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FCG Sweden and Tana Copenhagen, in partnership with
the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and D-Arch

Mapping Approaches to Democratization Assessment

Final report



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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency (now GAC)*
DEVCO	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
DFID	Department of International Development (now FCDO)*
DHR	Democracy and Human Rights
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
EBA	Expert Group for Aid Studies
EPD	European Partnership for Democracy
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly DFID)
FCG	Finnish Consulting Group
GAC	Global Affairs Canada (formerly CIDA)
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
J-PAL	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
KII	Key Informant Interview
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PB	Participatory Budgeting
RCTs	Randomised Control Trials
RBM	Results Based Management
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
TI	Transparency International
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators
3ie	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

**Note: CIDA and DFID changed their names to GAC and FCDO in 2020. When referring to their activities and publications before these changes, the older acronyms will be used in this paper; after the change, the new ones.*

Preface

This report presents the second output under the Evaluability Study of Sida's Approach to Democratization in Different Contexts (see Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 1). In May 2020, Sida contracted FCG and Tana Copenhagen through the Sida Framework Agreement for Evaluation Services, in partnership with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and D-Arch, to undertake a comprehensive evaluability study of Sida's support for democratization. Three distinct outputs form the combined evaluability study: (i) a mapping of research and donor approaches to democratization, providing insight into how democratization can be approached; (ii) a mapping of research and donor approaches to assessing the status and progress of democratization, providing information for such assessments; and (iii) a feasibility study evaluating Sida's democratization support.

The evaluation team consisted of Erik Bryld (team leader), Agnes Cornell and Harry Blair (both sub-team leaders), Nadia Masri-Pedersen (senior evaluator) and Charlotte Bonnet (junior evaluator). The quality of the final report was assured by Susan Tamondong, whose work was independent of that of the evaluation team. Léonie Borel and Kelsey Welham provided research support for the three outputs. The report has been professionally proofread by ProofreadingServices.com.

The sub-team leader for this report wishes to extend special thanks to the donor representatives who we interviewed online for this report. They invariably exhibited patience and willingness to answer our many questions at length, and they were most helpful in pointing us to useful documentation.

Executive Summary

The principal aims of this second mapping exercise will firstly be to explore how researchers and international donors assess democratization in specific countries and regions, and secondly to explore how they assess donor efforts to support and promote democratization. Accordingly, our focus will be on methodologies themselves rather than on the findings and analyses that result from employing the methodologies – on how researchers and donors do their work in measuring and evaluating democratization, not on what emerges from that work.

In our own methodology, we followed two tracks: documentary searches and interviews. We looked back through specific lead journals and used search engines like Google Scholar to find more than 175 relevant articles and books, combed through donor websites and conducted Zoom-enabled interviews with donor officials.

Sida wanted us not just to look at its Democracy and Human Rights (DHR), but to include all activities in other sectors like education and health, where interventions have had a democracy-related component. In consultation with our Sida steering team, we settled on the concept of a ‘democratization portfolio’ – a package that would include all such donor activity in a partner country. Given Sida’s strong emphasis on gender and poverty sub-populations in its work, we were asked to address these factors specifically in our study. In consultation with our steering team, we also developed a representative slate of bilateral, multilateral and foundation donors to explore.

In assessing the state of democracy in partner countries, our two constituencies have pursued both qualitative and quantitative approaches. On the qualitative side, scholarly research has usually focused on individual countries, and has consisted of document review, field visits and key informant interviews, increasingly supplemented in more recent years with quantitative data. Some of these studies have taken a political economy approach, but most have not.

Over the last couple of decades, there has been a huge increase in quantitative research on democratization status at the country level. The older large-n datasets have been augmented by with a number of others, most recently the ambitious V-Dem datasets. Other tools include opinion surveys, participatory evaluations and randomised control trials (RCTs). The latter have become widely used in the development field, but until recently have shown little capacity to scale up from short, small-scale local experiments anything like country level.

Understandably, assessments of donor efforts to promote democratization have been largely undertaken by the donors themselves, and most of them have focused on specific projects, with the logistical framework (‘log frame’) or some variant used as

the methodology for many years. Beginning in the late 1990s, programme indicators came into widespread use, increasingly complemented by opinion surveys of beneficiaries. Country-level evaluations of anything like a democratization portfolio have been much less frequent, owing to problems attendant on crafting measurement tools.

As for sub-populations, gender and democratization – and, to a lesser extent, poverty and democratization – as a topic has attracted significant scholarly interest. All the donors we interviewed identified gender issues as a leading priority, with one (Global Affairs Canada) titling its entire foreign aid program its ‘Feminist International Assistance Policy’. Although poverty-related research and assistance programs connected to democratization have become more prominent as well, economics, rather than political science, continues to command most of the attention and funding where poverty is concerned.

We found very little use or serious consideration of the democratization portfolio concept either in the scholarly literature or in donor documents. All our donor interviewees agreed the idea makes sense as a way to consider aid to democracy, but didn’t see any practical use for it, given the complexity of their overall programmes.

The reversal from democratic advance in the 1990s to democratic backsliding in more recent years has attracted much scholarly research and donor interest. Theories of turnaround and regression are emerging, and the large-n datasets are being deployed to measure democratic retreat.

We came to eight conclusions and recommendations in our study:

The democratization portfolio is an appealing concept intuitively and logically, but assembling and utilising it has proven too challenging, so it has not gained adherents. The concept must be narrowed considerably if it is to become usable.

- Qualitative evaluation continues to be the principal methodology for donors, and a prominent one for researchers. Underutilised political economy frameworks should be encouraged and expanded.
- Quantitative evaluation methodology has expanded significantly in recent decades, conducted with evermore advanced methods and using a growing set of databases. Its future growth should be supported.
- Evaluation methodology faces new challenges in assessing democratic erosion, but is rising to the task. Efforts here deserve support.
- Several donors have established independent agencies to evaluate their work, providing greater scope for objective assessment. Sweden’s Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) should be continued.
- Gender equality has become a top priority in democratization programmes across the donor community. Poverty has assumed a prominent but lower and largely separate place in these initiatives often included under an economic

development rubric rather than democracy. Efforts to link these two themes in democracy evaluations should be encouraged.

- The best practice in qualitative evaluation is political economy analysis, which reveals the underlying linkages between the polity and the economy that determine success or failure in democracy promotion. But its cost, time requirements, and specialized knowledge render it feasible for the most important partner countries. For other partners, some form of the logical framework approach would be best.
- On the quantitative side, for charting democratic progress or decline there are several levels depending on need for detail and audience. For ease of use and immediate understandability, the Economist Intelligence Unit's democracy index is ideal. If more detail is wanted without sacrificing comprehension for the intended audience, the Freedom House measures fill the need nicely. And for sheer richness of detail and use as a dataset for any level of statistical analysis, V-Dem has become the industry leader.

We noticed three prominent trends over recent years:

- Increasing use of quantitative research has confirmed that the broad optimism about rising democracy among scholars and donors in the 1990s is being replaced with a more realistic humility in foreign assistance policy.
- More advanced and detailed datasets, especially the V-Dem archive, are enabling more accurate and fine-grained evaluations.
- New research methods demanding higher-level skill sets have transformed postgraduate education, which has come at the expense of older area studies curriculums. This trend could have an adverse impact on the understanding of country context and culture that characterised earlier research and donor programming.

1 Introduction

This mapping study presents the second output under the Evaluability Study of Sida's Approach to Democratization in Different Contexts (see Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 1). In May 2020, Sida commissioned FCG and Tana Copenhagen, in partnership with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and D-Arch, to undertake a comprehensive evaluability study of Sida's support for democratization. Three distinct outputs form the combined evaluability study: (i) a mapping of research and donor approaches to democratization, providing insight into how democratization can be approached; (ii) a mapping of research and donor approaches to assessing the status and progress of democratization, providing information for such assessments; and (iii) a feasibility study evaluating Sida's democratization support. This report presents the findings of the second output: assessing the status and progress of democratization.

1.1 A CENTRAL FOCUS ON METHODOLOGY

The principal aims of this second mapping exercise will firstly be to explore how researchers and international donors assess democratization in specific countries and regions, and secondly to explore how they assess donor efforts to support and promote democratization. Accordingly, our focus will be on methodologies themselves rather than the findings and analyses that result from employing the methodologies – on how researchers and donors do their work in measuring and evaluating democratization, not on what emerges from that work.

1.2 TWO MAIN QUERIES: ASSESSING DEMOCRATIZATION AND ASSESSING INTERVENTIONS

Assessing democratization can mean either estimating a country's level of democratization at a given point in time or estimating its movement over time toward or away from more advanced democratization over time. The first approach points to a country's current status, while the second tries to examine its forward or backward trajectory with respect to democratization. Some analyses explore both these tracks, while others stick to just one.

Assessment of donor initiatives supporting democratization has included evaluations at all levels: project, programme (e.g. civil society, elections), country, region, and global. Most such effort has focused on projects (most of which require evaluations, often at several points during project lifetimes), but we will be concerned with the country level and, to a lesser extent, the regional level (given that far fewer regional

assessments have been made). These evaluations were once largely qualitative, but in recent decades, they have grown increasingly quantitative. We will track both types, with subsections for each.

In addition to our focus on overall democratization, we will give attention to sub-populations in both of our queries, particularly to gender equality and people living in poverty, both of which constitute high priorities in Sida's worldwide development support activities.

1.3 TWO OVERLAPPING CONSTITUENCIES: ACADEMICS AND DONORS

Our remit calls us to look at two theoretically separate constituencies of academics and donors: researchers and practitioners. The former is often perceived to concern themselves with knowledge for its own sake, while the latter are mostly seen to value knowledge insofar as it has practical uses. But in fact, academics (especially those with a public policy orientation) frequently conduct their research with an eye to influencing policy, and many in the donor community seek to add their thinking to the global body of knowledge. Moreover, a good many academics (like the sub-team leaders of our two mapping exercises) spend time working as practitioners with donor agencies, while donor employees often more or less autonomously write and submit articles to academic journals. And of course, many and perhaps most donors hire academics to conduct research, which is then often published in the form of donor reports. Thus, the lines between academic work and donor work are hazy and indistinct at best, and at times do not seem to exist at all. Most of the material the team has identified counts as academic work, but a good deal is also donor work. Some comes from academics who have donor support but who are essentially writing with *carte blanche*, and a portion has been produced by academics conducting work that has been outsourced by a state agency but done under the agency's direct supervision.¹

Although the degree of overlap is significant, there remain important differences between the two lines. Scholars can generally analyse whatever they want to, constrained only by what lies in their own data and that available from other sources, and they feel no pressure to connect donor democratization approaches with their impact on the state of democracy over time. But donors find themselves having to demonstrate how their foreign assistance programmes deliver results. It is difficult to do this in end-of-project evaluations, since the intervention has not had time by then to germinate demonstrably and grow significantly. Assessments that appraise movement towards (or away from) democratization and programme impact over time are hard to carry out, which is of course a major reason for the query in which we are now engaged.

¹ In US government practice, the former is generally called a grant, whilst the latter is referred to as a contract.

To resolve the potentially confusing overlap between what is academic and what is donor research and analysis, we will consider to be academic whatever is published in scholarly form, whether in books, journal articles, or working papers, plus material produced by donors that is authored by outsiders (whether or not they are formal academics) who are clearly writing under their own names with more or less autonomy (e.g., Hydén and Samuel 2011). Think tanks like IDEA International or the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) could present another classification problem here, but because they do so much scholarly work they can be placed on the academic side. All official reports and papers published by donor agencies have been straightforwardly placed on the government side, a decision usually (but not always) made easier by anonymous authorship. Thus, we will use the word ‘scholarly’ to denote work published by both academics in books and journals and by academics and researchers writing for donors but doing so under their own names. Most (but not all) of the material produced by donors does not include authors’ names, so the division between scholarly and donor publications becomes simpler, but some fuzziness inevitably remains as to what extent a researcher is writing an official document or expressing his/her own opinions. In our list of references (Annex 2), we have resolved this problem by first recording all documents having a named author or a non-governmental organization as author, whatever the publishing agency, and then listing all documents published by donor organizations without designated authors.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

We faced a number of limitations in the mapping exercises. It quickly became apparent that the literature and documentation on our topics have become immense over the last several decades, so much so that any sort of comprehensive analysis would be impossible absent a larger team and funding. Accordingly, we had to strike some kind of balance between coverage and concentration on high-quality research on the academic side. With donor materials, the challenge has been to gather and digest enough critical documents to give us an understanding of an agency’s approach to our queries and to interview enough donor officials to get a good feel for how they do their work without becoming overwhelmed by the sheer mass of both documents and people. We believe our report will show that we have managed both these tasks satisfactorily.

Our academic exploration was aided by the simple fact that the work is written and is made increasingly easy to find with the many Internet search engines and databanks accessible, as well as the huge number of journals available electronically. Donor documentation was rather more mixed, with some donors like UNDP putting virtually all their reports online and others making relatively little publicly available.

