

Liam Swiss and Jessica M.V. Barry. Forthcoming. “Have Changes in Official Language led to Spending Shifts?” in Rebecca Tiessen and Stephen Baranyi eds. *Canada’s commitments to gender and development in the Global South*. McGill-Queen's University Press. (equal co-authors)

CHAPTER 1

HAVE CHANGES IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE LED TO SPENDING SHIFTS?

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INTRODUCTION

Canada has long been considered a leader in the promotion of gender equality in the international context (Baranyi and Powell 2005; McGill 2012; Stienstra 1995; Sjolander 2005; Riddel Dixon 2001). Despite this reputation, it had become increasingly evident that CIDA had “reduced [its] overall commitment to gender equality despite strong rhetoric and policy guidelines” (“Members of informal”, p.1). Since the early 2000s Canada’s commitments to gender equality have been on the decline (Swiss 2012b), a trend mirrored in much of the international community (Alpízar et al. 2010; Alpízar Durán 2015). In 2009, government staff responsible for international aid policy through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) – now Global Affairs Canada (GAC) - were instructed to replace the term “gender equality” with “equality between women and men” (Collins 2009). The move surprised many, and has been interpreted by some as a challenge to Canada’s longstanding history of promoting the concept of

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gender equality globally. Tiessen and Carrier (2015) have thoroughly documented the politics and perceptions of this discursive shift, as the change in language was met with much criticism by many in the development sector. The rationale for the change is unclear, however one possible reason is an understanding of the term ‘gender equality’ amongst elected officials as too ‘liberal’ for a conservative constituency, or equated with the promotion of gender diversity, homosexuality, or the sexual and reproductive rights of women, including abortion. Alternatively, a limited understanding of the term ‘gender equality’ amongst officials may have made the expression ‘equality between men and women’ a desirable alternative, being easier to understand from a communications standpoint.

Whatever the government’s rationale, Tiessen and Carrier outline the important theoretical and programmatic implications of such a departure from Canada’s traditionally robust commitment to the concept of gender equality. Despite controversy surrounding the discursive shift, the question of whether the change in language corresponds to a significant change in spending on gender equality at the former CIDA has yet to be investigated. This chapter analyzes the former CIDA’s own Open Data Historical Project Data Set and International Aid Transparency Initiative Data Set to examine the trends in spending on gender equality by Canada in the period from 2005 to 2014 – the years immediately surrounding the shift away from the language of gender equality. Using a sample of over 240,000 project transactions in this period and comparing CIDA’s Gender Equality Marker coding to DAC Gender coding sources, this chapter examines whether the discursive shift away from gender equality was associated with any notable shift in spending on gender equality at CIDA. Surprisingly, the study concludes that Canada’s aid spending on gender equality has not decreased significantly during the Harper years, due partly to bureaucratic resistance.

BACKGROUND

Gender Equality and Canadian Development Assistance

In the past several decades the rights of women have gained prominence in global international development discourse. The adoption of women and gender as a development priority has been seen through increased engagement of major donors with these issues over the past four decades (Moser 2005; Moser and Moser 2005; Rathgeber 1990, 1995; Swiss 2012a; Smyth 2007). Donors have subsequently developed specialized units and policies addressing women's rights and gender equality concerns in their programs and as Smyth (2007) notes, 'gender talk' has become pervasive across a wide range of development issues, from economic policy to human rights and political participation. The increase in support for women's rights globally has coincided with the expansion of the global women's movement and increased visibility of gender equality issues at international conferences such as the high profile United Nations (UN) World Conferences on Women and the UN Decade for Women between 1976 and 1985. As a result many countries began to emphasize the rights of women in a broad spectrum of policy areas, including development assistance (Swiss 2012a).

Canada, as a relatively large provider of development aid, has long been considered a leader in the promotion of gender equality on the global stage (McGill 2012; Stienstra 1995; Sjolander 2005; Riddel Dixon 2001; Baranyi and Powell 2005; Hendriks 2005; Angeles 2003). Canada was considered ahead of the pack on gender equality policy on the global stage, ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, endorsing gender mainstreaming through the UN's 1995 Beijing Declaration, the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, in Beijing, Security

Council Resolution 1325 as well as adopting the OECD Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) Guidelines for Gender Equality (Baranyi and Powell 2005). Some argue that these policy commitments contribute to an image of Canadian state identity as a leader on gender equality issues. Howell (2005) argues that Canadian foreign policy discourses produce narratives of Canada as 'peaceful, tolerant, and orderly', and Richey (2001) points to Canada as portraying a 'feminist state identity' in international relations.

The former Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) policies on gender equality were long considered on the 'leading edge' of international practice (Brown 2012). The McLeod Group, a Canadian foreign policy advocacy group, has noted Canada's consistent work since the mid-1970s on the work they have done internally, with their Canadian partners and with international institutions, in the promotion of women's 'full participation' in the development process. They state that for many years CIDA "worked to promote a deeper understanding within CIDA and globally of the systemic causes of women's subordination and the social construction of gender relations, and translated that understanding into policies and programming" (McLeod Group 2013, n.p.). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s CIDA adopted a number of gender-equality related policies including its first policy guidelines on Women in Development (WID) in 1976 and the creation of a WID Directorate in 1984. Policy commitments to gender equality continued throughout the 1990s, through the establishment of a WID and Gender Equity Division in CIDA's Policy Branch in 1994, the adoption of gender mainstreaming principles through Canada's participating in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and the introduction of CIDA's Policy on Gender Equality in 1999 (CIDA 2012).

The rationale for the 1999 policy asserted that "gender inequalities intensify poverty, perpetuate it from one generation to the next and weaken women's and girls' ability to overcome

it... For poverty reduction to be achieved, the constraints that women and girls face must be eliminated” (CIDA 1999, ii). In 1999 the policy was well received by civil society organizations (CSOs) because “it concretely required gender equality and the realization of women’s rights as an overall goal, consideration and methodology for all of the Agency’s programs. In fact, many other donor agencies have referenced CIDA’s Policy on Gender Equality as a basis for developing their own” (“Members of the Informal” 2009, p.2). It remains highly relevant to Canada’s engagement internationally, considered by the government, scholars, and civil society organizations alike as a progressive, long-term commitment to promoting gender equality (McGill 2012; Baranyi and Powell 2005).

