

Mainstreaming Gender in International Organizations

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Gender mainstreaming has become the primary tool to advance gender equality in international organizations. The United Nations and its specialized agencies, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union, Organization of American States (OAS), and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) all have adopted gender mainstreaming, and governments around the world have followed their lead (True and Mintrom 2001; True 2003b). Despite the widespread acceptance of the strategy, there is considerable debate about what exactly gender mainstreaming means and how it should be implemented. Angela King, the special advisor to the UN secretary-general on gender matters, has listed conceptual confusion among the major constraints inhibiting gender mainstreaming (United Nations 2002, vi). In the European context, gender experts have bemoaned the difficulty of translating the term from English and have described the shifting meanings it has taken in different contexts in the European Union (Council of Europe 1998, 18; Wank 2003).

This essay is an effort to contribute to conceptual clarification. Although we draw on the extensive work of gender experts and consultants involved in the implementation of gender mainstreaming, we write from an academic location that puts us outside these organizational contexts. We are less interested in providing better definitions or tools than in providing an assessment of what gender mainstreaming has come to mean in practical contexts. Our approach is not a policy

analysis, that is, it does not treat gender mainstreaming as an organizational tool whose successes and failures need to be measured. Instead, we attempt a political science analysis of gender mainstreaming as a site around which global gender politics operate. Accordingly, we postulate that gender mainstreaming cannot be defined a priori but takes on meaning through organizational processes and politics. The implementation of gender mainstreaming is itself part of global gender politics.

In the Weberian approach governmental organizations have been described as rationalized bureaucracies that implement policies through the methodical application of tools. Indeed, entrusting the implementation of gender mainstreaming to bureaucracies implies a trust that these bureaucracies will realize the mandate to create gender equality in an objective manner. However, organizations also are social organisms with cultures and value commitments. These commitments circumscribe the ways in which policies are implemented. Organizational cultures and value commitments both enable and constrain change, producing distinct organizational pathways of implementation. Furthermore, organizations are sites of power defining identities and exclusions, rights and obligations, and employing categorical differences to place people in a hierarchical power structure. In other words, organizations engage in politics. They do not stand outside the global gender regime as its managers and guardians but are participants reproducing gendered rules and power relations through their practices.

In this essay we explore the distinctive paths that the implementation of gender mainstreaming has taken in three international organizations: the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, and the International Labor Organization (ILO). We show that these institutions have taken mainstreaming to mean very different things once they subsume the strategy under their institutional agendas. We also seek to gauge how power is renegotiated in these organizations through the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Our purpose is to elucidate the politics of gender mainstreaming in different institutional contexts and to provide an assessment of its limits and possibilities as a strategy.

WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

The Beijing Platform for Action, the document negotiated at the UN Women's Conference in 1995, provided the original mandate to the UN system to pursue gender mainstreaming. Its call for "mainstreaming a gender perspective in all

policies and programmes" (paragraphs 202 and 292) represented a victory for feminists, mostly from the South, who had called for such an approach.¹ The concept emerged from the gender and development (GAD) approach that had replaced early efforts to integrate women into development policies and programs. Advocates of GAD had criticized development interventions that had targeted only women and had focused on their participation in equal numbers, suggesting that these approaches had not attacked patriarchal power relations. They argued that gender oppression is structurally embedded and suggested that the goal of equality required an approach that addressed the power relationship between women and men. GAD rhetoric (if not always substance) has become orthodox among development institutions, and gender mainstreaming has become the primary tool for attacking gendered power relations. Only by focusing on the rules of the game in all issue areas could gendered rules be identified and modified and the pernicious effects of structural power be counteracted (Wichterlich 2001).

The adoption of gender mainstreaming by the United Nations turned a radical movement idea into a strategy of public management. In a 1997 conclusion, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) offered a much-quoted definition of gender mainstreaming, describing it as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated." ECOSOC elaborated by specifying that "the ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality" (quoted in UNIFEM 2000, 34). Program and project cycles, management processes, and tools now became the object of gender mainstreaming.