Identifying and interviewing the right donor officials presented a number of challenges. To begin with, each donor understandably organises itself in its own way, with its own nomenclature and labelling, such that it is often difficult to find the appropriate office to approach for an interview, to say nothing of the appropriate individuals. Secondly, as an aspect of their profession, donor agency officials are constantly shifting their

postings between headquarters and overseas, so that often we were able to identify the right person, only to discover that s/he had left the job for another posting. And recent donor agency reorganisations within three of the four bilateral donors we interviewed further confused our efforts to locate respondents. Nevertheless, we believe we have managed to obtain a representative sample of the international donor community.

1.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Democratization portfolio
 - Widespread agreement that it should be a guiding concept, but little interest in implementing it
- Qualitative evaluation methods
 - Still the principal methodology for donors, prominent for academics
 - Political economy approaches fruitful but relatively rare
- Quantitative evaluation methods
 - Many choices, but V-Dem becoming dominant dataset
 - Needed to retain donor domestic support
- Sub-populations
 - Gender focus universally mainstreamed and studied
 - Poverty a prominent but secondary priority
- Backsliding assessments
 - A new challenge

2 Methodology

2.1 REAFFIRMING DEFINITIONS: THE PORTFOLIO AS MAJOR FOCUS

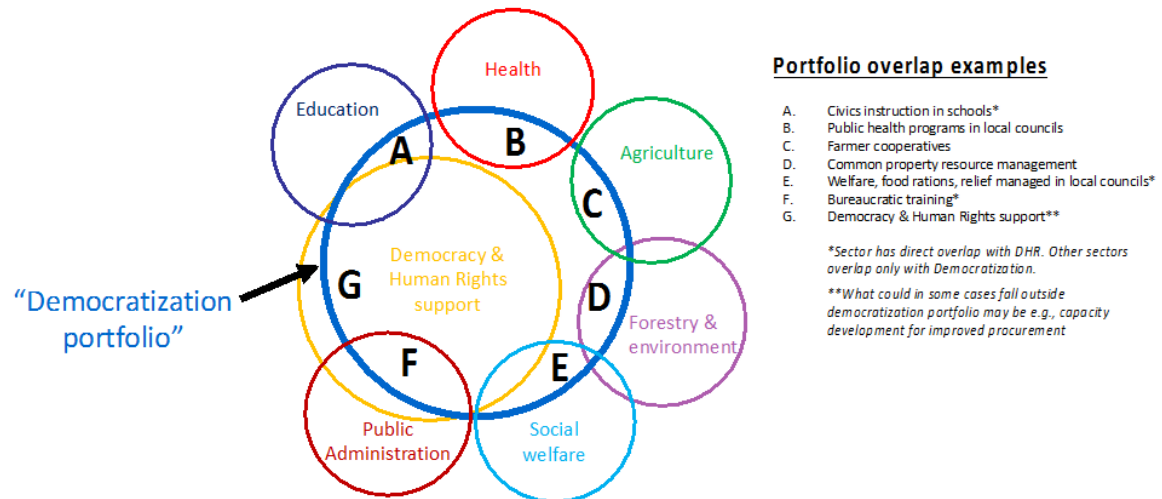
It would be appropriate to reaffirm our definitions of two principal terms we are using throughout: ‘democratization’ and ‘portfolio’. Given the many uses of both words currently employed among academics, think tanks and donors, definitions have to be essentially stipulative. That is, we must specify exactly what we mean when we use these terms. Thus, we understand ‘democratization’ as the movement or trajectory of a political system at any level towards a more advanced or deepening democracy. It can be thought of as ‘democracy writ large’. And we use the word ‘portfolio’ to refer to a set of donor-supported activities that can be considered under one rubric or category, in our case all donor efforts incorporating some aspect of democratization, even those outside what the donor considers its formal democracy programme at the country level.

We label this set the ‘democratization portfolio’, as shown in Figure 1 below. It includes everything a donor does in a given country (or region or globally) across all of its activities that support democratization directly (a donor’s equivalent of Sida’s Democracy and Human Rights (DHR) subsector) or indirectly (through the other subsectors depicted in the figure’s examples). In a sense, the concept indicates the extent to which democracy has become ‘mainstreamed’ in a donor’s overall activities in a given country.

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) report released in December 2020 develops a somewhat similar picture of donor support for democratization with its analysis of extensive and limited definitions of democracy aid (Niño-Zaragúa et al. 2020). Its limited definition comports with our own delineation of democracy support in the figure below, except that it excludes rule of law and judicial reform while we include both.

Figure 1 - Democratization portfolio

The Democratization Portfolio



The democratization portfolio as an abstract concept is easily understood both in the literature and by the donors we interviewed, but as will be evident in the present paper, rather little analysis from academics or donor agencies deals with portfolios as such. Programmes and subsectors have received much attention, overall country-level assistance efforts (i.e. those including all sectors) have received some scrutiny and global efforts have been given a little thought, but portfolio- and region-level efforts have received almost none.²

2.2 FOCI ON SUB-POPULATIONS

Sida has put a great deal of its overall effort into what it calls ‘sub-populations’ – principally women and people living in poverty. Beginning back in the 1990s, most players in the international development community gradually launched similar efforts on the gender front, aiming to mainstream a gender dimension into all their programmes and projects. Academic interest in gender issues has grown rapidly as well. A simple search using Google Scholar for articles employing the terms ‘gender’ and ‘democratization’ shows some 586,000 hits, 33,000 of them since 2016. If we add ‘evaluation’ to the first two terms, the overall total reduces to 107,000 with 28,400 since 2016. The journal *Democratization*, for example, has published some 204 articles locatable under the keywords ‘gender + democratization + evaluation’ since its founding in 1994, so there is a great deal of material available right there. Clearly, some serious narrowing of our search is called for. On the donor side, all the organisations we have reviewed through documents and interviews have incorporated a strong gender emphasis into their strategies and programming, so there is much material here also.

² Actually, it is projects that have been by far the most commonly subjected to evaluations, simply because most if not all donors basically operate in terms of projects. But our main task concerns the portfolio, which groups together projects and programmes, so with some exceptions, we will not be looking at individual projects.

Similarly, poverty, and more recently extreme poverty, have long been a staple topic in the international development community – in microfinance and poverty reduction programmes in particular. Traditionally, these programmes have largely been covered under the economic growth rubric in the donor community, and scholarly research has been conducted through an economics lens rather than a political science or sociological one. Over the last couple of decades, however, what had been the province of economics has been entered by these other disciplines, such that there is a good deal of scholarly writing in print. A parallel Google Search with the keyword set ‘poverty + alleviation + democratization + evaluation’ yielded over 11,000 hits since 2016 – less than half as many as with the gender probe noted just above, but a huge number nonetheless. As for donors, all of them consider poverty a high priority for their democratization programmes, although one second to gender at best. Again, then, there is much material here to work on.

2.3 THE ACADEMIC SIDE: PUBLISHED RESEARCH

We began our search by combing through issues published over the last 10 years in the two leading journals focusing on democratization as such (and probing backward in the journals as references to previous articles came to light): *Democratization*, edited in the United Kingdom, and *The Journal of Democracy*, an American publication. As expected, both journals had published many articles on evaluation of various aspects of our topic. Next, we looked through the two leading journals specialising in evaluation research itself: the *American Journal of Evaluation*; and *Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, published in the US and the UK, respectively. Here, the take was much smaller – seven articles relating to democracy in the American journal and five in its British counterpart. Clearly, democratization holds a much lower place in the evaluation field than more traditional topics like education or public health, partly because it is newer, but more likely because it is more difficult to measure and assess. Last, we looked through the last decade of what is arguably the most eclectic and widely read journal in the wider field of development, *World Development*.

As a second search strategy, we searched through Google Scholar using terms such as ‘democracy’, ‘democratization’, ‘assessment’ and ‘evaluation’ in various combinations, in order to find articles in journals that are perhaps less well known but that often publish valuable research. Google Scholar also tracks book-length publications, which have been included as well.

Only a handful of these articles offer anything directly in the form of methodologies for assessing democratization status and progress of democratization approaches at the country portfolio level. Our research found that scholars in general are quite interested in what donors have done to support democratization and how projects (but not portfolios or field office programmes) have succeeded or failed. They are also very interested in how partner countries have progressed towards democratization (or failed to do so), but for the most part, they treat these as two separate inquiries unrelated to each other. When scholars look at the state of democracy in a given country, they generally do so by looking at index measures and asking how the country arrived at these scores/rankings in very qualitative

political economic terms (elites did X, indigenous minorities resisted Y, corruption hobbled Z) rather than trying to assess what has been going on. What is lacking in most (but not all) cases is analysis of the extent to which a donor portfolio has (or has not) contributed to democratization in the wider sense. Even given all these limitations, however, we did identify over 175 items, mostly academic articles but also including a number of books such as Larry Diamond's latest volume (2019), as well as academic research published by donors (e.g. Finkel et al. 2020; Hydén and Samuel 2011; Hydén and Kristensen. 2019).

Finally, there are two repositories of publications on evaluation that we have found useful. First, there is the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) in New Delhi, which maintains an archive now containing over 3700 development impact evaluations. Of these, only 25 showed up in keyword searches for 'democracy' (23) and 'democratization' (2), and all but three or four of the 25 dealt with short-term experiments of one sort or another.

A second and more specialised repository is the Zotero subgroup dedicated to evaluability assessments maintained by the Corporation for Digital Scholarship, which is located in Vienna, Virginia in the US. Like 3ie, Zotero shows almost no democratization evaluability studies focusing on the country level or higher (only four out of 208, all done for FCDO).

2.4 THE DONOR SIDE: PUBLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Here, we worked with the Sida steering group to identify a set of donors that would include (a) larger and smaller donors; (b) donors that have been significantly involved in establishing norms and standards for democracy support; (c) donors that had shown interest in working with gender and poverty issues; and (d) donors that are both sufficiently transparent in their approaches, operations and records, and that were willing to meet with us in Zoom interviews. Our list included bilateral and multilateral international donors, as well as one non-governmental foundation, as follows:

Bilateral donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), formerly Department of International Development (DFID) - Global Affairs Canada (GAC), formerly Canadian International Development (CIDA) - Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) - United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Multilateral donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Union (EU) - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open Society Foundation (OSF)

As noted above, we are classifying as ‘donor publications’ only those materials which are official documents, such as reports, briefs, strategy statements and the like. Documents that are published by donors but authored by identified individuals (usually academics) and that are clearly written with an academic audience in mind, we classify as ‘scholarly’ publications. Even with this reduced definition, all donors publish many documents for public release. But while some (GAC and UNDP in particular) say they offer public access to all but internal policy materials, some budgetary items and of course personnel files, others provide only a few materials for public consumption. Still others allow considerable public access but no user-friendly methods to find things. In the latter cases, we found our interviewees quite willing to send us materials relevant to our inquiries. Altogether, we had few complaints about lack of access to useful donor documents. Those documents we actually used in writing the mapping studies are listed in Annex 2.

In addition to document reviews, we also conducted interviews with officials in each of our seven donor agencies. In total, 17 interviews were conducted with donor representatives: FCDO (2 interviews); GAC (4); SDC (2); USAID (3); EU (2); UNDP (3); and OSF (1). All the interviews were recorded (with permission of the interviewee) and are in process of being transcribed for our internal records. Interviewees are listed in Annex 3.

3 Principal Findings

3.1 ASSESSING THE STATUS OF DEMOCRACY

This section will address our study's first principal question: how scholars and donors assess the state of democratization at a given point in time and over time, irrespective of what donors have contributed. The bulk of the work to be examined here has been produced by scholars, mostly working independently or with research grants or contracts (some of which originated from donors). A smaller portion has come directly from donor agencies.

The section will open by looking at qualitative methodologies and then move to quantitative approaches, although we take as given that each methodology in fact borrows from the other, so we are really looking at mostly qualitative and mostly quantitative approaches.

3.1.1 Qualitative analysis

As democracy's 'third wave' began to gain momentum in the late 1980s and early 1990s,³ scholars drawn to it worked to develop an understanding of the processes involved. In those heady days, a rough theory emerged, focusing on successive stages of tipping points from autocracy to 'breakthroughs', 'transitions' in which the components of democracy, like free and fair elections, the rule of law, a vibrant civil society and an unfettered media would take shape. The assumption was that countries would eventually reach 'consolidation', when all the serious players in a polity agreed that democracy was 'the only game in town'. All would feel obliged to play by the 'operating rules of the game', both written and unwritten, as the price for staying in it. One major test was to be the 'two-turnover rule', by which voters ousted an incumbent political party at least twice.⁴ The research consisted largely of document reviews, field visits and KIIs (often funded by research grants or consultancies with donors) where possible, and then an estimate of how far along this teleological track a political system had come.

By the late 1990s, democratization as it proceeded in reality showed more complications than expected, as some political systems stalled out along the track and others unravelled. Assessing these reversals, Thomas Carothers published an article in *The Journal of Democracy* titled 'The end of the transition paradigm' (Carothers 2002). The essay caused something of a firestorm of objections, leading to a debate in the

³ Diamond (2019: 41-52) provides a brief summary of this period.