In the 1999 policy CIDA was committed to promoting gender equality in all its development policy and programming, stating that “gender equality must be considered as an integral part of all CIDA policies, programs and projects” (CIDA 1999). Furthermore, CIDA’s 2005 Framework for Assessing Gender Equality Results clearly outlined how CIDA quantifies the three ‘corporate objectives’ of the 1999 policy: decision making (equal participation between women and men in contributing to sustainable development in their communities), rights (the ability for women and girls to realize their full human rights) and development resources and benefits (reduced inequalities between women and men in terms of access and control over ‘benefits of development’ (CIDA 2005). It also provides an overview of CIDA’s attempts to integrate gender equality as a ‘cross-cutting theme’ in its policies and programs. In 2008 the agency completed an Evaluation of CIDA's Implementation of its 1999 Policy on Gender Equality and a plan of action to address recommendations which included the need for further progress on gender mainstreaming within the agency.

Politicization of aid

Despite its reputation as a leader on gender equality in the aid sector, Canada's focus on gender has been questioned in the wake of a recent trend towards increased politicization of its aid programs. In June of 2013, the former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) were amalgamated into a new 'mega-department' known at first as the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) and re-named again to Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in late 2015. In a statement following the Budget release, former CIDA Minister Julian Fantino stated that the amalgamation would "put development on equal footing with trade and diplomacy" (CCIC 2013, p. 1), justified by the need for 'policy coherence' or the alignment of three spheres of Canadian foreign policy: diplomacy, trade, and development. This announcement did not come as a surprise to those who followed the 'quest for policy coherence' that has been prominent on the global donor agenda for over a decade (Brown 2012, p.93), and the increasing alignment between Canadian international development priorities and domestic trade and economic interests in the past several years (OECD 2012). This raises concerns for some that national interests, or ensuring that aid spending will result in concrete benefits for Canadians, will overpower more 'altruistic' rationale for aid-giving (Black and Tiessen 2007).

Several scholars advance the argument that Canadian aid has been 'politicized' for domestic political purposes. For example, Hales (2005) argues that gender equality goals are undermined by the Canadian government's desire to advance a neoliberal economic agenda through its aid program. Black and Tiessen (2007) point to the desire on behalf of some to ensure that Canadian aid priorities are aligned with the pursuit of national interests such as increasing competitiveness, advancing prosperity and international security. Swiss (2012b) argues that Canadian foreign aid directed at women in Afghanistan has been 'instrumentalized' to advance

domestic security and military goals. Likewise, Canada has been shown to have done only limited work in integrating a gender equality approach in its security-related aid (Swiss 2015). Brown and Raddatz (2012) attribute the decline of Canada’s international strength in gender equality more generally to the election of the Conservative government in 2006 and the ‘politicization’ of foreign aid for domestic political purposes.

Politicization of Gender Equality

Although most point to CIDA’s 1999 Policy on Gender Equality as a very progressive policy framework, demonstrating CIDA’s strong commitment to gender equality, in the past several years civil society actors and several scholars have expressed concern regarding Canada’s performance on gender equality in its aid program (Swiss 2012b; Tiessen 2013; McLeod Group 2013; McGill 2012). Plewes and Kerr (2010) argue that “The gender equality and women's rights focus of our international co-operation and foreign policy is slipping away. It's been happening slowly and quietly, but with devastating impact” (n.p). While once considered a leader in international cooperation regarding women’s rights and gender equality, some have argued that recently the space for this kind of work has been ‘shrinking’.

This change in approach is further illustrated by a shift in language which has occurred in Canadian development policy. Michelle Collins, a writer for *Embassy Magazine* pointed out that since 2009 government staff responsible for international aid policy have been instructed to replace the term “gender equality” with “equality between men and women”. This shift may be interpreted as a challenge to Canada’s tradition of a strong rhetorical commitment to the promotion of the concept of gender equality in the international context (Tiessen and Carrier, 2015). It may also be interpreted as a ‘step back’, from a focus on systemic inequalities and

power imbalances between men and women, to a situation where a ‘gender-focus’ is reduced to a point where women are regarded as no more than instruments of economic development or military support.

Despite this, the Canadian government has attempted to retain an image of global leadership on gender equality issues by championing two high profile issues on the international stage: maternal and child health and the early and forced marriage of young girls in countries in the Global South. One International Women’s Day in 2014 Prime Minister Harper released a statement which states that:

Internationally, Canada is a recognized global leader in promoting the health of women and children in developing countries and in reducing the unacceptable mortality rates faced each year by these vulnerable populations. We are also taking a leadership role in supporting women who continue to struggle for equality. This includes increasing girls' access to quality education and working to protect women and children from violence and abuse by prioritizing the elimination of child, early and forced marriage (“Statement by the” 2014, n.p.).

The Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) is an initiative introduced in June of 2010 at the Group of 8 (G8) leaders meeting in Huntsville, Ontario. It included a commitment on behalf of the Canadian government of 1.2 billion dollars in new funding and 1.75 billion in ongoing spending dedicated to improving child and maternal health in countries in the Global South. The Maternal Health initiative was extremely controversial amongst Canadian development NGOs and in the wider Canadian public because it excluded funding for safe abortions, a procedure legal in Canada and a significant barrier to improving

maternal health globally (Carrier and Tiessen 2012; Delacourt 2010; Plewes 2010; Swiss 2012b). After significant pressure from within and outside the government, the Prime Minister agreed to provide some funds for “access to modern methods family planning for 12 million couples”, but maintained his stance against including funding for safe abortions (“The Muskoka Initiative” 2012).

The controversy surrounding the Muskoka Initiative created significant tensions between several civil society organizations and the Canadian government. In one instance, a group of international development advocates who had gathered on Parliament Hill to protest the government’s stance on abortion in foreign aid were told to “Shut the f----up” (n.p) on this issue by Conservative Senator Nancy Ruth (Delacourt 2010). The senator warned that more advocacy efforts on the part of development NGOs on this issue would result in more pushback from the government. The Senator said that the issue had become a ‘political football’ and that linking the issue to women’s health in Canada could risk re-opening a debate on abortion in Canada. The resulting controversies are one example of how ‘gender equality’ may be being ‘politicized’ in Canada’s aid program. In a 2010 Embassy Magazine article entitled “Politicizing, undermining gender equality”, Plewes and Kerr describe how the Muskoka initiative demonstrates how “A socially conservative agenda is being imposed on development priorities without any public discussion or accountability. This is what happened in the discussions about the G8 mother and child health initiative. It is also happening in all of Canada's support for women's rights internationally” (n.p.).