The ECOSOC definition is not the only definition of gender mainstreaming. Others typically resemble it in its focus on public administration, but sometimes differ in emphasis. Some focus on specific tools (such as gender analysis) or levels of women's participation, others on the incorporation of gender issues in all functional issue areas and thus within the "mainstream" of policy making. Some treat equality as a measurable outcome, some as an ongoing struggle (Council of Europe 1998, 18). Although suggestive of different understandings, it is difficult to infer political agendas from these definitions without embedding them in in-

stitutional and organizational contexts. It is in these contexts that those charged with implementing gender mainstreaming negotiate its meanings and the conditions for its successes and failures. This includes defining what is meant by a "gender perspective" and by "the concerns and experiences of women and men." It also includes negotiating the focus of activity, the style of intervention, resources, and criteria for evaluation.

There are three distinctive aspects of mainstreaming in the ecosoc definition. First, it describes mainstreaming as infusing gender considerations into *organizational processes*. Second, it calls for integrating concerns of women and men into policies and programs, that is, in the *output* of organizations. Third, it specifies that the *goal* of mainstreaming is equality between women and men. Jahan's (1995) operationalization of gender mainstreaming as composed of institutional strategies, operational strategies, and policy objectives parallels these distinctions. Her first category, institutional strategies, encompasses the assignment of responsibilities for gender mainstreaming, systems of accountability, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and personnel practices. Her second category includes approaches that the institutions have defined and the guidelines, knowledge, analytical tools, policies, projects, and programs that they have developed in carrying out their operations. Her third category includes the definition of objectives that organizations have arrived at. In this analysis, we borrow from Jahan to describe gender mainstreaming at UNDP, the ILO, and the World Bank. In line with our embedding of this research in organizational theory, we rename her first category "organizational processes" and her second category "organizational outputs." We relate her "policy objectives" category to the objective of gender equality set out in the ecosoc definition. The international organizations analyzed here emphasize process, outputs, and the definition of policy objectives to different degrees, a reflection of their organizational cultures, worldviews, and core values.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: THE PRIMACY OF PROCESS

Of the three organizations reviewed, UNDP most extensively focuses on the process aspect of mainstreaming, a result undoubtedly of its highly decentralized structure and an organizational philosophy that stresses client countries' ownership in the development process (Kardam 1991; Müller 1998). UNDP made WID one of four major themes in 1986 and created the Division of Women and Development within the Bureau for Program and Policy Evaluation to ensure that

women would play a larger role within the organization, both as participants and as beneficiaries. While not yet employing the language of mainstreaming, the function of the division amounted to a mainstreaming of processes: it was to oversee the UNDP committee in charge of project approval to make sure that women's interests were integrated into all projects. As was typical of women's machineries, the WID division suffered from resource shortages that undermined its ability to carry out its tasks. There was also a tendency for WID and gender goals to be subverted at the programming level (Miller 1998, 154-57).

UNDP now formally endorses mainstreaming as the primary method of achieving gender equality. While its policy accepts both the process and output aspects of ecosoc's definition of gender mainstreaming (UNDP, 2000b, 1), in practice the organization has almost exclusively focused on issues of organizational process (compare Jahan 1995, 24). In 1992 the Gender in Development Program (GIDP) replaced the WID division in an effort to decentralize responsibility for WID to the state level. This included the establishment of a system of "gender focal points" throughout the organization. Within each of UNDP's 134 country offices, a program staff person and a member of senior management are designated as a focal point to oversee the implementation of mainstreaming. A Gender Programme Team facilitates a "global knowledge network" made up of these focal points, UN volunteers, and UNFEM regional program directors. The team provides guidance on policies and programs and promotes the objective of gender equality throughout the organization (UNDP 2000a, 1-2; UNDP 2002a, 16).