⁴ Leading theorists were O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Linz and Stepan (1996), and Huntington (1991). Carothers (2002) summarises the paradigm well, as does Törnquist (2013: 1-29).

Journal (Plattner and Diamond 2002), but within a few years, the transition paradigm had basically faded out.

Qualitative evaluations of democratization continued, however, using the same methodologies, but now with greater attention to context and events. In addition, evaluations came increasingly to rely on at least some quantitative measures, in response to donor pressures to ‘manage for results.’ Some examples from *The Journal of Democracy* will illustrate the continuing use of qualitative methods in scholarly circles (Romero 1996; DeVotta 2011, Paget 2017). Two donors in particular have continued to emphasise largely qualitative approaches in their country-level assessments: the UNDP and the Soros Foundation.

Many evaluations examined specific projects and so are outside our remit, but a large number focused on the country level. Of these, most were undertaken by scholars, a few on their own initiative, some on contract with think tanks or directly with donors. A couple of examples will illustrate the two types.

- Over a number of years, Olle Törnquist has studied Indonesia’s democratization trajectory, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, resulting in a book-length analysis (Törnquist 2013), among other publications.
- A group of European donors sponsored five country-level case studies to examine citizen voice and accountability, using mostly qualitative methods. This effort was coordinated by a team at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London. FCDO and SDC sponsored the Bangladesh study, undertaken by a team from a consulting firm (Jupp et al.2010). The findings of the five country studies were then synthesised in a report by the ODI team (Rocha Menocal and Sharma 2008).

The most ambitious effort to date in country-level analysis has been the one pioneered by IDEA International, with its Quality of Democracy approach. Launched in 2000, with the release of *Assessing the Quality of Democracy: A Practical Guide* (updated with a new 322-page edition: Beetham et al. 2008), this approach urged thorough analysis of a country’s constitution, political institutions, diversity, competition and citizen opinions. Its major achievement was a massive study of five South Asian countries centred on the year 2004 (Sethi 2008). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the study involved a team of three principal investigators and 47 researchers working for more than three years to produce a report of over 300 pages – a remarkable accomplishment, but also a costly and time-consuming one, which is presumably why so few other studies using this methodology.⁵ Nevertheless, Beetham’s central idea of comprehensive, multifaceted research has had some influence. For example, the UNDP guide for measuring gender and poverty indicators drew on his framework (UNDP 2006).

⁵ The only two we were able to identify covered Nepal (Hachhetu et al. 2008) and Zambia (Chipenzi et al.2011).

Political economy analysis has explored the interface between political and economic actors and institutions as they have advanced and retarded democratization. In the early 2000s, FCDO sponsored a series of 17 qualitative studies in this field as part of its Drivers of Change initiative in place at that time (McLoughlin 2014). These studies probed countries' economies, as well as their political systems, and provided a rounded assessment of how the two intertwined with each other (e.g. Duncan et al. 2002 on Bangladesh). There has been some interest in political economy analysis since then, for instance in Sida's Power Analysis approach (Pettit 2013), but few studies on the order of the FCDO series have appeared, despite some exhortations to conduct more of them (e.g., Rocha Menocal 2014; Haggard and Kaufman 2016; also, Dahl-Østergaard 2005 and Edelman 2009)

Further attention to qualitative analysis will be provided in Section 3.2.

3.1.2 Measuring democratization: quantitative analysis

The vast majority of evaluations in the development field overall focus on projects, understandably enough given that projects must be accounted for in terms of results delivered. It is relatively straightforward to evaluate projects, at least while they are still active, because the players (donors, contractors, implementers, beneficiaries) are all in place, documentation is readily available and logistics (e.g. travel to project sites) is easy to arrange. A majority of scholarly assessments also deal with projects, for a variety of reasons: the writer was part of an evaluation team, has done his/her own fieldwork and wants to publish it, can research the project from documents and/or by interviewing participants remotely, etc.

Above the project level, evaluating a single subsector (i.e. programme) like civil society or political parties, which generally includes several projects in various stages of planning, implementation, closing down and completion, is much more complex. Evaluating a donor's formal democracy programme in a country is even more complicated. Here, the analyst must find some way to aggregate the impact of all the donor's efforts in its democracy sector. This is difficult enough, to be sure, but then comes the attribution issue. If donor X and donor Y are both supporting civil society, how can the researcher attribute any changes to one donor alone (not to mention exogenous factors like changes in state policy toward civil society organisations)? Needless to say, these problems would be greatly magnified if one were to attempt to evaluate the impact of a donor's democratization portfolio as we have defined it here. Trying to add in the democratic side effects of a programme in public health working through locally elected councils to eradicate schistosomiasis in Zimbabwe, for example, would be next to impossible. Assessments at regional and global level naturally compound all these problems, which at least in part explains why so few of them have been undertaken. It is for these reasons that the term 'contribution' is so often used in place of 'attribution'.

These factors largely determine why so many scholars rely on indices to assess the overall level of democracy in a country (e.g. Freedom House, the Economist Intelligence Unit) or components of democracy (e.g. V-Dem, Transparency International). One potential advantage to this approach is that the totality of donor efforts to advance democratization can be captured in a good V-Dem-based research effort, including what work in subsectors like agriculture and social welfare might have added.

As the ‘third wave’ of global democratization began to pick up speed in the late 1980s, and the international development community – both academics and donors – began to devote its energies to it, the sheer amount of academic research on democratization began to expand as well.⁶ A search of five leading journals between 1990 and 2016 identified almost 2700 articles explicitly dealing with empirical analysis. Of these, over 500, or about 17%, focused on ‘democratic quality and measurement’, but most of these were case studies of specific projects or programmes, or were statistical studies using indices (Coppedge and Keuhn 2019; Pelke and Friesen 2019). Analysis at the subsector or democratization portfolio level was essentially absent.

Large-n datasets.⁷ There have been many efforts to gauge democratization itself at the country level, however. Academic interest in measuring democracy goes back to the late 1950s, when Ted Robert Gurr launched the Polity study at the University of Maryland. Now in its fifth version and managed at the Center for Systemic Peace in Vienna, Virginia, Polity 5⁸ covers more than 150 countries with a number of governance measures calculated annually from 1800 onward. It is widely used in academic research, though much less so by donor agencies. Freedom House began its work in the 1970s under the direction of Raymond Gastil. With its easily understood annual calculations of Political Rights and Civil Liberties⁹, it has become arguably the most popular index for both academics and donors. Launched in 2006, the Economist Intelligence Unit’s EIU Democracy Index¹⁰ has become a strong rival to Freedom House with its even simpler single summative score.

Yet another measure is the Bertelsmann Transformation Index¹¹, which initially appeared in 2003 and has been published biannually since then. One significant problem with these measures is that they measure somewhat different aspects of democracy and combine them in different ways, producing indices difficult to compare. Larry Diamond and colleagues (Diamond et al. 2016: 46-75) have reformulated the latter three of these four indexing systems to produce a set of indices that do correlate

⁶ Wilde traces these developments well in his chapter in the Hydén and Samuel volume (Wilde 2011).

⁷ There is no standard definition of “large-n,” but the term generally refers to datasets running into at least the hundreds and often thousands of subjects to be interviewed or scores and more of countries to be included, with many variables noted for each case.

⁸ Accessible at (<http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>).

⁹ Accessible at (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>).

¹⁰ Accessible at (<https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index>).

¹¹ Accessible at (<https://www.bti-project.org/en/home.html?&cb=00000>).

highly with each other. At present this new set continues as an experiment,¹² but if it becomes widely accepted, it could become a standard measure in its own right.

The most recent addition to this group of indices began in 2014, when Staffan Lindberg founded the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. The Institute's Varieties of Democracies now issues an annual report on the global state of democracy¹³ and maintains a comprehensive V-Dem Dataset¹⁴ of 470 indicators and 82 indices covering 202 polities, of which 80 date back to 1789.¹⁵ This hugely ambitious dataset encourages searches by five broad categories like 'electoral democracy' or fine-grained indicators such as 'access to justice by women', which can be compared with the same indicator for men. V-Dem dwarfs the other indices in the level of detail it measures and its temporal breadth of coverage.¹⁶

The datasets have been put to use by scholars asking whether donor democratization assistance has demonstrably improved the democratic climate in partner countries. In a widely cited and very careful study using USAID expenditures and democracy data from Freedom House and Polity IV (the predecessor to Polity 5), Finkel et al. (2007, see also Sarles 2007) showed that between 1990 and 2003, USAID democracy assistance statistically accounted for an 0.05-point annual increase in an average country's Freedom House 13-point scale (i.e. 0.65 points over the 13-year period covered). Causality issues (which the authors deal with in detail) aside, this approach would seem to offer some hope for using a donor's democracy support budget as a predictor of democratization, despite the level of effort required to undertake such analysis, which would be highly discouraging.¹⁷ Using the V-Dem database, Finkel and colleagues updated their study in 2020 (Finkel et al. 2020), finding an attenuated but still positive relationship between USAID democracy funding and democratization.¹⁸

Two other indices should be noted here, given their widespread use by scholars and donors. In the mid-1990s, more donor-oriented indices emerged. The most prominent is the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, or WGI,¹⁹ begun in 1996 by Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kray and updated annually since 2002. The WGI features

¹² Personal communication with Larry Diamond, 18 February 2021.

¹³ Accessible at (<https://www.v-dem.net/en/publications/democracy-reports/>).

¹⁴ Accessible at (<https://www.v-dem.net/en/data/data-version-10/>).

¹⁵ The V-Dem project and its datasets are described in detail in Coppedge et al. (2020). For an example of how the V-Dem data could be used, see Wilson et al. (2020).

¹⁶ See Coppedge et al. (2020) for an in-depth account of the V-Dem project.

¹⁷ Indeed, despite the promise of such work, with the exception of Scott and Steele (2011) we know of no subsequent similar studies over the 13 years since Finkel et al. was published in 2007 other than their own work published in 2020, the Lührmann et al. (2018) study, and the just-released EBA study Niño-Zaragúa et al. (2020).

¹⁸ Interestingly, it can be argued that the linkage between aid and democratisation goes both ways, i.e. that an increase in democratisation leads to more democracy aid from USAID. See Scott and Steele (2011) and Steele et al. (2019). We should note that Niño-Zaragúa and colleagues conducted a similar exercise for their EBA study (2020: 107 & ff.), finding that democracy aid does show a modest positive relationship with V-Dem's electoral democracy index. This holds for all donors, as well as for bilaterals and multilaterals considered as separate groups and Sida by itself.

¹⁹ Accessible at (<https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/>).

six governance indicators such as Voice and Accountability and Control of Corruption, which are now frequently used by donors and academics. In 1993, Peter Eigen founded Transparency International (TI) in Berlin to promote awareness of corruption, and in 1995 TI launched the Corruption Perception Index,²⁰ which has appeared annually. The index now ranks 180 countries.

These datasets provide annual snapshots of the state of democratic play in the countries they cover, all at the national level, except V-Dem, which includes some 22 measures at subnational levels (McMann 2018). Their main value lies in providing data on an annual (or biannual for Bertelsmann) basis, allowing users to track trends over time – especially useful when one wants to get an idea of when democratization began to pick up or decline and by how much, and how countries compare over time on these measures of advance and retreat.

The V-Dem dataset has spawned considerable research in measuring democratization, much of it up to now from academics connected with the V-Dem Institute (though given the breadth and depth of the dataset, it is safe to predict that it will become widely used in the near future). Two such studies will illustrate its potential. Lindberg and colleagues (Lindberg et al. 2018) have analysed over 300 ‘liberalization episodes’ in 180 non-democratic political systems over the 1900-2017 period, asking how many succeeded in furthering the state of democracy (just over a third did so). Lührmann and colleagues (2018) used OECD aid data to find democratization linkages among regime types, finding that significant effects varied between those types. For instance, there were positive outcomes in electoral democracies, but no real impact in closed autocracies.

Other large-n datasets have also been employed in this kind of work. Heinich and Loftis (2019) used democracy aid data to explore linkages to electoral turnover following poor economic performance over some 1100 elections in 114 developing countries during a 35-year timespan, seeking evidence of aid’s impact on accountability. Scott and Steele (2011) created their own dataset to analyse linkages between USAID support and democratization. In addition, as Dijkstra (2018) has detailed, many other studies using different data sources and statistical measures have explored the connections between aid and democratization. Clearly, the possibilities for large-n analysis are immense.

Opinion surveys have become a major tool at both the project and country level.²¹ Most projects of any size include funds to sponsor surveys of beneficiaries (and often implementers as well), in many cases at several stages along the way: baseline surveys at a project’s start, others at mid-term, and finally one at end-of-project. In most developing countries of any size, a competent opinion polling industry has arisen in

²⁰ Accessible at (<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019/results>).