Despite past leadership on gender equality, it has been argued that both in policy and in practice, Canada has decreased substantially in recent years. Stuart (2011) states that “Funding for gender equality has slipped, and there has been a steady marginalization of women’s rights in

our international aid program” (Stuart 2011, p.2). In 2000 under a Liberal government CIDA’s funding for gender equality- specific programming consisted of 1.85% of its spending. But by 2006 this had fallen to only 1.01 percent (p.2).

The most visible of these gender-specific projects, bilateral women’s or gender funds managed locally in recipient countries, has been one seeming casualty of this reduction. Lauded in the 2009 evaluation of CIDA’s gender policy and programming, these locally responsive funds supported small initiatives (typically less than \$50,000CAD) implemented by women’s groups and NGOs in recipient countries that targeted women’s rights or issues and gender equality. Common in the pre-Conservative era, a review of the DFATD project browser dataset (confirmed by the IATI dataset) suggests that at least 10 such gender fund projects operated in the 2001-2007 period, totalling more than \$34 million CAD. The same data suggests no similar bilateral responsive women’s or gender funds have been approved by CIDA or DFATD since 2007 at least, indicating an end to the use of this aid modality under the current government.

Gender Coding

The way that aid programs are coded for the extent to which they integrate gender equality goals is one way in which donors attempt to implement gender mainstreaming strategies. The OECD DAC has implemented a policy marker for gender equality with which members of the committee are asked to categorize their bilateral aid commitments. The marker system has three levels, each corresponding with a degree of integration of gender equality goals. 0 is considered not targeted at gender equality, 1 is significant, where gender equality is important but a secondary objective of the program, 2 is principal, where gender equality is “an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental in its design” (as cited in Tomlinson 2013, p.

1). Though seemingly naturalizing the measure of gender equality in aid programming, indicators of this sort have been critiqued as being inherently political processes rife with debate and contestation that is often obscured by the indicators or markers themselves (Merry and Coutin 2014).

Not surprisingly, then, there has been some controversy over the way in which Canada's commitment to gender equality in its bilateral aid program has been measured using the marker system. Tomlinson (2013) describes how CIDA's bilateral commitments to projects where "gender equality was an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental in its design" under the DAC guidelines increased significantly from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011. The results in the later time period showed that Canada had by far surpassed every other donor, with 43 percent of all marked projects corresponding with the highest DAC gender equality marker value. The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) noted this as a remarkable achievement and an indication that Canada was a major supporter of women's rights globally (Arutyunova and Clark 2013). As Tomlinson argues, the reason for this increase has less to do with the substantive increase in the integration of gender equality goals into project, and more to do with a change in how CIDA coded for gender equality in its projects. In 2011, CIDA began publishing an historical data set which included four possible values: no results coded as 0, results at the immediate outcome level as 1, results at the intermediate outcome level as 2, and gender equality as the principle objective and result of the initiative as 3. An inquiry by DFATD officials responsible for ODA statistics noted that CIDA had begun equating the DAC marker 2 (principal) with the CIDA marker 3 (principal) in addition to the CIDA marker 2 (intermediate outcome) (p.3). The inclusion of intermediate outcomes into the DAC system value with gender equality as the principal purpose may have exaggerated the 2010-2011 CIDA outcomes, and thus

raises questions about whether these results demonstrate a real increase in Canada's commitment to gender equality or not. The fact that this shift in coding is occurring nearly simultaneously with the discursive shift in gender language is a complicating factor in our analysis.

ANALYSIS

The discursive shift from gender equality to equality between women and men in the context of increased politicization of Canadian aid not surprisingly raised significant concerns within the Canadian development community (Plewes and Kerr 2010). Did this shift in language entail a shift in aid spending or program planning? Acknowledging the misgivings around the quality and validity of available gender coding data for Canadian aid (Tomlinson 2013) and more general concerns about such measurement systems (Merry and Coutin 2014), we examine the available data to assess the effect of the shift to equality between women and men on Canada's aid programs.

Drawing upon two separate Government of Canada data sets we examine Canada's aid programming pre- and post-2009 to assess how the discursive shift to equality between women and men influenced:

- (1) The proportion of Canadian aid programs targeting gender equality;
- (2) The amount of aid funds dedicated to programs targeting gender equality; and
- (3) The nature of language used in project titles, descriptions, and results statements for new aid programming.

Datasets

Tomlinson (2013) identifies the discrepancies between CIDA’s Gender Equality marker coding and the GE Marker coding employed by the OECD DAC. Regrettably, no single Government of Canada data set exists which incorporates both forms of coding. As a result, we examine two separate data sources on Canadian aid data: DFATD’s Historical Project Data Set (HPD)¹ and the DFATD International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Data Set². Regrettably, each dataset yields a slightly different sample of Canadian aid projects over a similar window of time.

The HPD includes all project transactions active in a given fiscal year and when all available years are combined and duplicate entries for multiple project transactions are eliminated yields a sample of 15,085 project-years and a total of 6,930 unique project numbers over the period 2005-2012.³ The GE marker data included in the HPD is the CIDA gender marker. It is not clear in the HPD documentation whether the HPD reflects the GE marker coding as it happened in the year the project was created, or if these codes have been retroactively revised with the introduction of the new CIDA GE marker in 2009.

In contrast, the IATI data set contains information on 2,817 projects with start-dates ranging from 1996 onwards, but with the majority concentrated in year years 2007 onwards (2,170 once duplicate project-level activities are eliminated). Using end dates included in the data set, we were able to project the initiatives out across the fiscal years in which they were active and create a project by fiscal year data set comparable to the HPD. This results in a total sample of 7,054 project-year observations. The IATI data set, in contrast to the HPD, does not include the CIDA GE marker; instead it includes the DAC GE Policy Marker – a standard measure in IATI data across many donors.