The centrality of process in UNDP's approach to mainstreaming is evident in its focus on capacity building. In a 2002 "practice note" on gender equality, capacity building appears as one of three main approaches, next to providing policy advice and supporting stand-alone gender projects and programs (UNDP 2002a, 8). Capacity building will lead to the creation of a new, less masculinized UNDP. In the words of one participant in UNDP gender training, "Gender is not just about programmes, policies, and personnel balance, but also about institutional culture. It is about caring, flexibility and empowerment, which affects behaviour, rules, programmes, and impacts" (UNDP 2000b, 2). However, unlike in the World Bank and the ILO, there is little concern in UNDP for developing a policy statement that analyzes causes and correlates of gender inequality, provides a rationale for UNDP intervention, and specifies the impacts desired. Indeed, the lack of substantive content was identified as a problem in UNDP exercises to build gender capacity in the 1990s (Schalkwyk 1998, 32). Likewise, the 2000 an-

nual report of the UNDP administrator identified a need to “focus . . . on policy and planning as well as capacity building” (UNDP and UNPF Executive Board, 2001, 29, 32). More recent documents have addressed these concerns by illustrating ways in which gender matters in the UNDP’s six “practices areas,” that is, democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment, information and communications technology, and HIV/AIDS (UNDP 2002a, 2003). The content of gender mainstreaming here emerges in the recounting of best practices at the national level.

Given the UNDP’s decentralized structure, its process-focused approach to mainstreaming is a gargantuan task. Indeed, a 1998 review identified a series of organizational constraints to the success of capacity building—many reminiscent of issues identified ten years earlier, constraints that mainstreaming was supposed to overcome. These constraints included among others the isolation of focal points and their lack of information about management priorities; attitudes and priorities of resident representatives that did not necessarily include gender mainstreaming; the continued compartmentalization of gender issues into a separate area not considered relevant to other priority themes; a hierarchical organizational culture that did not encourage the participation of the junior staff who often served as focal points; and the lack of recognition women often faced from professional colleagues (Schalkwyk 1998, 35–37). The UNDP administrator’s 2000 annual report, while finding progress in particular in the development of linkages and coherence in country-level activities focused on gender equality, also bemoaned the relatively limited reporting on gender under goals other than gender equality, indicating a limited degree of mainstreaming (UNDP and UNPF Executive Board 2001, 29). A review of UNDP supported activities in sub-Saharan Africa found that gender mainstreaming was lagging considerably. In the area of poverty eradication, fewer than half of the projects reviewed included some gender analysis, and only 33 percent employed a gender specialist. The picture was even more dismal in the area of governance. Here only 6 of 59 initiatives were based on a gender analysis, though 18 employed a gender specialist (*Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in Sub-Saharan Africa* 2000, 4–5).

The results-oriented 2000–2001 annual reports showed similar results. On one hand country reports reflected an increase in gender activity; on the other, financial allocations for gender amounted to a mere 1 percent (excluding programs where gender was mainstreamed), and there were significantly fewer progress statements on accomplishing the goal of gender equality than on other goals

(UNDP 2002a, 6–7). A recent review of gender mainstreaming in UNDP, spearheaded by the Gender Programme Team, reiterates many of these critiques: there is a considerable lack of gender expertise, and the goal of building capacity has been especially elusive at the national level; gender focal points lack resources and are marginalized; and—in a new twist—making gender a cross-cutting issue threatens to render the issue institutionally homeless: “By making gender mainstreaming everybody’s job, it can easily become nobody’s job. The budget implications are significant: cross-cutting issues seldom sit atop dedicated pots of money” (UNDP 2003, 7).