²¹

recent years (mainly conducting market surveys) that can be called upon for this donor work.²²

The second type of poll, the regional barometer survey, has become much more ambitious. The Afrobarometer began in the late 1990s and now conducts national surveys on a regular basis in more than 30 African countries (including North Africa). Topics include democracy generally, elections, gender equality, political participation, access to justice and poverty. The surveys are repeated periodically, with the 9th round beginning in 2019. The survey instrument has a standard repertoire of questions, permitting comparison across countries and over time within specific countries. An earlier effort was begun for Latin America in 1995; Latinobarómetro covers 18 countries in the region with annual surveys. Five additional barometers have been established in other world regions, and collectively they have been a hugely valuable resource for scholarly research.²³ The barometers could be used to assess national democratization progress in a DHR subsector (e.g., rule of law), but the results would reflect citizen opinion of the subsector in general, not the outcome of any particular donor's projects or programmes.

The World Values Survey (WVS), launched by Ronald Inglehart at the University of Michigan in 1983 and renewed every five years, covers more than 120 countries with large-scale opinion surveys focusing on political, socio-economic and cultural matters, thus expanding its scope far beyond the political dimensions traced in other surveys. The wide scope of the data collected by the WVS can be summed up in the title of one of its more recent publications: *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy* (Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

We should devote some attention to randomised evaluations, now generally known as **randomised control trials (RCTs)**. Widely used in virtually every development sector except democracy, they have become the gold standard in the development community, against which other methods are often accorded substantially lower validity. As interest in 'measuring for results' picked up in the 2000s, donors began to demand more rigorous methodologies to calculate outcomes. In response, USAID sponsored a study by the National Research Council (Goldstone et al. 2008), which laid out strong recommendations for randomised evaluations in democracy assessments, with RCTs as the preferred form.

RCTs have become widely employed in social science circles to evaluate development interventions, with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (known as J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) arguably becoming the lead practitioner. But few of J-PAL's RCT studies have involved democracy interventions. Out of 1015 RCTs run by mid-2020, only 22 fell into J-PAL's 'political economy and governance' category, and of these, only seven focused on democratization. All seven

²² Kumar (2013: 140-148) provides a good overview of these surveys.

²³ A series of articles on all seven barometers appeared in *The Journal of Democracy*, beginning in 2007. See the introductory editorial by Plattner and Diamond (2007).

analysed discrete projects lasting two years or less, with relatively small sample sizes. The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) in New Delhi has assembled a dataset of more than 3700 such evaluations, many of which are RCTs. However, less than five percent were classified as ‘public administration’, and almost all of those studies examined non-democracy projects.

The problem for us is not lack of studies, however, but the fact that virtually all of them cover short periods (none over two years and many only a few months), which is generally too little time for democratic change to germinate and grow to any significant extent. A second problem lies in scale: most RCT studies are set at a local level, and ones at a higher level include relatively small numbers of people. Third and most importantly, RCTs can only work with discrete project activities – nothing as large and internally varied as a DHR subsector or portfolio.²⁴ Chris Elbers and colleagues have suggested workarounds for these issues: difference-in-differences approaches (in which the control group requirements are largely removed) and regression analyses (Elbers et al., 2009 and 2013; also Goldstone et al. 2008: 138-139, 182). The promise here is that larger projects, perhaps even the more heterogeneous levels of programmes and subsectors, can be accommodated in the analysis, though some of the attributional clarity of RCTs will be sacrificed.

RCTs have seemed best suited to serve as a method that could show ‘proof of concept’ to aid scholars in their research and donors in planning future interventions. However, a recent USAID study demonstrated that RCTs could be scaled up to national level (Wibbels et al., 2018), a development to which we will return in the next subsection of this paper.

Participatory evaluations have been employed to provide bottom-up assessments in many projects. Beneficiaries are asked to fill out scorecards at municipal level or take part in social audits of programmes at local to state-wide levels in India (Blair 2018, also Jha and Samuel 2011). This kind of instrument has not been employed much, if at all, by scholars or donors, but rather by research organisations largely in India, most notably the Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, founded in 1995 by Samuel Paul, a retired World Bank official. The Centre began work with municipal surveys of public service delivery, but then scaled up to the state level, producing, for instance, a citizen report card for the rural population (92 million in 2011) of Bihar State (PAF 2013) and a social audit of Karnataka State (61 million in 2011) (Vivekananda 2013). If such studies could be produced for governmental units of this size in India, they could surely be undertaken at a countrywide level elsewhere. The chief merit of such participatory evaluations is that they can act in a practical way as an accountability tool and in an evaluational sense as a citizen-level counterweight to the top-down nature of log frame and programme indicator approaches. In general, though, while donors we met will

²⁴ For a more thoroughgoing critique of RCTs, see Piciotto (2020); also Kumar (2013: 89-95).

often use social accountability tools in evaluating specific projects, they have not employed them at the country level.

It can be argued that this kind of mechanism undermines the statutory role of elections as the principal instrument of democratic accountability – a charge similar to that sometimes levied against civil society. But the counterargument would be that both social accountability surveys and civil society activism have the capacity of deployment at any time and issue specificity, while elections come only at long intervals and generally are contested around a wide range of issues and candidates.

Regional democratization assessments have until quite recently, been scarce. Altman and Pérez-Liñán (2002) published one including 18 Latin American countries, and one African regional study (Flavel et al. 2013) has appeared, but in 2018 IDEA International launched an annual publication titled *The Global State of Democracy* that aggregates numerous quantitative indicators by region and within regions by country. The 2019 edition points to 97 indicators, of which 70 percent are taken from V-Dem’s work – an impressive testimonial to that organisation’s influence (IDEA 2019: 249). This series is undoubtedly destined to become as widely used, as the indices are already well established, like those produced by Freedom House, the EIU and others. At present, though, few donors have begun to use this very new instrument.

3.2 ASSESSING DONOR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT DEMOCRATIZATION

On the donor side, the history of democratization evaluation over this period²⁵ is well worth examining, as much of the methodology employed is still in use. The core methodologies of qualitative analysis have been 1) key informant interviews (KII is so well-known an acronym that it is often used as such without description in the development community); 2) site visits; and 3) documents, the latter now much more accessible through the Internet than in earlier days. An additional instrument, focus groups, became popular in the early 1990s. All four methods continue in widespread use.²⁶

Up into the 1980s and even 1990s, the logical framework (usually referred to as the ‘log frame’) was the dominant assessment concept. Developed at the end of the 1960s to evaluate foreign aid projects and widely adopted,²⁷ the log frame is most easily described as a series of steps beginning with Assumptions (which can be considered the Theory of Change underlying the project), and proceeding to Activities → Outputs → Purpose → Goal. In the 1990s, many, and probably most, evaluations conducted in

²⁵ Coppedge and Keuhn (2019) provide a brief appraisal of methods used over this time, and Alexandra Wilde (2011) offers a short account of successive ‘waves’ of democratization assessment during this period.

²⁶ See Blair et al. (1993) for an example. Kumar (2013: 153-165) outlines this methodology.

²⁷ For a quick overview of the logframe, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical_framework_approach. Accessed 22 July 2020.

the democratization field (which itself began in a serious way only in with the ‘third wave’ in the late 1980s) used a log frame approach of one sort or another. Though subjected to considerable criticism,²⁸ the log frame continued in use for many years and is often employed even today.

Beginning in the 1990s, a number of donors, feeling pressure from their legislatures and political leaders to provide measurable evidence of success with foreign aid, embraced the Results Based Management (RBM) movement popular in public administration at the time, and instituted an indicators approach to evaluation. The idea here was to set specific numerical targets for critical aspects of projects and programmes, even up to the country level. USAID and DFID in particular adopted the RBM approach, which tended to encourage officials to work for short-term, easily measured results. In addition, RBM essentially ignored external influences and their impact on program outcomes (e.g., partner policy changes, economic recessions). Some donors continue to employ versions of RBM today (Bjuremalm and Sjöstadt 2016; Holzepfel 2016; Natsios 2010).

Based on our search of the literature on democratization, our strong impression is that scholars working on their own have generally been more interested in assessing the status of democracy, as well as movement toward and away from democratization, than in evaluating the results of donor promotion efforts, but a fair number have also taken the latter path. Most of the work on assessing these efforts, however, has understandably come from the donors themselves, especially after the Management for Results era of the 1990s. All the donor representatives we met with have evaluation protocols at the field mission level, and virtually every project these days gets a yearly check against quantifiable programme indicators of activities, intermediate results and strategic objectives to be attained during its lifetime.²⁹

Deeper assessments come through a thorough review, which often takes the form of three appraisals: one at the beginning to form a baseline against which to judge progress, another at midterm, and a final one at a project’s end. In many projects, a certain percentage of the total of these appraisals is baked into the budget, a practical necessity given the cost of running opinion surveys and bringing in outside experts to undertake reviews.

In contrast, country-level assessments focusing on a democracy sector’s overall donor impact are much less frequent, in large part because of the problems mentioned above of aggregating measures of different sub-sectoral programmes and attributing credit for impact. Such evaluations do take place, however, and some donors perform them on a regular schedule. The UNDP, for example, has established an Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), one of whose functions is to conduct periodic reviews of country

²⁸ For two examples, see Gasper (2000) and Crawford (2003).

²⁹ For examples of indicators used, see the USAID (1998) and the UNDP (2007).

programmes, generally on a five-year timetable (IEO evaluation office 2020).³⁰ In 2019, the IEO undertook 19 such reviews. Its methodology is largely qualitative, using KIIs and documents (including access to material produced by non-UNDP organisations and individuals). IEO reports include all sectors as well as democratic governance, though each sector is evaluated without reference to other sectors, which is to say UNDP does not view its support efforts through a ‘democratic portfolio’ lens. Thus, in its 2019 evaluation of Ethiopia support activities, ‘gender’ and ‘poverty reduction’ were reviewed apart from ‘democratic governance’. Conclusions were stated in written form, not using numerical indicators (IEO-ICPE Ethiopia 2019). IEO produced a similar report on Bangladesh the next year (IPO-ICPE Bangladesh 2020).

Britain’s Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO, formerly DFID) relies on an autonomous evaluation agency, titled the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI), which reports to Parliament.³¹ In recent years, as FCDO scaled back its direct support for democratization, ICAI has undertaken very few evaluations in that sector. In fact, only two out of 57 evaluations over the 2011-2018 period analysed activities in the sector: one was on electoral support globally, and the other was a country-level study on democracy sector support in Nepal and Uganda (ICAI 2012 and 2018). Interestingly, DFID has employed a second level of independent review of ICAI itself in the form of an outside assessment, conducted by contractors, covering its evaluation work between 2011 and 2018 (Mitchell and Baker 2019). DFID also sponsored the only regional evaluation we have come across, a study of its democratization efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa (Flavel et al. 2013).³²

The European Commission carries out evaluations through its Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO). DEVCO has conducted several large-scale, high-level evaluations, the most ambitious of which examined the EU’s support for gender equality and women’s empowerment (Smail et al. 2020), to which we will return later in this paper. Another DEVCO evaluation examined some 148 country and regional evaluations that had been conducted up through 2016, using a desk-study approach (DEVCO 2016). Aggregating this mass of studies at such a high level led to very generalised findings, mainly that the cumulative effect of the many EU interventions had ‘contributed’ to various goals like ‘a democratic and efficient governance framework’. DEVCO has also outsourced democracy research, much of it to The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD). One large EPD team recently completed a mainly qualitative study endeavouring to capture the aggregate impact of European democracy support (Bloching et al. 2019).

Global Affairs Canada (GAC, formerly known as Canadian International Development Agency or CIDA) conducts comprehensive country-level evaluations of its

³⁰ For a description of the IEO, see <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluation-office.shtml>.

³¹ Information on ICAI can be found at its home page <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/>.

³² Two regional studies from Sweden could be mentioned here, both focusing on East Africa: Svenson et al. (2007) from Sida, and Hydén and Kristensen (2019) from EBA.

programmes on a rotating basis, at the rate of several a year. These assessments include all sectors and include a political economy analysis as well as portfolio and document review, KIIs and site visits. GAC's recent Ukraine evaluation, for example, covered nine years (2009-2010 to 2017-2018) and included some 187 projects in all sectors (GAC 2019). Specifically covering the governance sector, the agency conducted a global evaluation of 77 projects in 81 countries between 2008-2009 and 2011-2012, using the standard DAC categories of relevance, effectiveness, etc.

In the last several years, the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Center (DRG) has greatly expanded its evaluative scope and capability in at least four directions. First, it has begun to use USAID's newly launched long-term impact evaluation programme to undertake retrospective analysis of democratization initiatives. Such work necessarily requires extensive effort to locate records, project personnel and beneficiaries, all of which entails significant costs beyond what the usual evaluation requires (ERIE 2018). Thus far, DRG has sponsored at least one evaluation of this sort on civic engagement in Serbia (Babovic et al. 2017). Secondly, USAID has also taken up what it calls ex-post evaluations, conducted closer to an intervention's end than the long-term assessments (USAID 2020). Third, as mentioned earlier, DRG has begun conducting RCT studies on a country-wide basis. The initial study involved 150 of Ghana's 213 districts in a programme that had been operating for several years, and that aimed to increase the accountability of elected local assemblies. This study used two treatment groups and a control group (Wibbels et al. 2018). Intervention was not all that long in duration at the time of testing, but coverage was nationwide – a notable advance for this methodology. Finally, DRG has embarked on a political economy analysis effort, using a guide authored by Rocha Menocal and colleagues (2018). The first two initiatives noted here focus on projects, not on countries or even subsectors, though the Serbia study may come close. Still, it may be possible to move up the level of analysis from project to subsector, e.g. civil society, if not anywhere near to a democratization portfolio.