Using these two complementary, but not overlapping samples of Canadian aid programs we are able to examine the trends in how GE has been funded, coded, and referred to in CIDA’s aid projects both before and after the discursive shift from *gender equality* to *equality between women and men*.

[TABLES 1 & 2 ABOUT HERE]

[FIGURES 1 & 2 ABOUT HERE]

GE Coding

We examined how the former CIDA’s programs have been coded for gender equality over time and whether a change can be seen between the pre- and post-2009 periods when the discursive shift occurred. Tables 1 and 2 show the breakdown of the CIDA and DAC GE marker coding by percent of active projects in both datasets. The same results are depicted in Figures 1 and 2 to better assess the trends over time. The CIDA and DAC markers do not align entirely owing to our complementary but not identical samples; however, some similar trends are seen in both data sets.⁴

First, the proportion of projects coded as having no GE results or not targeting GE is declining over time. In the HPD data we see it decline from a height of more than 66 percent in 2005/2006 to just over 38 percent in 2011/2012. Likewise, the IATI data shows a similar, though less stark, decline in the GE not targeted category from a height of 48 percent in 2008/2009 to just below 32 percent in 2013/2014. These trends both begin ahead of the 2009 discursive shift and continue through it, though the reductions in the no result/not targeted category are sharpest in the most recent years in each table. Taken at face value, this finding

suggests that a larger proportion of Canada's aid programs have some sort of GE result, or are at least being coded as such.

If a significant proportion of projects are now incorporating gender results, which category is growing as the no-result categories shrink? This is the second similar pattern seen in both data sets. In each case it appears that these projects are shifting into the immediate-intermediate and significant objective marker categories. GE as a principal objective is relatively consistent over time in each data set, through fluctuating more in the IATI data. If we look at the upper-most categories in Figures 1 and 2, we see they remain relatively consistent while the middle marker categories expand over time as the no results category shrinks. Independent of changes to the coding system that would lead to an over-reporting at the DAC of projects with GE as principal objective, we do see a growth post-2009 in the 'middle' categories of GE results. In the HPD, the near tripling of the GE results at immediate outcome level is notable, while the intermediate outcome level increases by more than half between 2005 and 2012. In the IATI data, the growth of the significant objective DAC category is also appreciable, increasing by more than 10 percentage points from 2007 through 2014, absorbing much of the reduction in the not targeted category over this time.

Tomlinson's concern that the DAC marker over reports Canada's focus on GE results is made plain by comparing the two figures, as there is a big difference between 3.5 percent of projects having GE as a principal objective/result in 2011/2012 in the HPD data and 38.5 percent being reported as having the same by the IATI data's DAC marker in the same year. Interestingly, however, is that no major shift is revealed in this data as a result of a change in CIDA coding practices and how they are forwarded to the DAC. This is likely a result of the

nature of the IATI data presently, where projects are likely coded with their current GE marker result rather than that they received when they were first established.

Overall, it appears that the discursive shift (and the change in coding practices) at CIDA in 2009 has had no negative effect on the proportion of projects being coded as having gender equality results. Indeed, the trends from both data sets suggest that CIDA/DFATD are reporting more gender results in all its programming now than at any point since 2005. This finding would seem counterintuitive to the expectations suggested by the critics of the shift to equality between women and men and the reported end of the use of locally managed gender funds as an aid modality. In the next section we examine whether similar patterns emerge when comparing the amount of aid funding dedicated to GE results.

[FIGURES 3-4 ABOUT HERE]

GE Spending

The HPD data set allows us to track annual spending by projects and aggregate that spending at the fiscal year level by GE marker category. Figure 3 shows total annual spending by GE marker category from 2005-2012 for all projects in the HPD. While we see a slight decline in the amount spent in the ‘No GE results’ category over time, both the intermediate result and principal objective category remain more or less consistent. In contrast, we see a sharp uptick in the amount of funds disbursed on projects with GE results at the immediate outcome level, growing from under \$250 million in 2005/2006 to more than \$1.7 billion in 2011/2012. Whether this shift is a result of revised coding approaches is not possible to determine using the current HPD data, however, if we assume it is not, then the sharp increase in spending on projects with GE results at the immediate level seems to support the trends in proportion of

projects with GE results examined in the last section. When considering the post-2009 period, we see this growth is actually strongest between the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 fiscal years, lending little support for the idea that the discursive shift to equality between women and men might impact the spending on gender at CIDA/DFATD.

The content of the IATI dataset does not enable an annual aggregation of spending by the DAC GE marker category, but similar data is available directly from the DAC and its Creditor Reporting Service data set. Figure 4 shows a similar annual aggregate (based on calendar years) of aid spending in terms of total commitments in USD by GE marker category. Here we see several interesting trends that all coincide with the shift in how CIDA practiced GE coding in 2009. First, all Canadian projects were screened from this point forward, with the category of ‘not screened’ dropping to zero from 2009 on. Second, we see a massive jump in the GE as a principal objective in the same period. This corresponds to the decision reported by Tomlinson (2013) to equate both the intermediate and principal categories of the CIDA GE marker with the principal category of the DAC marker. Regardless, there is an overall increase in spending coded with significant or principal objectives in this period, largely as a result of increased screening of programs.

[FIGURES 5-6 ABOUT HERE]

Looking at the average annual project disbursement in the HPD (Figure 4) or the average annual new project commitment in the IATI data (Figure 5) we see similar trends in the immediate outcome category and – to a lesser degree – in the significant objective category. In both cases, post-2009 we see increased spending in these areas, although there is a significant

drop-off between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 in the IATI data for new project commitments in this category.⁵

In terms of spending, the trend towards larger amounts of CIDA/DFATD funding annually devoted to those projects with immediate GE outcomes is the most striking finding. Both at the aggregate and at the project average level, this category of GE spending has grown both in proportion of total projects and in terms of dollars dedicated to those projects. Post-2009 this growth has been sharpest, suggesting again that the discursive shift from gender equality to equality between women and men had little impact on spending.

[FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE]

GE Mentions

If there was no decline in proportion of projects or spending dedicated to gender equality, what of the shift in discourse as it manifests at the project level? The best way to get at such a question would tend to be through document content analysis of project documentation, but we can also start to look at this through a simple accounting of the mentions of key terminology in project titles, descriptions, and results statements available in the IATI dataset.⁶ Figure 6 shows the results of such an accounting, plotting the absolute number of new project starts in a given fiscal year that reflect either the term ‘gender’ or ‘women’ in these fields. As a crude barometer for how the GE efforts of CIDA programs reflect in the way initiatives are described and reported on, Figure 6 shows a sharp increase in the mention of the word ‘Women’ in project descriptions and results post-2009, while use of the word ‘Gender’ drops in both project titles and descriptions from 2010 onwards. These contrasting trends would seem to be in keeping with the shift in language, except that the upper plot in Figure 6 shows a steady increase in the use of

the word gender in the results statements of projects activated from 2010 onwards. In contrast, only two projects actually use the term ‘Equality Between Women and Men’ in their title, four in their description, and one in its results statements (not shown in Figure).

With both the use of women and gender in results statements increasing in the post-2009 period, but limited uptake of the language of equality between women and men, we reveal an interesting potential disconnect between the top-down prescription of this discursive change from the Minister’s office and the continuing and increasing use of the term gender in the same period – one where the language of gender equality might not be reflected in project titles and descriptions at the time of project creation, but reappears in the results statements for the projects once they have begun operation. Such a disconnect would suggest that CIDA/DFATD project planners and managers might be tacitly adopting the discursive shift to equality between women and men at the planning stage for the sake of compliance with ministerial directives, but then maintaining a discourse of gender equality as projects unfold.

Perhaps the effects of the shift to equality between women and men is most evident in this accounting of the use of the terms gender and women in new project starts, but at the same time, we see evidence of a surge in the use of gender terminology when it comes to the reporting of project results. Further examination of the content of project titles, descriptions, and results statements using alternate data sources and/or project documentation and reports would help add greater clarity to this trend.

DISCUSSION

Though we started our analysis with no formal hypothesis about how the discursive shift to equality between women and men might have shaped the work of CIDA/DFATD on gender

equality post-2009, the prevailing notion from critics of the move and others in the development community at the time was that it was likely to negatively impact work on GE at CIDA.

Contrary to that notion, our analysis above paints a different picture, one where – assuming its employees are effectively and accurately coding aid programs – CIDA/DFATD’s work on GE has been resilient to the politicized discursive shift and where work on gender equality has intensified in terms of the proportion of projects with GE results, the amount spent on GE programming, and even in terms of the frequency of mentioning gender in project results statements (though this remains limited). Moreover, in the same post-2009 period, we have witnessed CIDA/DFATD introduce new coding for GE results and begin reporting the GE coding of **all** programs to the DAC. Regardless of whether this new reporting to the DAC exaggerates Canada’s commitments to GE, the fact that Canada is screening all programs against the GE coding system is a proactive step.

On the surface, at least, it would appear that the shift to equality between women and men had little or no effect on the everyday practices of GE at CIDA in terms of spending or programming. What can account for this counterintuitive finding? Three explanations warrant consideration:

(1) *“Equality between women and men” had no effect*: Perhaps the simplest possible explanation is that the discursive shift to equality between women and men was nothing more than a tempest in a teapot and had no effect - critics and development practitioners were alarmed by the politicized shift in language, but it did little to alter the substantial organizational inertia Canada possessed on promoting gender equality. Such an explanation might explain why we would see outward shifts in the language used to describe or title projects, but little reduction in resources or programming coded as being dedicated towards GE results.

(2) *“Equality between women and men” had a negative effect that is obscured by other countervailing factors:* This explanation for our results would be possible if we are simply missing the effects of the shift to equality between women and men because of other more pro-GE developments at CIDA that were already in motion or happened coincidentally with the change in language. For instance, if the GE coding system had not been revised and the way in which CIDA/DFATD reported GE results to the DAC not been altered, perhaps we would see a declining commitment to GE or the ending of the use of local gender funds in other metrics. If the GE coding changes and the seeming intensification of inclusion of GE results was done purposefully to hide a declining space for gender equality within the donor agency, this might be a plausible explanation, but on the surface no evidence points at a broader politicized conspiracy of such nature.

(3) *“Equality between women and men” had an unintended positive effect on the conduct of gender equality programming:* The final option to consider is that by politicizing a shift in language away from gender equality to equality between women and men, the Government instead motivated additional action from bureaucrats to intensify the work of gender equality within Canada’s aid program. In this way, the politicization of the language used to describe Canada’s gender efforts may have led to a form of bureaucratic entrepreneurialism or activism which has been employed previously at CIDA to further gender equality goals (Swiss 2009). Could the intensification of gender results reporting, revision of the GE coding scheme, or increases in aid to GE programs be a response to the politicization by the Minister and the Harper government? This explanation is worth investigating further through ethnographic methods which our current dataset unfortunately does not enable.

CONCLUSION

As an exploratory analysis to assess the effect of the discursive shift to equality between women and men, this study has shown via CIDA/DFATD data that – at least at face value – Canada appears to be devoting a larger proportion of its programming and more funds than ever before towards aid in support of gender equality despite the elimination of gender-specific programs like local gender funds. The simplest conclusion is that there appear to be few negative effects of the shift using the heuristics we have here. In this respect, the first explanation explored above appears most appealing. Despite the well-documented politics surrounding and potential problems that could have arisen from the discursive shift, Canada’s GE programming remained resilient – and indeed grew (Plewes and Kerr 2010; Tiessen and Carrier, 2015). Some of this might have been enabled by key players within CIDA and DFATD who helped to further the GE agenda in the face of a retrograde, top-down approach received with disdain, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to be able to confirm that possibility. The GE coding figures do not tell the entire story. Future research with access to GAC officials involved in the work of gender equality within the aid program would be valuable to shed light on how the shift to equality between women and men was received and or resisted.