The slowness of change at UNDP illustrates how difficult it is to move organizational cultures but does not in itself invalidate the strategic focus on processes. Indeed, UNDP—often via UNIFEM—has helped pioneer many creative innovations in gendering organizational processes, from gender indices and scoreboards to gender-responsive budgeting. And, of the organizations reviewed, UNDP has the highest percentage of women in professional positions, increasing from 20.6 percent in the mid-1970s to 41 percent in mid-2002 (UNDP 2002a, 1998; Jahan 1995). Furthermore, in response to the Gender Programme Team’s critique, UNDP management has strengthened strategic programming and accountability by mainstreaming gender into work on the UN’s Millennium Development Goals and by using gender-responsive budgeting in building economic governance programs. It also has strengthened reporting requirements and stepped up compulsory training and capacity building (UNDP and UNPF Executive Board 2004). There seems to be a commitment to carry gender mainstreaming to its logical conclusion and make organizations dedicated to women’s empowerment superfluous.

But what may get lost in the process is precisely the focus on women’s empowerment. Feminists within UNDP have come to emphasize the need for a double-pronged approach that encompasses both gender mainstreaming and empowerment (UNDP 2003, 8). Treating gender as a cross-cutting issue has become a threat to organizational spaces that have made women’s empowerment their primary goal. There is a movement toward increasingly implicating UNIFEM in gender mainstreaming within UNDP. UNIFEM subregional offices are being merged with UNDP regional centers, and there is a stated intent to integrate UNIFEM’s work into UNDP programs; to form joint UNIFEM/UNDP teams to analyze UNDP policies, programs, and resource allocations; and to significantly increase UNIFEM support for gender mainstreaming in UNDP (UNDP and UNPF Executive Board 2004). The fact that this cooperation is intended to address the lack

of UNDP resources for gender mainstreaming may not bode well for independent UNIFEM programming.

The UNDP experience illustrates co-optation of feminist agendas into broader organizational priorities. Mainstreaming gender into the UNDP subsumes gender equality under UNDP's commitment to sustainable human development—equality between women and men is desirable because “gender discrimination is the source of endemic poverty, of inequitable and low economic growth, of high HIV prevalence, and of inadequate governance” (UNDP 2002a, iv). The key to sustainability, for the UNDP, is participatory development and decentralization. Within this approach, a lack of national “capacity” has hampered UNDP efforts to promote gender equality. In a context of scarce resources, it is drawing on UNIFEM to support its gender mainstreaming efforts—both locally and at headquarters, potentially weakening the key feminist organization within the UN system with dedicated resources to the advancement of women.

THE WORLD BANK: FITTING GENDER INTO A POLICY FRAMEWORK

The issue of gender mainstreaming came into focus at the World Bank at about the same time as it did at UNDP. In 1985 a new WID advisor was appointed at the Bank. In stark contrast to UNDP, her duties were to focus on policy. She was to “demonstrate how attention to Women in Development contributed to development objectives in a language that was acceptable to economists and to provide clear operational guidelines” (Miller 1998, 152). In 1987 WID became one of four areas of special emphasis at the Bank. This was followed in 1988 by a new system in which all projects proposed by the Bank were to be analyzed for attention to WID during the approval stage. During this time the staff and budget of the WID sector increased dramatically, from \$80,000 to \$620,000 between 1986 and 1988 (153).

In the early 1990s, management became concerned that gender was not being sufficiently integrated into World Bank projects and shifted attention to mainstreaming gender into organizational processes. The WID division was closed down and replaced with a Gender Analysis and Policy thematic group in an attempt to improve system-wide attention to gender issues via decentralization. This new group was process-oriented and was charged with the task of overseeing mainstreaming through education, both in training bank staff and aiding interested member states in devising appropriate strategies. The overseeing of policy previously performed by the WID division was not transferred to the thematic

group but rather to a monitoring team responsible for both gender and poverty (Miller 1998, 155–56; Jahan 1995, 62).