When retrospective assessments like the Ghana study mentioned above are undertaken after a country-level democracy support program has ended, the results can be striking.³³ A different but arguably even more useful approach would be to undertake ex-post assessments several years after a programme had ended, to see what impact

³³ One Sida-sponsored example in particular stands out here. Henny Andersen and colleagues (2019) conducted a 20-year evaluation of Sida democratisation support efforts in Cambodia, finding that whilst a succession of individual projects supporting democratisation at local council level enjoyed significant success, they operated against a much stronger current of increasing authoritarianism and patronage politics at the top, which meant that those small successes went for naught in the end. Had attention been given to political economy analysis, this deterioration in the larger political system should have been obvious enough to lead either to radical change in the programme or its outright cancellation. In a contrary example, an earlier Sida-sponsored evaluation of the Nordic-funded rural employment programme in Bangladesh from 1980 into the late 1990s found the results reasonably successful (Lindahl et al. 1998).

could still be observed.³⁴ This kind of analysis would be invaluable in showing how and when interventions have enduring long-term effects.

3.3 GENDER AND POVERTY SUBPOPULATIONS

Sida has crafted its entire DHR sectoral effort around a core interest in addressing gender and poverty issues. Accordingly, it asked us to look specifically at how the academic and donor communities have included these two constituencies in their evaluations. The paper will take up these two topics in order.

3.3.1 Gender

Amid the immense scholarly output of research on gender in all aspects over the last several decades, there has been a good deal devoted to gender and democratization. Within that category, there is a subcategory of material on evaluation.

When Google Scholar is searched for items using the keywords ‘gender’, ‘democratization’ and ‘evaluation’, more than 28,000 results published since 2016 are returned. Perhaps the most frequent subjects within this set address ‘elections’ and ‘quotas’: 20,000 and 6000 respectively, which may relate to the relatively wide availability of data on this topic. However, substituting “political empowerment” (arguably a more difficult topic to evaluate) still elicits 5700 hits. In the journal *Democratization* alone, there have been more than 200 articles published since its beginning in 1993 using the three keywords from the beginning of this paragraph. The universe here is large indeed.

Wendy Stokes (2012) provided a good overview in her essay on democratization and gender, covering all three keyword topics and concluding that ‘there are mechanisms in existence around the world both to prompt governments into action and to monitor the results, but that progress is slow and sometimes contradictory’ (Stokes 2012: 406). Research just on one topic can move in quite different directions. In research on quotas, Jayal found that India’s move to impose quota-based gender reservations on local elected councils has, contrary to many expectations, ‘enabled women to address their practical gender needs and interests’ (Jayal 2005: 15). But in a study to determine partner-country motivations for establishing gender quotas, Edgell found a good number of states appeared to be using them ‘as signalling devices [to donors] rather than as a result of ongoing liberalization efforts’ (Edgell 2017: 1103). The agency has devised a “gender-based analysis”—an evaluational tool that is applied to every program periodically. It includes surveys and community workshops among other instruments.

³⁴ One such example is Gary Bland’s (2011) analysis of participatory budgeting’s sustainability in El Salvador nearly five years after the programme itself had ended. An even more impressive long-term evaluation (though not involving democracy) was carried out by a seven-person team over 18 months, looking at the impact of development interventions in Eastern Nepal over a 40-year period (Koleros et al. 2016).

On the donor side, all the officials we interviewed said that gender had become a central focus of their democratization support programmes, to the extent that it is a required component of all project proposals, implementation and evaluation.³⁵ DFID's policy paper 'Strategic vision for gender equality: her potential, our future' (DFID 2018) is a good example. Clearly the most advanced donor in this regard is GAC, which has titled its entire aid programme 'Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy' and has set 'Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls' as its core action area (GAC 2017).

Last year, the European Commission has completed what is surely the most ambitious evaluation to date of support for gender equality, its four-volume assessment of its own programmes over the years 2010-2018. The publication included 12 detailed country case studies, among them one on Bangladesh (Smail et al. 2020).

To aid evaluations of democratic governance, the UNDP has developed a framework for selecting gender-sensitive and pro-poor indicators that is used to monitor all programs systematically. It is based on IDEA International's State of Democracy Project (UNDP 2006). The UNDP's IEO also includes gender as a required topic in its periodic country-level programme evaluations. Its recent assessment for Bangladesh (IEO-ICPE 2020) serves as an example. USAID has a Gender and Development Office that overlooks all the agency's programs. Gender analysis is required before any project and within projects required down to level of individual grants and contracts.

3.3.2 Poverty

The UNDP's attention to poverty parallels very closely its interest in gender as a core theme in all its work. The framework document and IEO assessments mentioned in the previous paragraph give equal emphasis and space to both topics (UNDP 2006 and IEO 2020). But the IEO's recent evaluation of its support for poverty reduction gave no real attention to the topic in relation to democratization (IEO 2018). Perhaps the UNDP, like the World Bank, continues to see poverty reduction as foremost a matter of economic growth and only after that as a democratization matter. Its programme evaluations for Ethiopia, for instance, place 'Economic growth and poverty reduction' first among its subsections on findings, giving the topic seven pages, while 'Democratic governance and capacity development' gets third place and three pages of coverage (IEO-ICPE 2019). DFID, in contrast, heavily emphasised a 'pro-poor' theme in the early 2000s (Duncan et al. 2002; also DFID 2004 and DFID 2010) and supported the work of the Chronic Poverty Research Centre from 2000 to 2011.³⁶ Today, poverty continues as a major FCDO focus but more as an aspect of socio-economic development than of governance or democratization. GAC sees poverty through a lens

³⁵ In many ways, this commitment strongly resembles the ongoing one among so many donors that environmental impact analysis must be an integral component in all projects having any relation to ecosystems.

³⁶ The Centre's work can be found at the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network's website <https://www.chronicpoverty.org>.

of working with marginalised populations along many fronts rather than as a high-profile initiative by itself. USAID has a similar view.

As for the scholarly literature, poverty research has been a staple product in economics for several decades, as an outgrowth of the discipline's much longer devotion to economic growth more generally. There has been some scholarly work on linkages between democracy and both poverty reduction and inequality, with mixed findings in both cases. Crawford and Abdulai (2012) provide a good summary of this work up through the first decade of the present millennium. To illustrate the contradictory research, Franke-Borge Wietzke has recently published a statistical analysis of this linkage, showing that poverty reduction has a stronger effect on democracy than alternative predictors (Wietzke 2019), while earlier research on Brazil's participatory budgeting showed very little effect on poverty or well-being (Boulding and Wampler 2010).

Three serious constraints hobble research in this area. First, while many income surveys pinpoint degrees of poverty in a given population with instruments like the Gini index, it is harder to identify individuals by income quintile or decile to conduct surveys and experiments. This problem is compounded by the fact that people's poverty status is constantly changing. A panel study in Bangladesh found that of the 57 percent of sample respondents who could be classified as living in poverty in 1987-88, almost half had climbed out of poverty by the time of the second survey in 2000, while two-fifths of those above the poverty line earlier had fallen into poverty in the 2000 round (Sen 2003). With a churning population base like this, evaluation research becomes difficult. Finally, as Pande (2020) argues, institutional barriers maintained by ruling elites inhibit organised efforts by people living in poverty to pursue democratic avenues that could redirect poverty-reducing resources to themselves, meaning there is relatively little evidence available for researchers to evaluate.

Participatory budgeting (PB) offers a workaround of sorts for the first two of these constraints. Begun at the municipal level in Brazil at the end of the 1980s, PB engaged citizens to form councils that would prioritize government investment spending and monitor the results. Numerous studies showed people living in poverty participating at a higher rate than their share of the population (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2017). In India, the state of Kerala adopted PB on a state-wide basis in the mid-1990s and experienced the same high degree of participation by citizens below the official poverty line. More importantly, in contrast with so much evidence showing a pattern of decentralization programs succumbing to elite capture, Kerala's PB appears to have escaped this fate, with the result that program benefits have not accrued to those better off (Heller et al. 2007; see also Blair 2020a). If this empowerment of people living in poverty could be accomplished across a state of 35 million people, surely it could work at countrywide level elsewhere.

3.4 THE DEMOCRATIZATION PORTFOLIO AS A WORKING CONCEPT

From the outset of our study, the Sida steering group has emphasised its interest in a ‘portfolio’ approach that would include all aspects of its aid which affected democratization. Our team’s deliberations on this topic led to our delineation of a ‘democratization portfolio’, presented here as the figure in Subsection 2.1. In our search of the scholarly literature and donor documents, as well as in our donor interviews, we looked for evidence that this portfolio concept has been used in assessment work. We found little, if any, indication of its use in either body of written material. When we asked donor officials, virtually all agreed that the concept is an excellent way to consider aid to democracy but noted at the same time that it is not really employed in their own work, which focuses on activities normally included in their agency’s democracy sector.³⁷ (It is worth noting that in all cases this sector looks very much like Sida’s DHR sector.) The ‘silo’ configuration, with its separation of aid programmes into the traditional sectors, continues to be the norm in the international donor community.

The central problem with the democratization portfolio concept from an assessment standpoint came clearly into view at the webinar presentation of EBA’s report titled ‘Democracy aid: any effects?’ on 10 December 2020. In deciding how they would define ‘democracy aid’ for their inquiry, the authors had to choose between an ‘extensive definition’ that would include almost everything a Swedish embassy does in an embassy that even remotely links to democracy and a ‘limited definition’ confined to the DHR sector (our democratization portfolio definition would have come somewhere in between these two poles). When asked why the EBA team chose the limited definition, author Miguel Nino-Zarazua responded that it would be basically impossible to include and somehow measure all or even most of the elements in that wider expression, such as the diplomatic mission, aid to the prison system, and fire and rescue services. Our own definition of ‘democratization portfolio’ does not extend that far, but the same principle holds: it would be very difficult to measure what Sida’s activities in its health or agriculture sector add to democratization. Thus, aid assessment (as well as aid programming) finds itself bound by silos.

3.5 ASSESSING DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

The reversal in course from democracy’s ‘big bang’ expansion of the 1990s to its recession over the last 15 years has been widely observed in both the academic and popular literature. Larry Diamond has adeptly summed up the turnaround by pointing out that from 1991 to 2005, the Freedom House calculations showed more countries gaining ground than losing it (more than twice as many in 7 of those 15 years), but in every year after 2006, more states lost than gained ground (Diamond 2020). Lührmann

³⁷ The one exception on this count was USAID, where officials expressed enthusiasm for our portfolio idea, but we did not have time in the interview to explore how much it had come into practice.

and Lindberg (2019) have found a similar pattern using the V-Dem dataset. Coppedge (2017) has also employed the V-Dem dataset to explore this trend.

The declines at the country level have largely been analysed through qualitative methods (e.g. Blair 2020b, Paget 2017, and Hunter and Power 2019), but the four authors noted in the previous paragraph have also pondered the causes behind these declines, as have other scholars (e.g. Bermeo 2017, Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, Runciman 2018, and Waldner and Lust 2018). In their work, theories of change are emerging to explain the patterns of democratic devolution. And Picciotto (2015) has endeavoured to craft a methodology incorporating a political economy approach with advocacy. It might seem at first glance that testing theories of retrograde change would entail little more than running evidence of democratization backward. But in fact, quantitative assessments have begun to appear. Using the V-Dem dataset, Coppedge (2017) has employed a factor analysis to construct two ‘dimensions of decline’ that can be used to assess the rate of democratic decline at country level. Lührmann and Lindberg (2019) have developed an ‘autocratization rate’ metric using the same dataset. In sum, assessment methodologies for dealing with democratic backsliding are moving in promising directions and should soon lead to an increasing production of studies. Academic scholarship is keeping up with the continually changing landscape of democratization.

Researchers have already begun to conduct assessments with a view to countering democratic decline. Michael Bernhard et al. (2019) has used V-Dem’s historical data covering the period 1900-2010 to test countries’ experiences of resisting breakdowns in order to draw lessons from successes and failures. Henckes and Godfrey (2020) have used IDEA International’s State of Global Democracy data to trace democratic erosion in seven case-study countries, most recently to pinpoint key factors in their declines and propose remedial strategies. Many more assessments of democratic backsliding can be expected to come.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 GENERAL

The democratization portfolio is an appealing concept intuitively and logically. It would make programming more coherent and evaluation more accurate to have all donor activities involving democratization in one package. It would also enable donors to provide a better picture of their efforts to support democracy abroad to their legislative funders and the public, while at the same time allowing researchers to provide a more accurate picture of aid impact. But assembling and utilising that package would be a formidable task indeed. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the concept has gained so little acceptance among donors or researchers, an observation confirmed by the just-released EBA report (Niño-Zaragúa et al. 2020). We would suggest significantly narrowing the concept for future use.