More than six years on from the discursive shift to equality between women and men it seems clear that the controversy it inspired has not resulted in significant shifts in Canada’s gender equality-related aid programming. This finding should not be seen to diminish the political damage such a shift has inflicted on Canada’s international reputation as a leader in the gender equality field or the troubles that an increasingly politicized aid program has experienced in the gender equality context and beyond (Howell 2005; Richey 2001). Such concerns about Canada’s reputation may be well-founded. There is no denying that outwardly the discursive shift away from gender equality is highly politicized and appears to send the contradictory

signals about Canada’s approach to gender. Despite this red flag, we argue that the fact that Canada’s gender programming – at least in terms of spending and relative share of programming – has remained resilient to this naked politicization is an encouraging sign. The fact – coding controversy aside - that Canada’s GE programming and spending has expanded in this period and that all programs are now screened against the gender equality markers both internally and for reporting to the DAC are all signs of an institutional momentum on gender equality at CIDA and DFATD that effectively resisted the potentially negative effects of a shameless political ploy aimed at diminishing the gender equality agenda.

¹ Available at: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/CAR-1128144934-R9J>

² Available at: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/dfatd-maecd_activities-activites

³ These are top-level seven character project numbers taking the format X000000, where X is a letter indicating the former CIDA branch delivering the project and 000000 is the six-digit project id number. Projects might have lower-level sub-projects, but for the purposes of this analysis we aggregate data at this top-level id. The same process was carried out on the IATI data, leaving one project observation per fiscal year while a project is active.

⁴ Chi-square statistics reported for both tables indicate that the reported differences between categories are statistically significant in each data set.

⁵ This may be owing to the reported lapse of funds and low levels of project approvals witnessed at CIDA in the 2012/2013 fiscal year. See: <http://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/project-approval-paralysis-and-canadas-declining-aid-spending>

⁶ The exclusion of these fields from the HPD data did not permit comparing results from that data set.

TABLE 1. Percent Active Projects by CIDA Gender Equality Policy Marker, 2005-2012 (HPD Dataset)

CIDA Gender Marker	<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>							Total
	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	
No GE results	66.38	63.24	59.79	52.90	47.10	40.32	38.34	54.81
GE results at immediate outcome level	7.00	7.13	8.47	11.59	15.88	17.46	20.94	11.52
GE results at intermediate outcome level	23.88	26.23	28.52	31.75	32.68	38.36	37.24	30.19
GE is principal objective/result	2.75	3.40	3.22	3.77	4.34	3.86	3.48	3.48
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Chi-Square Statistic: 701.79; p<0.001

TABLE 2. Percent Active Projects by DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker, 2007-2014 (IATI Dataset)

DAC Gender Marker	<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>							Total
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	
GE not targeted	41.27	48.21	46.47	43.83	41.14	33.84	31.96	40.27
GE significant objective	14.29	12.99	15.23	16.21	20.41	23.03	25.00	19.11
GE principal objective	44.44	38.80	38.30	39.96	38.45	43.14	43.04	40.63
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Chi-Square Statistic: 116; p<0.001

FIGURE 1. Percent of Active Projects by CIDA GE Marker Category, 2005-2012 (HPD Dataset)

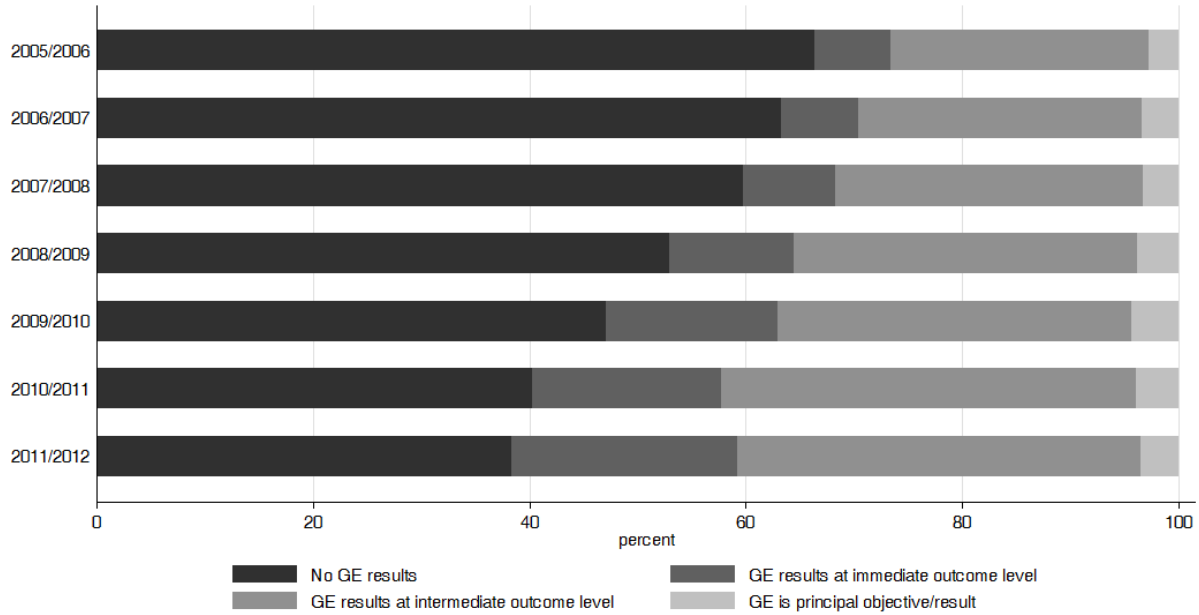


FIGURE 2. Percent of Active Projects by DAC GE Marker Category, 2007-2013 (IATI Dataset)