In yet another major reorganization in 1997, attention to gender became institutionally subsumed under the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) technical network, one of four major networks set up to support country-level operations (World Bank 2003a 1–2). Within PREM there is now a Gender and Development Board consisting of representatives from each of the six Bank regions, from each of the four major networks, and from other key units. The Board is charged with developing a rationale for Bank work on gender issues, research and learning on gender issues, training and outreach on gender issues, and the integration of gender into the Country Assistance Strategy process and private sector development activities, as well as the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of gender issues (World Bank 2003a.1). To assist the Board with implementing the work programs it devises, there is also a Gender and Development Group within PREM which provides support to the Board (1). This institutionalization of gender issues within one of the Bank's new core policy areas has been widely considered an important mainstreaming event (O'Brien et al. 2000, 44; World Bank 2000a). It also has entailed a shift back to considering gender mainstreaming not only a matter of process but also a matter of policy and programs.

Even though advocates welcomed the move of gender issues under the PREM network, they pointed out that there continued to be few incentives to encourage Bank staff to consider gender issues and that the demand-driven system, under which the new gender unit operated, left it in a position where it had to “sell” its services in an inhospitable ideological environment focused on neoliberal economics (O'Brien et al. 2000, 44–45). Further, there seemed to be few resources dedicated to mainstreaming gender in organizational processes under PREM. Indeed, a 1997 evaluation of World Bank activities on mainstreaming (Murphy 1997) focuses almost exclusively on organizational outputs, primarily projects but also country assistance strategies and economic and sector work. Process elements specified did include the commitment of senior management to gender mainstreaming and the establishment of focal points. However, the work of focal points often is in addition to existing assignments and funding for regional teams has been low and insecure. For example, the Africa regional gender team was reduced to two members after funding sources dried up. Furthermore, gender training of staff, a key effort at UNDP and ILO, plays a relatively small role at the World Bank. Apparently, “a high level of gender expertise can be found among

task managers who have never worked as gender specialists," and training tool kits have been developed mostly to sensitize borrower counterparts (15, 45).

In terms of formulating a policy, the Bank has stated its commitment to assisting its member states in designing "gender-sensitive policies and programs to ensure that overall development efforts are directed to attain impacts that are equitably beneficial for both men and women" (World Bank 1999, 1). It has issued a handbook on mainstreaming gender into social assignments, which offers suggestions for Bank staff to integrate gender into projects. This includes everything from gender-disaggregating data collection and analysis to scheduling meetings at times appropriate for both men and women (Moser et al. 1998, 1-3). However, despite the strong focus on outputs, there has been confusion over what the Bank's policy is on gender and how it should be carried out in practice. A 1999 review found that the Bank lacked a common "gender rationale and language, as well as tools and training for mainstreaming gender and development" (Moser et al. 1999, 5).

In recent years the World Bank has made significant progress both in developing an overarching policy rationale for the Bank's activities on gender and in devising a strategy for enhancing and improving its mainstreaming efforts. In particular, the 2001 World Bank policy report *Engendering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources and Voice* links gender equality with economic growth, poverty reduction, and good governance. Based on the extensive data reviewed, the report calls for institutional reform "to establish equal rights and opportunities for women and men," "economic development to strengthen incentives for more equal resources and participation," and for "measures to redress persistent disparities in command over resources and political voice," legitimizing the integration of gender concerns in World Bank policies and projects, and making gender fit into the language of economists (World Bank 2001b, 1-2).

The 2002 report *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action* also constitutes a significant step forward in mainstreaming gender in the World Bank. The report builds on the policy framework established in 2001, focusing on outlining strategies for action. The report identifies three major goals for mainstreaming gender: (1) make Bank interventions responsive to country conditions and commitments, that is, make gender-related efforts "country led and country specific"; (2) make interventions more strategic and in line with the Bank's mission by focusing on gender issues that are "particularly important for poverty reduction, economic growth, and well-being"; and (3) improve the

alignment of Bank policies, processes, and resources to support strategic gender mainstreaming (World Bank 2002b, 15-17). However, what really makes the 2002 report such a significant step forward for the Bank is that it operationalizes these general goals into a concrete, three-step process accompanied with a detailed timetable for implementation at all levels and a significant budgetary commitment. The process entails the preparation of a periodic Country Gender Assessment (CGA) for each country with an active lending program; the development of a priority policy and operational interventions which respond to the CGA; and ongoing monitoring of the implementation and results of the policy and operational initiatives (World Bank 2002b, 18). While the focus is on process, it puts in the center policies and operational interventions. Unlike in UNDP, the process is a means to a defined policy end.