Qualitative evaluation continues as the principal methodology for donors and a prominent one for researchers. But political economy analysis, which probes the underlying connections between political and economic activity, can illuminate so much about how and why democratization advances or declines, remains an underutilised subdiscipline. Sida has supported a very similar approach under the rubric of power analysis (Pettit 2013; see also Dahl-Östergaard et al. 2005). This should be further encouraged in future work.

Quantitative evaluation methodology has significantly expanded in recent decades, greatly facilitated by the creation and expansion of databases like Freedom House, the Corruption Perceptions Index and most recently the Variety of Democracies project, known as V-Dem. New statistical methods have come into use, along with a more widespread understanding of their use in the international donor community. Even though the democratization portfolio concept has found little traction in the evaluation field in general, recent work at USAID (e.g., Wibbels et al. 2018) has developed methodologies to assess sub-sectoral programs like civil society at the country level. If other democracy subsectors like parties, elections, local governance and media could be similarly aggregated to country level, it might be possible to craft a democracy measure that could then add in contributions from other sectors like education and health that would approximate the democratization portfolio framework outlined in Section 2.1. Sida should encourage this kind of research, as well as further development of datasets and their use.

Evaluation methodology now faces new challenges with the global change from democratic progress to democratic decline. The scholarly community has responded with theorizing and efforts to measure the backsliding, as discussed above in Section

3.5. But this is truly a start-up enterprise: after a long string of success, it has become necessary to account for and appraise setback, even failure. It might be useful to extend the net to other disciplines with long experience at dealing with reverses. The literature on commercial reverses and declines is likely to provide some good insights here on how a business after a period of expansion deals with a recession and the need to downsize. The same could be said of bureaucracies facing budget cuts. Some outreach to schools of business and public administration should be encouraged with Sida support

At least three donors have set up independent agencies to evaluate their foreign aid work. The UK has ICAI, the UNDP has the IEO and Sweden has the EBA³⁸. These bodies operate entirely independently of their respective bilateral donor agencies, enabling them to avoid the temptations of self-appraisal and allowing them to provide objective analysis. It is to be hoped that this arrangement can be continued indefinitely.

For other country democratization programs, political analysis along the lines of country-level essays appearing in *Journal of Democracy* or *Democratization* should be good for background and programme context. This kind of work is less costly and can be done more quickly than a full-dress political economy analysis but still requires a level of expertise not generally found within a donor establishment.

4.2 SUB-POPULATIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality has received much attention in evaluation research on democratization, paralleling the steadily increasing profile of gender studies in universities. All the donors we interviewed give gender a high priority, and in the Canadian case, the highest priority. All include gender analysis as well as what might be called a “gender impact assessment”³⁹ in program monitoring and evaluations. We can conclude that gender has become well ‘baked in’ to democratization work for the foreseeable future, reinforced by the continuing academic and public policy attention it can be expected to draw upon in donor countries. .

Poverty alleviation has emerged as a topic of interest in democratization research and for donors, but not as prominently as gender. It remains largely the province of economists and economic growth programmes. Donors do include activities in their democracy programs that are similar to Sida’s perspectives of people living in poverty, but such efforts are cast in terms of including marginalised groups of which people living in poverty are a prominent component.

Although gender and poverty are obviously closely intertwined both theoretically and in the interventions supported by donors, we found less linkage between them in the

³⁸ Although the US does not have a system like this, USAID is subject to outside assessment by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which comes under the Congress, making it independent of the executive branch altogether. But the GAO generally aims at a broader picture in its assessments, not at projects or even sectors. See, for example, GAO (2017).

³⁹ Somewhat similar to the environmental impact analysis required by virtually all donors,

literature than we expected. For example, Wietzke’s (2019) wide-ranging exploration of poverty reduction and democratization makes no mention of gender. Likewise, the EC’s four-volume study of efforts to advance gender equality does not refer to poverty at any point (Smail et al. 2020). We found only two contrasting examples: a couple of IEO country reports do examine the two issues together (IEO-ICPE 2019 and 2020). Donor representatives we interviewed spoke about their initiatives in both areas, but just not at the same time.⁴⁰ Given that at least half of people living in poverty in any given country are female, the overlap between poverty and gender is so large that it makes little sense to pursue democratization initiatives in either group without doing so in the other. It would also make eminent good sense to evaluate poverty and gender at the same time. Clearly, this linkage needs further exploration.

4.3 BEST PRACTICES

On the qualitative side, political economy analysis is clearly the best instrument available. If done well, it reveals the underlying relationships and practices that are likely to facilitate or (more likely) constrain democratization, and it can point to reasons why a program is succeeding or failing. But to be done well, it is time consuming (and therefore costly), and it requires country-level expertise of a high order, which is generally not available in-house for any donor except perhaps for the World Bank or the UNDP. So a full political economy analysis is best reserved for a donor’s most important partner countries.

In tracking democratization progress or backsliding, a logframe analysis, appropriately modified to suit the need at hand, is still superior to other methods. RBM approaches have proven less useful for the reasons laid out in Natsios (2010).

For quantitative assessment, the growth of datasets and analytical instruments in recent decades has created numerous modes of evaluation, making different systems available for particular purposes and audiences. The international development community has benefited immensely from this competition, making it difficult to point to specific products as “best.” Even so, it is possible to roughly rank several excellent ones in order of usability and complexity:

- In terms of ease of use and immediate intelligibility for all users, the Economist Intelligence Unit’s democracy index is ideal with its 1-to-10 scoring for five democracy variables.
- If more detail is desired but not at the cost of statistical complexity, the two principal Freedom House measures of political rights and civil liberties can be used as composited indices or disaggregated into their components. This series reaches back to the early 1970s, providing a longer timespan than the Economist’s index, which began in 2006.
- For sheer richness of democratization detail, V-Dem has become the state of the art with its 82 indices for some 200 polities, stretching back in many cases

⁴⁰ The lack of connection here may be due in part to our failure to press them on it in our interviews.

to 1789. Clear instructions make the V-Dem dataset easy to use for the simplest queries or the most complex statistical analysis.

More specialized inquiries can consult the many datasets available like the Corruption Perceptions Index produced by Transparency International, the various barometers for opinion surveys, or the World Values Survey for cultural data.

4.4 TRENDS OVER TIME

The democratization hubris embodied in Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' optimism (Fukuyama 1991) of the 1990s and in the combined academic and donor enthusiasm for democracy promotion has now been thoroughly replaced by a more realistic humility on the part of researchers and donors. The increasing use of quantitative evaluations has shown this reduction in zeal to be well justified.

More advanced and detailed datasets have enabled more accurate and fine-grained evaluations. The V-Dem archive has become increasingly prominent in this regard, as the many references to it in this paper will attest. It is not unlikely that V-Dem will become the predominant dataset for quantitatively-based evaluative work on democratization, while the more easily understood indices like Freedom House and the EIU will continue to be widely used in qualitative work.

A second-order consequence of this increasingly complex analysis is that fewer consumers in donor agencies and their legislative oversight bodies will be able to understand it aside from executive summaries. Tools like the maximum likelihood estimation and structural equation modelling method used in the recent EBA report on democracy aid impact (Niño-Zaragúa et al. 2020: 35 & ff.) tell a convincing story to statistical cognoscenti, but for policymakers stretching their knowledge to take in a presentation using earlier techniques like ordinary least squares regression and its zero-to-one score readout, the EBA study is likely to be more than a bit puzzling. Considerable effort will be required to render this new research intelligible to the wider public, but if such fields as genetic coding in DNA or subatomic physics can be made not only understandable but exciting to a lay public, then so can the methods used to measure democratization.

Increasingly sophisticated research methods and datasets have demanded increasingly knowledgeable researchers, which has led to significant changes in the postgraduate education that produces those researchers. As a result, successive cohorts of researchers on democratization are better trained in these advanced methodologies, but less acquainted with the area studies approaches that previously characterised preparation for research in developing countries. What will be the consequences for the political economy analysis that many assert should be encouraged as a critical evaluation tool? If it is uninformed by the intimate knowledge of country context and culture that distinguished earlier research in this field, it will surely be far less useful for understanding the dynamics of democratization.

Research of this sort can of course be outsourced to academics, think tanks or contractors, but they face the same consequences of declining academic interest in area studies among the social sciences, in particular those most relevant to democratization work: political science, international relations, and economics.

Annex 1 - Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference **for the Evaluability study of** **Sida's approach to democratization in** **different contexts**

2020-04-29

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1. Introduction

Sida has strong directives to support democratization in its partner countries as well as to strengthen democracy through support at regional and global levels. The democracy support at these three levels is interconnected and meant to be mutually reinforcing at country level. Implementing these directives can be a challenging and sensitive task given that Sida often operates in complex contexts. The task involves decisions related to how the entire country programme/portfolio should be managed to further democracy, create synergies between sectors and handle trade-offs to avoid possible negative effects. This means that the choice of channels, the level of involvement with the state and/or other change agents as well as how democracy support and support in other sectors contribute to democratization are important considerations. Democracy is Sida's largest thematic area¹ - just over a quarter of all funds disbursed, which is almost twice the average of the world's largest donor countries within the OECD.

The Swedish engagement in democracy support has increased significantly² over time. From 112 MUSD, 16% of Sida's budget in 1998 to 870 MUSD, over a quarter of the budget in 2018. Also, the focus of the interventions has changed significantly. To see how well Sida has adapted to this increased focus, fast growth and change of the sector, Sida intends to conduct an evaluation assessing Sida's approach to democratization relative to the experiences and best practices available.

Sida regularly performs a number of strategic evaluations in areas deemed important for the organization. The strategic evaluation plan for each period is decided by the Director General with support from Sida's management team. For 2020, one of the strategic evaluations expected to be initiated is an evaluation of Sida's approach to democratization in different contexts.

An evaluation of Sida's approach to democratization is also included as part of the proposed actions in Sida's response³ to the Letter of Appropriation 2020, where Sida is tasked to make an inventory and report back to the Swedish Government on Sida's work on democracy in development cooperation⁴.

It is stated in the strategic evaluation plan 2020 that an evaluability study shall be undertaken prior to a decision on the proposed full-scale evaluation. This document is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this evaluability study.

2. The proposed full-scale evaluation.

This is a short description of the proposed full-scale evaluation of Sida's approach to democratization in different country and regional contexts, as well as on global level.

¹ Democracy is defined in terms of OECD DAC's sector code and includes e.g. human rights, gender equality, the rule of law and public administration.

² Government letter in response to looking through and developing the work on democracy in development cooperation, 2019, and Study on Sida's Support to Public Administration & Institutional Capacity Development 2003-2015: Perspectives, Evidence and Lessons Learned, 2016

³ <https://www.esv.se/statsliggaren/regleringsbrev/?RBID=20271>

⁴ Government letter in response to looking through and developing the work on democracy in development cooperation, 2019

2.1 Users

Primary intended users:

- Sida's networks for Democracy & Human Rights and Freedom of Expression & ICT as well as policy experts and program managers.
- Sida's board and management.
- Operational Departments at Sida's head office, including the geographical departments, the Unit for Democracy and Human Rights (DEMO), the Unit for Civil Society Support (CIVSAM) and the Unit for Capacity Development (KAPAME), as well as Swedish Missions abroad working with development cooperation.

Secondary intended users:

- The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- The Swedish Parliament.
- Institutions and organizations engaged in democracy support, and in other thematic areas, as intermediaries or implementors of Swedish democracy support, with a focus on Sida's partners.

Other users:

- International institutions and organizations engaged in democracy support, as intermediaries or implementors and in other thematic areas.
- OECD/DAC Governance Network.
- Like-minded donors and philanthropists.

2.2 Use

- Increased knowledge of Sida's approaches (direct and indirect) to democratization in different contexts.
- Input to improvement/development of the operationalisation and programming of strategies for Swedish Development Cooperation.
- Input to Sida's strategy proposals to the Swedish Government, where democratization is a proposed strategy goal.
- Contribute to learning and development as well as internal consistency in democratization work within Sida at different geographical and organizational levels as well as coherence in Sida's methods, theory and assessments related to this work.
- Support for communication and dialogue with cooperation partners and the general public.
- Part of Sida's response to the assignment in the annual letter of appropriation related to the drive for democracy of the Government of Sweden.

2.3 Tentative areas of interest for the proposed full-scale evaluation

This is a short overview of the current thinking on relevant areas of interest for the proposed full-scale evaluation. Please see also sub-chapter 3.3 on aspects of change logic and theory as well as assessment of democratization that will be considered.

2.3.1 Theory and Logic

- Comparing Sida's different approaches to democratization in different country contexts as well as on regional and global levels (the logic Sida uses and the theory behind it) with approaches used by other donors and in academic research. **This should include a discussion on the suitability and, if deemed feasible, results of Sida's approach as well as recommendations on potential improvements.** On regional and global levels, the focus is primarily on the supportive effect for democratization support at country level.

