and organizational difficulties, the respondents confirmed the lack of training.

In contrast to these difficulties and analyzing the social, political and development cooperation in Tunisia for the selected period, GM and the fight for gender equality could have been enhanced by several potential factors described by the Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000). The political opportunity was clear and evident, as demonstrated by the evolution of the political situation. New approaches and negotiations on topics previously banned as were human rights, press freedom and the participation of women in political parties entered into the political agenda. In addition, the resurgence of new civil society organizations as well as the increase in ODA funds for new projects and cooperation programs could have had a positive influence with a greater

impact. The strategic framework as potential factor of change can be seen from a double angle. First, there is a conflict between the dominant and the proposed framework, observed to be the dominant framework of the DUE staff in Tunisia, but without training or a specific budget allocation, and the EC guidelines dictated by the Brussels headquarter as proposed framework. In this case the conflict would not be positive, because it shows individual institutional resistance and even blocking of the GM transformative effect, as pointed out by Mergaert and Lombardo (2014). Second, the conflict is observed between the proposed strategic framework of the civil society, pressing for greater freedom and greater social equality, and the dominant framework, applied by national and international organizations. In this second case, we could indicate that conflict is positive because the CSO pressure has been able to push the UE Delegation toward gender equality actions. So far, progress has been limited but is hopeful that Tunisian feminist organizations will continue fighting for the construction of democracy in their country, including women rights.

CONCLUSION

The main research question was: to what extent can the EU GM strategy in Tunisia be considered "transformative" of the unequal gender roles? The answer to the question is that the strategy of GM in the EU cooperation with Tunisia in no case could be considered as "transformative" (Verloo 2005) of gender roles, but on the contrary, could be considered as an "integrationist strategy" (Verloo, 2005), bureaucratic (Squire, 2005; Kantola and Outshoorn, 2007 and Walby, 2005) and plastic as it has a "cosmetic use of gender" (Beneria, 2005). Moreover, the GM achieved is not a crosscutting issue with transformative potential of unequal gender roles but is rather based on a technocratic-bureaucratic approach. First, it is apparent that the gender perspective is included partially and only as a cross-cutting issue in the section with the same name. The attention to the equality between men and women evaporates and disappears (Moser, 2005; Moser and Moser, 2005) through the lines of the documents and appears discontinuously in different sectors. Therefore, it can be concluded that the approach taken does not really challenge unequal gender roles with a transforming vision, but rather has a focus on the inclusion of women in certain policies or certain sectors of the policy of bilateral cooperation, confirming the integrationist approach that authors like Verloo (2005) and Jahan (1995) have indicated in their studies. Second, the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators is performed discontinuously and randomly, there is not a systematization of the type of indicators that could be considered gender sensitive. A slight improvement is seen in the last years: the first document presents zero indicators, the second presents a gender sensitive indicator, or some that mention women, and the third, in the field of socio-economics, reforms the indicators to include at least disaggregated data on sex, socioeconomic status and age. Regarding the appearance of men and women, none of the three documents analyzed presents this feature, perhaps because gender issues are seen as a women's issue and not a social and structural problem, which could indicate a confusion between gender and specific actions for women

pointed out by Daly (2005) and Alonso (2015).

Fourth, regarding the participatory and inclusive approach, it can be noted that the approach taken is partially inclusive, as the list of civil society organizations consulted is not included in any case, and this consultation process could be questioned because the selection criteria is not clear to the participants. This conclusion is obtained due to the lack of a list of participants and comments from the key actors. It is especially important to mention that the main gender problem in the three documents analyzed and the responses by the EU delegation staff is considered to be the exclusion of women (integrationist approach) and not the problem of gender inequality in the society as a whole, caused by the patriarchal culture of the country.

Considering the study of the five changes defined by Lombardo and Meier (2006) and whether they have emerged in the GM of the EU Development policy to Tunisia, we can conclude that: The first change in public policy decisions towards a concept of gender equality explicitly challenging patriarchy is not observed; there is a lack of the mention of men in documents and interviews and an absence of the issue of gender inequality in areas such as environment or economic reforms and it is only mentioned in social sectors. The second change, "challenging the goals itself from a feminist perspective". It has been found that gender equality was included in some documents as an objective in itself, but it cannot be said this seemed to be the main priority. The last three changes, regarding equal inclusion of men and women, are clearly not happening in the first two documents studied. The institutional and organizational change process has not been studied, since it was outside of the scope of this research, but I am aware that this is happening because there is now a focal gender point which did not previously exist in the EU delegation. However, this focal point is only involved in planning and programming of civil society and women issues, confirming the conclusion of the interview about the confusion between gender and specific actions[6]. The latest changes of "displacement and empowerment" mentioned by Verloo (2005) as well as participation and inclusion, mentioned by Jahan (1995), have also occurred in a comprehensive and systematic way, but only partially, as shown by the lack of a participant list and the lack of an objective selection criteria.

The difficulties and obstacles of GM have been made clear through the analysis of documents and interviews with various key people in the dialogue process and formulation of EU bilateral policy to Tunisia. Firstly, political difficulties related to the lack of budgetary allocation were noted. Secondly, there has been great operational difficulty marked by a bureaucratic administrative process of "ticking in the box"[7], which has been downplaying this social priority. Hence, during the interviews, the lack of training and awareness of the gender issues and more specifically to the integration of GM was brought to light. As for the social and organizational difficulties, the respondents confirmed the lack of training.

In contrast to these difficulties and analyzing the social, political and development cooperation in Tunisia for the selected period (2011-2015), GM and the fight for

gender equality could have been enhanced by a number of potential factors described by the Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) theory. The political opportunity was clear and evident, as demonstrated by the evolution of the political situation and official documents analyzed. New approaches, new negotiations on topics previously banned as were human rights, press freedom and the participation of women in political parties entered into the political agenda. In addition, the resurgence of new civil society organizations as well as the increase in ODA funds for new projects and cooperation programs could have had a positive influence with a greater impact. The strategic framework as potential factor of change can be seen from a double angle as mentioned in Chapter II. First, there is a conflict between the dominant and the proposed framework, observed to be the dominant framework of the DUE staff in Tunisia, but without training or a specific budget allocation, and the EC guidelines dictated by the Brussels headquarter as proposed framework. In this case the conflict would not be positive, because it shows individual institutional resistance and even blocking of the GM transformative effect, as pointed out by Mergaert and Lombardo (2014). Second, the conflict is observed between the proposed strategic framework of the civil society, pressing for greater freedom and greater social equality, and the dominant framework, applied by national and international organizations. In this second case, we could indicate that conflict is positive because the CSO pressure has been able to push the UE Delegation toward gender equality actions. So far, progress has been limited but is hopeful that Tunisian feminist organizations will continue fighting for the construction of democracy in their country, including women rights.

If there is so much literature, studies, agreements, promises on combating gender inequality and GM integration as a strategic tool in this fight, why is this fight not immersed in all policy areas and especially in development policy? Why are there so many difficulties to realize the GM? Why is there constant rhetoric that does not allow a real impact? These questions and many others arise when reading the results of this research that shows how, despite the will and determination of the international community and especially the EU to institutionalize GM, there are still serious difficulties that limit its incorporation and a possible transformative impact of unequal gender roles in the EU development policy to Tunisia.

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