A review of progress of 2003 fiscal year activities (World Bank 2004) found that 22 percent of active client countries had completed a CGA and that there was increased attention to gender issues in core diagnostic economic and sector work and in country assistance strategies. Thirty-three poverty reduction strategy papers included an extensive diagnosis of gender inequalities, an increase over the previous year but still a low percentage given the fact that women make up a disproportionate number of the poor. Furthermore, there was demonstrably greater attention to gender issues in project design and supervision. The review identifies as challenges for the future the need to go from gender analysis to gender-responsive actions and the need to pay attention to gender issues in sectors other than health and education. It furthermore recognizes the need for more extensive "client and staff capacity building."

Not surprisingly, the Bank's focus on policy content has led to charges that it has co-opted radical agendas for institutional purposes. In particular, the 2001 report's linking of gender equality to free markets and economic growth raised consternation in the Bank's External Consultative Group on Gender, a civil society advisory group formed after the Beijing conference in order to establish a dialogue with feminists outside the Bank (World Bank 1999, 20). Aligning itself with World Bank rhetoric, the report celebrates economic growth as a means to gender equality. Far from subverting capitalist (and, some say, therefore patriarchal) agendas, it actually supports them. In addition, the institutionalist economic approach visible in the report has allowed the Bank to tame feminist critiques of liberal economics by defining economic and social issues as inhabiting separate spheres. Gender inequality becomes a social issue needing social inter-

ventions (Bergeron 2003), and gender mainstreaming in World Bank practice has concentrated on social issues like health and education. In this way, the Bank has adjusted feminist arguments to the logics of liberal economics, isolating gender analysis from finance and macroeconomic interventions, the Bank's bread and butter issues.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION: FROM WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The ILO's concern with questions pertaining to women workers goes back to the first wave of the women's movement and the creation in 1926 within the office of a section responsible for women and children (Lubin and Winslow 1990, 209). Because of its long history of engaging with questions of social justice for women, the ILO has most firmly institutionalized policies in the area, formulated as international labor standards (conventions, recommendations, and declarations) and adopted by the International Labor Conference. Where UNDP has focused on organizational processes and the World Bank on fitting gender into its projects and programs, the ILO has participated in defining gender equality through an arsenal of conventions and recommendations. They include most importantly the equal pay convention (1951), the convention against discrimination in employment and occupation (1958), the convention on workers with family responsibilities (1981), and the maternity protection convention (last revised in 2000). These instruments emerge from an institutional mandate of promoting human rights and social justice and from a philosophy that considers government action and the institutionalization of tripartism as key sources of change. This is in contrast to the participatory and client-focused approach of UNDP and of the World Bank's technocratic advocacy of market reforms.

Two documents emerged from the ILO during the UN Women's Decade: the 1985 resolution on equal opportunities and treatment for men and women in employment and a 1987 plan of action that outlines the major areas of ILO activity toward the ends specified in the resolution. Means to accomplish these objectives included advising governments, training constituents, creating new standards, research, and technical cooperation activities. The language of mainstreaming does not appear in the documents, but one of the objectives listed in the plan is "to integrate women workers' questions fully into the overall programme of the ILO and ensure that women's issues feature adequately in research, information dissemination and technical cooperation activities" (ILO 1994, 132).