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- Analyzing and assessing rationality and coherence of the theoretical and methodological approaches, including concepts and definitions used at different levels and departments/units within Sida as well as Sweden's Missions abroad. Furthermore, analysing and assessing Sida's logical/theoretical approach for evaluating/choosing different implementing partners and the partners' approach.
- **As part of this issue the question on how internal learning between departments/units/Swedish missions abroad can improve have a high focus.**
- Espoused theory relative to theory-in-use (what we say we do compared to what is actually done). *When evaluating interventions, implementation failure should be distinguished from theory failure.*

2.3.2 Assessment

- Sida assesses the quality, level and change of democracy in partner countries as well as on aggregated regional and global levels continuously. This is done both as part of a context analysis at country, regional and global level for the purpose of policy discussions as well as part of planning and assessing strategy-, program- and portfolio- results. Since Sida's target groups are often subsets of the population, assessments of effects must be disaggregated into relevant population segments. The proposed full-scale evaluation should compare Sida's (and co-operating partners') approach when assessing levels and changes of democracy with approaches used by other donors and in academic research. This should include a discussion on how the results feed back into the programs as well as Sida's learning and method development. It should also include a discussion on the suitability of Sida's approaches for assessment in different contexts and for the different purposes discussed above as well as recommendations on potential improvements.
- Discussing if using different methods and metrics would significantly alter the perceived outcomes in Sida funded programs and projects (contributions).

3. The assignment

3.1 Purpose of the Evaluability study: Intended use and intended users

This is an evaluability study in preparation for a proposed full-scale evaluation of Sida's approach to supporting democratization in its partner countries, through interventions and partnership on national, regional and global levels. The purpose of the evaluability study is to assess the evaluability of Sida's approach to democracy support and to development cooperation in other thematic areas and sectors supporting democratization. The evaluability study should also provide recommendations on methodology and methods as well as suggest relevant evaluation criteria and questions given the intended use of the proposed full-scale evaluation. The focus shall be on the underlying logic and theory used by Sida, the applied change theories⁵. See 2.3.1.

In addition, the evaluability study shall address the evaluability of the methods used by Sida to assess the situation, progress and results in the sector. See 2.3.2.

⁵ Change logic/theory is used here and in the rest of the document as a generic term and not a specification of any specific school of thought. It is meant to include the logic explaining which (chain of) actions are assumed to lead to which results as well as the theory behind these assumptions

Conclusions and recommendations from this evaluability study will provide input to Sida's Evaluation Unit's (UTV) decision on whether to proceed with the proposed full-scale evaluation. The tender is expected to include suggestions on how to make the process inclusive with for example workshops for discussing recommendations on how to conduct the proposed full-scale evaluation with optimal result. It is expected that the tender will suggest a progress reporting structure on a biweekly basis that keeps UTV current on the findings of the evaluability process. These reports are to be used as input to UTV's parallel planning of the proposed full-scale evaluation.

The results from this evaluability study shall also provide input/data to the proposed full-scale evaluation, described above. The evaluability study is expected to compile two mappings including analysis within the areas of change logic/theories and assessment methods (see 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 below). These mappings shall be made available as two separate reports forming a base for Sida internal discussions and learning. Primary intended users of the mappings are the networks of Democracy & Human Rights and Freedom of Expression & ICT, including policy specialists and operational staff. As part of the process of compiling these mappings it is expected that tenders will propose one seminar/workshop for each mapping based on early findings and that the input from these seminars/workshops are allowed to have a large impact on the final analysis and mappings. It is also expected that tenders will include one learning seminar for each mapping where the results are presented and discussed.

The evaluability study is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the process.

3.2 Scope of the Evaluability Study

It is expected that the scope of the evaluability study shall be discussed in the tender. It is also expected that different alternatives for the scope of the evaluability study shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report with a discussion on pros and cons for the alternatives.

3.3 Objective of the Evaluability Study

3.3.1 Feasibility of the proposed full-scale evaluation

The proposed full-scale evaluation will focus on two main areas, both of which will be discussed more in detail below.

The question on how internal learning between departments/units/missions abroad can improve has a high focus.

(A) Sida's change logic/theory, including how Sida assesses partners' change logic/theory and

(B) Sida's assessment of the quality, level and change of democracy in a country.

The first objective of the evaluability study is to assess the feasibility of the proposed full-scale evaluation with regards to availability of information/data for these two areas (A and B), as well as suitable methodology and methods for data collection. The evaluability study is expected to include a thorough discussion and recommendations on methods both for data collection as well as for evaluating (A) and (B) along the areas of interest discussed in section 2. The evaluability study is expected to include recommendations on the scope of the proposed

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full-scale evaluation. Since the proposed full-scale evaluation would be rather demanding both regarding availability of data and methodology the tender is expected to show an understanding of the issues. When possible, methods prioritizing a larger sample by using desk studies, remote interviews etc. should be used instead of field trips.

To provide some reality feedback on the proposed methods, the report is expected to include a small scale “proof of concept“ collection of information/data from a representative selection of sources (to be defined during the inception phase but not more than four cooperation countries).

The feasibility study should include proposals and discussions on scope, selection criteria regarding countries and interventions, data and suggestions on evaluation criteria and evaluation questions. **This should include a discussion on how the change logic/theory and assessment methods used by Sida and its cooperation partners (data from point A and B below) can constructively be related/compared to the mappings from objective 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 below.**

The tender should include a proposal on a debriefing workshop/seminar where the results relevant for the proposed full-scale evaluation can be discussed.

A) Sida’s change logic and theory as used and/or referenced to explicitly and implicitly within Sida or by an implementing partner.

The proposed full-scale evaluation is expected to include an extensive mapping of the change logic and theory (if any) used by Sida (or if relevant, it’s implementing partners) at different levels within Sida. This includes specifying the underlying logic (cause and effect relationships) of Sida’s democracy support including what resources and activities are expected to produce what results as well as the underlying theory on causality (why are these activities expected to produce these results). The theoretical superstructure should be limited to what is relevant for understanding the assumed causation in the chain of logic described. The theoretical mapping should include the commonly recurring theme - if and how donors should engage with non-democratic governments and, a discussion on the potential effects on democratization from donor involvement in other thematic areas and sectors. How can involvement within different sectors of a donor portfolio interact to support the goal of strengthening democracy? How can involvement through different channels interact to support democratization ?

This is proposed to be done at three levels of analysis within Sida. The levels overlap in some cases and it is expected that a working division for the feasibility study will be agreed on in the inception report.

1. **Sida (agency) level.** Sida has a unit for Policy Support with Lead/Policy Specialists in the area of Democracy and Human Rights including Freedom of Expression/ICT (TEMA), as well as a dedicated unit for global support to Democracy and Human Rights (DEMO). Analysis at this level frequently focuses on policy and aggregated trends.
2. **Strategy level.** Approximately every fifth year a new country and regional strategy governing Sida’s work in each partner country is drafted and adopted by the Government of Sweden. This is done in two steps. First, a strategy proposal is elaborated by Sida which is by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to inform government decisions on country, regional and global a co-operation strategies which govern Sida’s work.
3. **Operational and intervention level.** When a new strategy is launched, the relevant Sida department/unit or Swedish mission abroad

drafts an operationalization plan. A change logic and theory is an explicit part of the operationalization plan. Individual interventions are then initiated or in the case of already existing interventions they are either terminated or continued as deemed relevant for the new strategy. This is usually handled by the relevant country offices or regional departments.

The focus is both on espoused theory: What does Sida's representatives communicate? How does Sida argue in strategy proposals? What does Sida units or Swedish missions abroad say or write in intervention documentation, as well as on what is actually done?

Note that the focus on change logic and theory should be on use relevant to Sida's mission on democracy support and human rights with a focus on people living in poverty/people who are poor⁶.

B. Current assessment of democratization in Sida

Sida assesses the situation and progress of its strategy goals and programs/interventions related to democracy promotion at least yearly. In addition, there is a continuous general discussion on the state of democracy and freedom related to our partner countries among programme officers, thematic experts and policy specialists. The study should assess the feasibility of evaluating the suitability of the assessment methods used by Sida. This should be done at different levels preliminary suggested below but to be agreed on during the inception phase.

- Usage in Sida internal discussions/analysis of the aggregated trends (i.e. 'shrinking democratic space', 'democratic backsliding*', 'autocratisation').
- In Sida internal assessments of goals/targets/progress for interventions and strategy goals.
- In Sida internal country analysis (i.e. Multi-Dimensional Poverty Analysis, MDPA).

3.3.2 State of the art thinking on change logic and theory for democracy promotion

International democracy support among OECD/DAC donors has remained fairly stable as share of donor budgets over time, 7% 1995 versus 10% today. Growing aid budgets however have increased the actual amount spent in the sector by almost 4 times to 12.5 billion USD (2017). During this time the focus of democracy aid has shifted substantially, and several new sub sectors/focus areas have been introduced. We can hope that 35 years of donor and partner experiences as well as academic endeavours have generated some valuable insights into what works well and what works less well in different contexts.

The second objective for the evaluability study is to compile a mapping of the current thinking among donors, partners and academics in the area of change logic and theory. Note that the same focus on practical use and limitations on theoretical superstructure as in the section above should apply here.

The mapping should relate to (but not be limited to) the following issues:

⁶ For a more stringent definition of poverty see Sida Multi-Dimensional Poverty Analysis primer which, in addition to economic resources define a number of other (for Sida) relevant dimensions.

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- Discussions on change logic and theory should, if relevant, also include information on existing criticism and areas of contestation of the logic/theory and if relevant, proposed alternatives.
- The definition of democracy support should include democratic political institutions and processes, human rights, the rule of law, well functioning public administration and institutions, including state building.
- Discussions on the potential effect on democratization from donor involvement in other sectors than democracy support. How can involvement within different sectors of a donor portfolio interact to support the goal of democratization? How can involvement through different channels interact to strengthen democracy?
- Comparison of bilateral support to strengthen democracy versus support through multilateral or international organizations.
- The discussion should include the commonly recurring theme if and how donors should engage with non-democratic governments. This issue should be considered in all of the questions above.
- Include a discussion on Effect versus Cost/Resources versus Risk for change logic/theories discussed where risk includes inherent risks of failure to reach the expected outcomes, risk of adverse effects as well as risks for backlashes in the political sphere in the donor or partner country, including security risks faced by partners.

Democratization processes are complex processes driven by factors to a large extent outside the influence of international development actors, something the logic and theories guiding democracy support must account for. We expect the mapping to use a systems perspective in categorizing the area in a way relevant for addressing complex processes, but the tender should tentatively outline the suggested approach.

Sida's work on strengthening democracy also takes place in many different contexts. It also works with many different approaches, most of the time overlapping. The tender should suggest how the mapping can relate to and include such factors in a constructive and comprehensible way including:

- Can we find a pattern of methodological/theoretical differences based on some categorization of context?
- Can we find a pattern of methodological/theoretical differences based on some categorization of within population target segments?

This mapping should be presented as a stand-alone deliverable (document and presentation) suitable to use as a basis for discussions and learnings. As part of the process of compiling the mapping, it is expected that the tender will include one seminar/workshop based on the early findings and that the input from this seminar/workshop is allowed to have a large impact on the final analysis and mapping. It is also expected that the tender should include a learning seminar after the conclusion of the study where the mapping will be presented and discussed.

3.3.3 State of the art for assessment of the state and change of democracy in developing countries

In order to analyse the state of democracy in our partner countries as well as assess to what extent the intended results of democratization support has been realized, one has to define both the intended results as well as be able to assess the state and change of democracy in a given context. Given the large number of actors as well as the varying contexts, the expected result

of democracy support will vary. Also, the unit of analysis will vary from the state down to different segments of the population.

The third objective for the evaluability study is to compile a mapping and discussion of the current thinking among donors, partners and academics on how to define and assess the levels and changes in the democratization processes of a country as well as its different sub populations. In particular with a focus on how to assess the results of democracy support as well as support through other thematic areas at strategy-, program- and portfolio level (formative as well as summative). Sida's main target group is people living in poverty/people who are poor⁷ within their partner countries so there should be a focus on that sub population in addition to gender. The focus should not be on making a list of yearly indexes but rather on more "analytical" methods. We expect the tender to include a first, tentative suggestion on how to approach this task and a more detailed specification in the inception report.

This mapping/discussion should be presented as a stand-alone deliverable (document and presentation) suitable to use as a basis for discussions and learning. As part of the process of compiling the mapping, it is expected that the tender will include one seminar/workshop based on the early findings and that the input from this seminar/workshop will be allowed to have a large impact on the final analysis and mapping. It is also expected that the tender should include a learning seminar after the conclusion of the study where the mapping will be presented and discussed.

Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further developed during the inception phase of the evaluability study.

3.4 Approach and methods for the Evaluability Study

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluability study approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluability study design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report.

Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the evaluator and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the tender. The evaluator shall to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluability study approach/methodology and methods.

A *gender responsive* approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used.