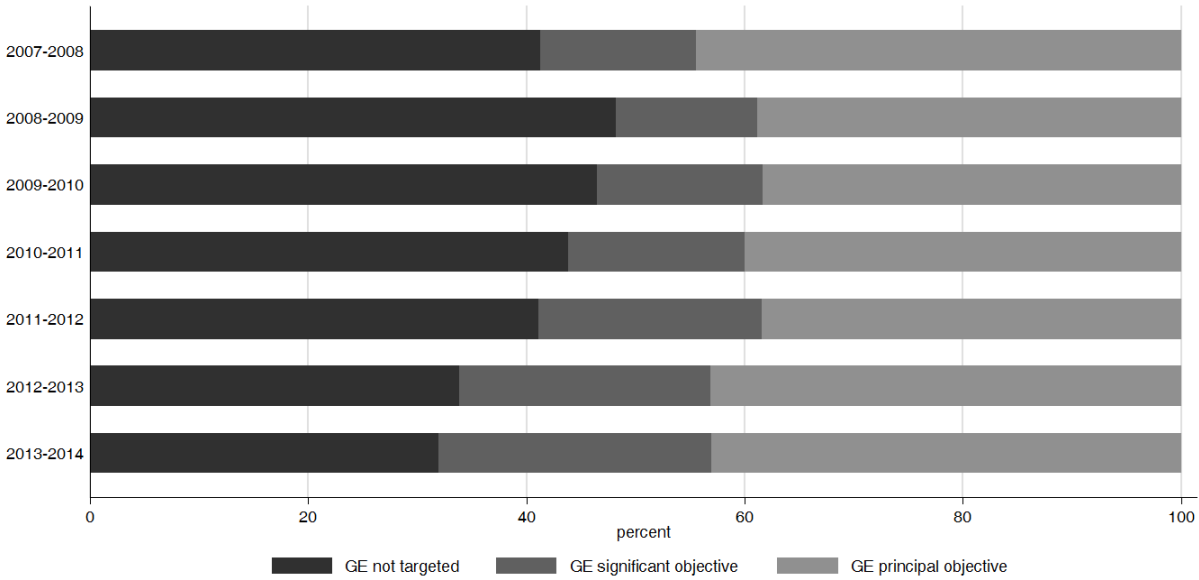


FIGURE 3. Total Annual Disbursements by CIDA GE Marker, 2005-2012 (HPD Dataset)

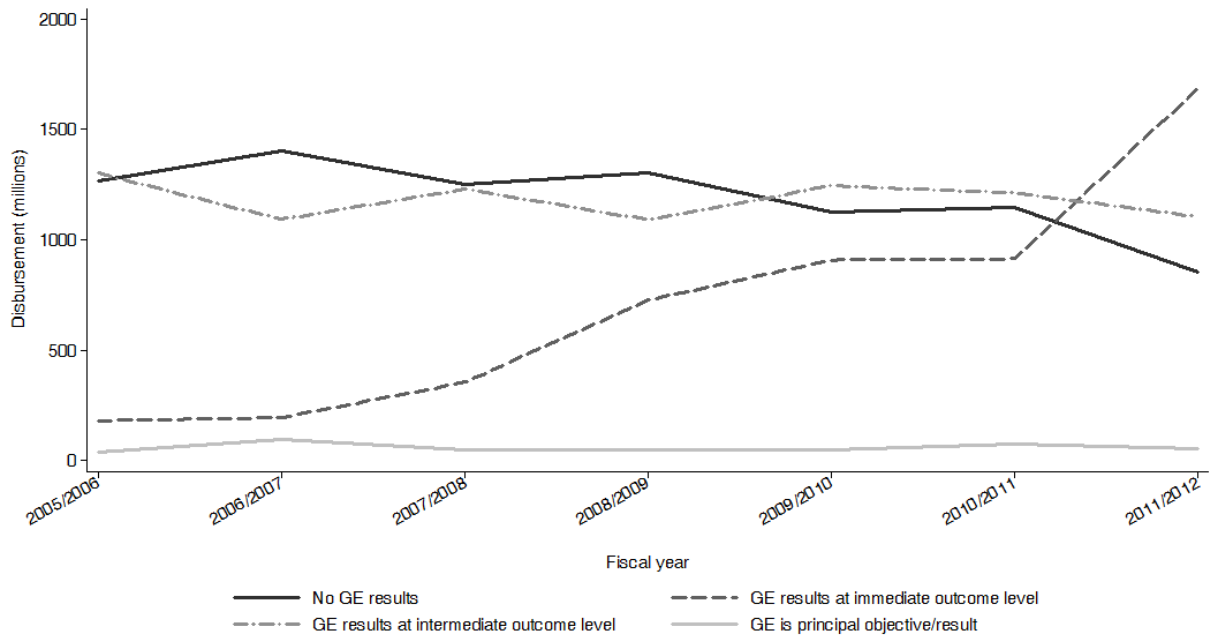


FIGURE 4. Total Annual Commitments by DAC GE Marker, 2002-2012 (DAC CRS)

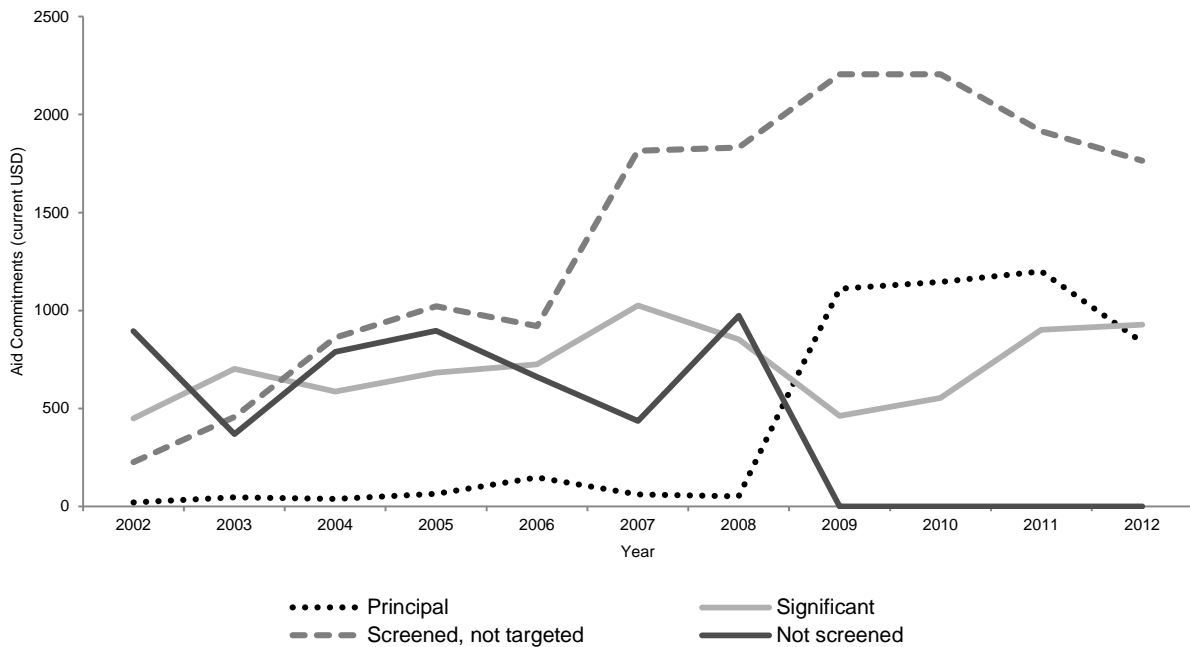


FIGURE 5. Average Annual Disbursements by CIDA GE Marker, 2005-2012 (HPD Dataset)