Sida's approach to evaluation is *utilization-focused*, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluability study process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluability study. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present

- i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluability study process and
- ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluability study.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluability study, evaluators should ensure a design and process that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data

⁷ For a more stringent definition see Sida Multi-Dimensional Poverty Analysis primer which, in addition to economic resources define a number of other (for Sida) relevant dimensions of poverty as well as integrates the five perspectives, e.g. perspectives of people living in poverty, a human rights based approach (rights perspective) and a gender equality perspective

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collection phase or the dissemination phase. The evaluators will be requested to sign confidentiality agreements with Sida.

4. Organisation of evaluability study management

This evaluability study is commissioned by Sida's Evaluation Unit (UTV) at the Department for Operational Support. Which also, together with the networks for Democracy & Human Rights, Freedom of Expression & ICT, relevant policy specialists and operational staff involved in programming are the intended users. Representatives from UTV together with representatives from relevant units within Sida has formed a steering group, which has contributed to and agreed on the ToR for this evaluability study. The steering group is a decision-making body. It will approve the inception report, the final report of the evaluability study, the mappings and evaluate the tenders. The steering group will participate in the start-up meeting of the evaluability study, as well as in the debriefing/validation workshop and the two mapping workshops where preliminary findings and conclusions are discussed.

5. Quality of the Evaluability Study

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation⁸. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation⁹. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the process.

6. Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluability study shall be carried out between June 2020 and February 2021.

The table below lists key deliverables for the process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Workshops will be held in Stockholm. Meetings under point 6 will be virtual. Other meetings will be in Stockholm if deemed feasible by Sida, otherwise virtual.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Start-up meeting (virtual)	Steering group and evaluators	2020-06-17 13:00-16:30
2. Draft inception report delivered.	Evaluators	Mid-August.
3. Inception meeting in Stockholm or virtual	Steering group, evaluators and reference group.	End of August.

⁸ DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, OECD, 2010.

⁹ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

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4. Comments from intended users to evaluators	Comments from Sida during inception meeting and in writing after inception meeting.	One week after inception meeting.
5. Approval of inception report	Steering group	
6. Data collection, analysis, report writing and quality assurance including bi-weekly update meetings/discussions with the steering group as a basis for their work on the ToR for the proposed full-scale evaluation.	Evaluators	Up to end of November
7. Workshop as part of input to mapping on change logic/theory (see 2.3.1)	Evaluators, steering group as well as relevant participants invited by the steering committee.	Date agreed on during the inception phase.
8. Workshop as part of input to mapping on assessment methods (see 2.3)	Evaluators, steering group as well as relevant participants invited by the steering committee.	Date agreed on during the inception phase.
9. Debriefing/validation workshop (meeting)	Evaluators, steering group, reference group.	Mid November
10. Draft evaluability study report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility study • Mapping change logic/theory • Mapping assessment method 	Evaluators	Beginning December
11. Comments from intended users to evaluators	Steering group	Mid December
12. Final evaluability report	Evaluators	Mid or end January
13. Seminar Feasibility study	Evaluator, UTV, Steering group.	End January or beginning February
14. Workshop Mapping change logic/theory	Evaluators, relevant Sida personell	February, Steering group decides preliminary date during inception phase.

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15. Workshop Mapping assessment methods	Evaluators, relevant Sida personell	February, Steering group decides preliminary date during inception phase.
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The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluability process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluability study proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluability questions, present the evaluability study approach/methodology (including how a utilization-focused and gender responsive approach will be ensured), methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluability study design. A clear distinction between the evaluability study approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluability study should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluability study.

The final report as well as **the two mappings** (see 3.2, point 2 and 3) shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final reports should have a clear structure. The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages. The evaluability study approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail and a clear distinction between the two shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect a gender analysis/an analysis of identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. The report should be no more than 35 pages excluding annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report) while a target for the two mappings should be discussed and agreed on during the inception phase. The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation¹⁰.

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report and mappings, insert them into the Template for Sida Studies in Evaluation¹¹ and submit them to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved reports to sida@nordicmorning.com, with a copy to [Johan Kiessling](mailto:Johan.Kiessling@sida.se) as well as evaluation@sida.se. Write "Sida Studies in Evaluation" in the email subject field. The following information must be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full report title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".
4. Type of allocation "sakanslag".
5. Type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas.

¹⁰ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

¹¹ The template will be provided by Sida.

7. Evaluability study team qualification

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the evaluation team shall include the following competencies:

1. Extensive knowledge and experience of democratization support in different contexts, including developing, transitional and conflict and fragility affected countries.
2. An *active* researcher at consultant level PhD with expert knowledge of the research area democratization processes in different contexts, including developing, transitional and conflict and fragility affected countries.
3. An *active* researcher at consultant level PhD with expert knowledge of assessment methods of democratization (situation, levels and results).
4. Extensive experience of other donors' democratization support (processes, assessment methods, theories of change etc), including bilateral, multilateral, European and non-European donors.
5. Extensive experience of at least 5 assignments of evaluating democracy support.
6. Documented knowledge and experience of utilization-focused evaluation and participatory evaluation processes.
7. Extensive facilitation and communication skills.
8. Extensive experience of leading learning workshops.
9. At least one team member must have an excellent command of Swedish.

Please note that the consultancy firm/consortium, including separate members of a consortium carrying out the evaluability study, may not qualify for tendering for the full-scale evaluation due to potential conflicts of interest.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the tender. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local consultants are included in the team if appropriate.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

8. Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluability study is 1 800 000 SEK.

The contact person at Sida is Johan Kiessling, VERKSTÖD/UTV. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by the Evaluation Unit, VERKSTÖD/UTV.

Contact details to intended users will be provided by the Evaluation Unit, VERKSTÖD/UTV.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics for bookings, interviews, preparing visits including any necessary security arrangements. Meetings and workshops with Sida will be prepared in collaboration between Sida and the evaluator but the evaluator has the overarching responsibility for the organization.

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9. Annexes

Annex A: List of key documentation

Regeringsskrivelse till svar på att inventera och utveckla arbetet med demokrati i utvecklingssamarbetet, 2019 (references to important research can be found in the paper)

Sidas skrivelse som svar på Regleringsbrevsuppdrag om Krympande demokratiskt utrymme, 2017

Study on Sida's Support to Public Administration & Institutional Capacity Development 2003-2015: Perspectives, Evidence and Lessons Learned, 2016

SADEV, *Demokratisk utveckling och ökad respekt för mänskliga rättigheter – resultat av svenskt bistånd*, SADEV report 2012:1

Rocha Menocal & Sharma, *Joint Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability*, Synthesis Report, ODI, 2008
Andersen et al, *Supporting State-Building for Democratisation? A Study of 20 Years of Swedish Democracy Aid to Cambodia*, EBA Rapport 2019:03

Swedish Aid in the Era of Shrinking Democratic Space – the Case of Turkey, EBA Rapport 2018:06

European Partnership for Democracy, *Democracy Abroad: Different European approaches to supporting democracy*, 2019, <http://epd.eu/>

European Partnership for Democracy, *Review of European Democracy Support, An Executive Summary of Findings and Recommendations*, June 2019, <http://epd.eu/>, accessed 2020-03-27

Sida. UTV Working Paper 2007:3: [Assessment of Sida's Support for Human Rights and Democracy](#), link: <https://www.sida.se/Svenska/publikationer/153205/assessment-of-sidas-support-for-human-rights-and-democracy/>, accessed 2020-03-27

Carothers, Thomas, '[International Democracy Support: Filling the Leadership Vacuum](#)', July, 2019, link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/07/18/international-democracy-support-filling-leadership-vacuum-pub-79522>, accessed 2020-03-27

Carothers, Thomas, '[Defending Civic Space: Is the International Community Stuck?](#)', October 2019, link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/22/defending-civic-space-is-international-community-stuck-pub-80110>, accessed 2020-03-27

Anna Lührmann, Valeriya Mechkova, Sirianne Dahlum, Laura Maxwell, Moa Olin, Constanza Sanhueza Petrarca, Rachel Sigman, Matthew C. Wilson & Staffan I. Lindberg (2018) State of the world 2017: autocratization and exclusion?, *Democratization*, 25:8, 1321-1340, DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2018.1479693

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Democracy Facing Global Challenges: Variety of Democracy Institute Annual Democracy Report 2019, länk: <https://duckduckgo.com/l/?kh=-1&uddg=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.v-dem.net%2Fen%2F>, accessed 20200124

International IDEA: The Global State of Democracy 2019 – Addressing the Ills, Reviving the Promise, November 18, 2019, Stockholm, link: <https://duckduckgo.com/l/?kh=-1&uddg=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.idea.int%2Four-work%2Fwhat-we-do%2Fglobal-state-democracy>, accessed 20200209

Nevitte, N. & Kanji, M. Authority Orientations and Political Support: A Cross-national Analysis of Satisfaction with Governments and Democracy. link: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSPublicationsPapers.jsp?PUB=9> (accessed 2020-02-10)

Annex 2 - List of Documentation

Authored Documents on Democratization:

Altman, D., & Pérez-Liñán, A. (2002). 'Assessing the Quality of Democracy: Freedom, Competitiveness and Participation in Eighteen Latin American Countries'. *Democratization*, 9(2), 85-100, DOI: 10.1080/714000256.

Andersen, H., Larsson, K., and Öjendal. (2019). Supporting state-building for democratisation? A study of 20 years of Swedish democracy aid to Cambodia. EBA report 2019:03.

Babovic, M., Newkirk, J.A., Ilic, D.R., Golemac-Powell, A., Hasecic, D.H., and Vukovic, D. (2017). *The Role of Community Development and Citizen Engagement Activities in Strengthening Civic Engagement and Government Responsiveness in Serbia*. USAID Mission Serbia. Ex-Post Evaluation – Final Report. Submitted by SeConS Development Initiative Group Belgrade.

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Beetham, D., Carvalho, E., Landman, T., & Weir, S. (2008). *Assessing the Quality of Democracy. A Practical Guide*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Stockholm.

Bermeo, N. (2016). 'On Democratic Backsliding'. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 5-19. DOI: [10.1353/jod.2016.0012](https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2016.0012).

Bernhard, M., et al. (2020). 'Parties, Civil Society, and the Deterrence of Democratic Defection'. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 55(1), 1-26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-019-09295-0>.

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- Coppedge, M. (2017). *Eroding regimes: What, where, and when?* Working Paper 2017: 57. V-Dem Institute.
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Annex 3 - List of Interviewees

Name	Position	Organisation	Date
Sarah Lister	Head of Governance Unit	UNDP	October 22 nd , 2020
Eric Bertram	Deputy Director, Democracy Policy and Indigenous Affairs	Global Affairs Canada	October 23 rd , 2020
Patrick Costello	Head of Division Democracy and Electoral Observation	EU/EEAS	October 23 rd , 2020
Benedict Teagarden	Chief of Staff	USAID	October 27 th , 2020
Jennifer Erickson	Deputy Director Global Issues and Development Branch	Global Affairs Canada	October 28 th , 2020
Melina Trippolini Papageorgiou	Democracy Lead	SDC	October 29 th , 2020
Ursula Keller Alazzawi	Gender Lead	SDC	October 29 th , 2020
Shehryar Sarwar	Senior Gender Equality Specialist	Global Affairs Canada	October 30 th , 2020
Muthoni Wanyeki	Regional Director	Open Society Foundations	October 30 th , 2020
Vijaya Vadvelu	Senior evaluator	UNDP	November 9 th , 2020
Anonymous	Anonymous	FCDO	November 16 th , 2020
Dennis Curry	Senior Governance Advisor	FCDO	November 19 th , 2020

ANNEX 3 - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Amanda DeSaladeer	Deputy Director, International Assistance Evaluation	Global Affairs Canada	November 23 rd , 2020
Thomas Millar	Head of Sector, Democracy,	EU/DEVCO	November 30 th , 2020
George Conway	Deputy Director of the Crisis Bureau	UNDP	December 1 st , 2020
Brady Witthoft, Daniel Sabet, Matthew Baker	DRG Learning team	USAID	December 7 th , 2020
David Jacobstein	Cross-Sectoral team	USAID	December 21 st , 2020

Mapping Approaches to Democratization Assessment

This report presents the findings from the second mapping exercise that researches how researchers and international donors assess democratization, and donor efforts to support and promote it. A conventional definition of democracy was preferred in this report. The research focused on methodologies themselves, both qualitative and quantitative, rather than on findings and analyses.

The report reveals that qualitative evaluation continues to be the principal methodology for donors and a prominent one for researchers, and therefore recommends that underutilised political economy analysis should be expanded. Quantitative evaluation methodology has expanded greatly in recent decades, using ever more advanced methods, and its future growth should be supported. However, evaluation methodology faces new challenges in assessing democratic backsliding but is rising to the task. Lastly, gender equality has become a top priority in democratization programmes and evaluation. Poverty has assumed a prominent but lower place and remains largely the province of the economic growth sector. Efforts to link these themes in democracy evaluations should be encouraged.

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