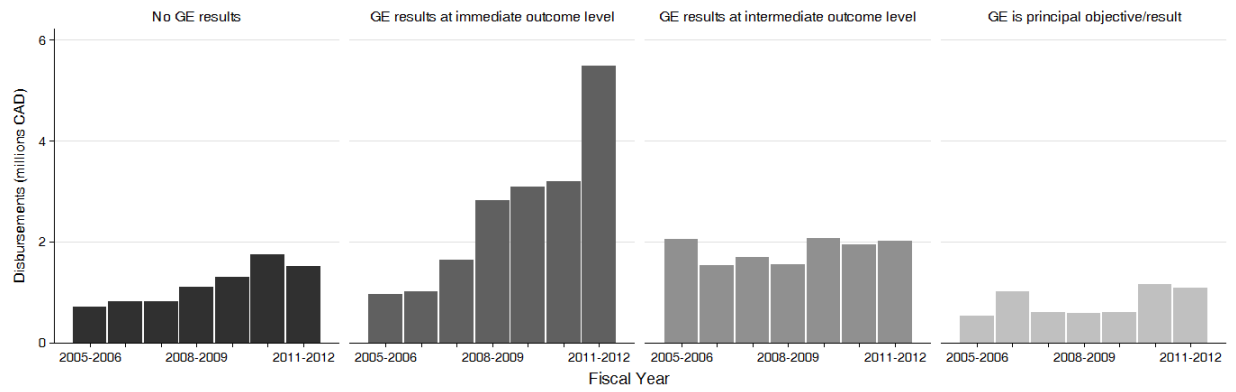


FIGURE 6. Average Annual New Project Commitment by DAC GE Marker, 2007-2013 (IATI Dataset)

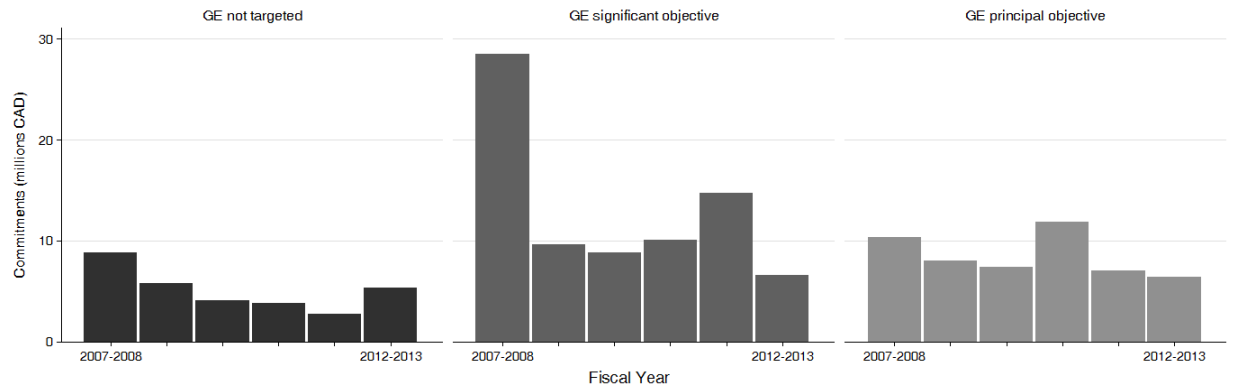
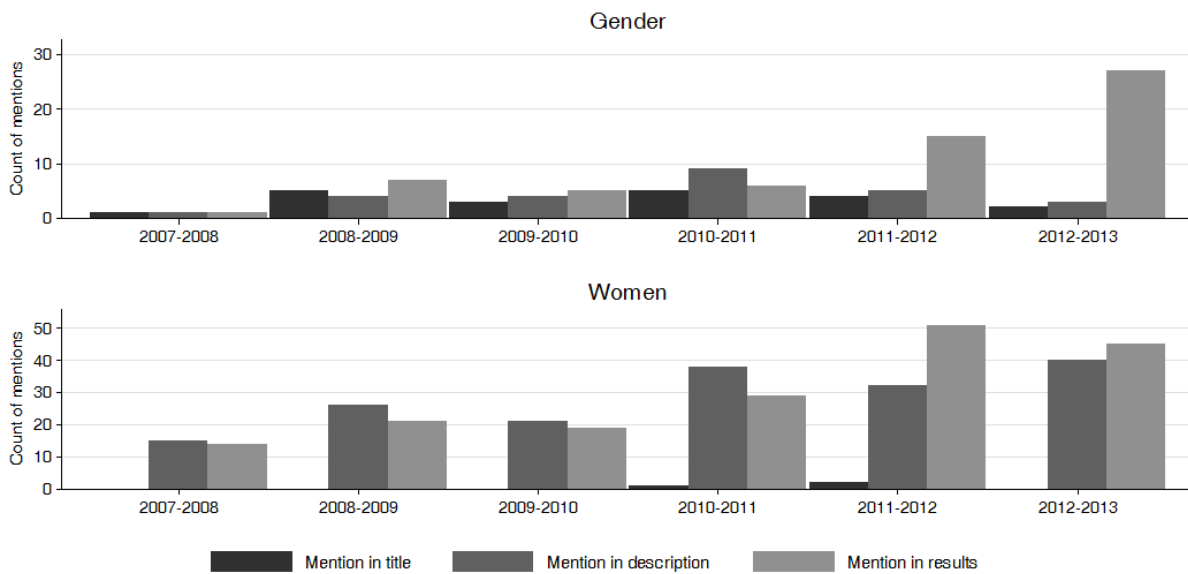


FIGURE 7. Mentions of 'Gender' or 'Women' in Project Titles, Descriptions, and Results Statements, 2007-2013 (IATI Dataset)



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