Perhaps because of its extensive record of formulating rights for women joined with a reliance on legislative strategies and on the social partners as change agents, the ILO was slow to take up mainstreaming as a matter of changing organizational processes. It created a WID coordinator position in 1986 whose mandate it was to integrate women's issues into the ILO's technical cooperation programs (Miller 1998, 152–53). A systematic integration of gender perspectives into a standard setting became an issue only in 1989 when the ILO created the position of Special Adviser on Women Workers' Questions. Efforts at decentralization and mainstreaming included interdepartmental committees and projects, the creation of focal points, the appointment of Regional Advisers for Women Worker's Questions to the four ILO regional headquarters, and finally the implementation of an institution-wide staff training program on gender in 1995 (156–57). Overall, ILO efforts suffered from the typical resource shortages. As at UNDP, many of the ILO personnel designated to address WID were expected to do so in addition to their prior responsibilities, an often impossible task (152–53). A 1998 UNRISD report on the ILO's gender focal point system found weaknesses due to a lack of senior management commitment, a lack of clarity of the role of the special advisor, the lack of an integrated institutional approach, and a shortage of human resources for gender mainstreaming (summarized in U. Murray 2001).

The advent of a new director-general, Juan Somavia, in March of 1999 meant a leap forward in the ILO's efforts to mainstream gender. Making gender mainstreaming a "high priority," Somavia changed the Office of the Special Advisor into the Bureau for Gender Equality, giving it a direct reporting line to the director-general and increasing its human and financial resources in an era of zero-budget growth. Anticipating an opportunity for change, the special advisor had already initiated a research and team-building process in 1998 that created the basis for a new action plan and a policy statement. Senior management adopted the action plan, and the director-general issued a circular on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in December 1999. Both documents placed a strong emphasis on process issues, addressing both the structure of the organization and numbers of women in professional staff in addition to mainstreaming gender into technical and operational work. Four main areas of focus have emerged in practice: structural arrangements in the office, capacity building, an accountability system with adequate resources, and a gender-sensitive human resource policy. There are now gender teams in each technical sector under the guidance of their executive directors to influence programming and capacity building. At

the technical and operational level there was a 15.6 percent increase in resources allocated to gender mainstreaming from the 1998–99 to the 2000–2001 biennium (J. Zhang 2000; ILO, Governing Body 2000; ILO, Director-General's Announcements, 1999).

Capacity building played a key role in the early ILO efforts to mainstream. In 1999, the organization spent \$158,000 to conduct eighteen workshops to train staff on gender issues. These efforts moved from general awareness-raising to more specific issues (e.g., gender in social security, poverty eradication, etc.). Various departments, including those not typically focused on gender (e.g., standards, social protection, social dialogue), completed assessments on the degree to which gender has been considered in their work and have participated in workshops to build capacity. Beginning in 2001, the ILO introduced gender audits, a participatory methodology of self-assessment in which facilitators guided fifteen units to review the significance of gender in their work area together with successes and shortcomings. The audits served the purpose of organizational learning paired with a review of effectiveness. The gender bureau plans to institutionalize the audit in future budget cycles. Findings from the first audit are instructive on the progress of gender mainstreaming within the ILO (*ILO Gender Audit 2001–02 2002*).

There has been considerable progress in mainstreaming gender into organizational processes. Although there are still shortcomings in implementation, the gender bureau is focusing on the development of improved indicators, monitoring and accountability systems, and tracking of expenditures to improve implementation. There is also an effort to define the roles and responsibilities of the gender focal points as catalysts while insisting that gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all staff, including primarily senior management. Discussions in the human resources sector to define “core-competences” of all ILO staff now include a competence on gender matters. Furthermore, there has been progress in moving more women into professional positions; 37.6 percent of staff at the professional level and higher were women in 2003, up from 14.1 percent in the mid-1970s (phone interview of Elisabeth Prügl with Jane Youyun Zhang, 10 July 2001; U. Murray 2001; ILO Governing Body 2001, table 3; ILO 2004, table 4).

Interestingly, the audit found deficiencies in the area of policy. Under Somalia's leadership, the ILO has focused on creating “decent work” in a globalizing economy. Decent work is “work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects

for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men” (ILO Governing Body 2001). Despite the inclusion of gender equality in this definition, the gender audit identified a need to “define and deepen the understanding of gender equality concepts such as gender equity, empowerment of women, men and masculinities” as well as to “clarify what the gender equality issues are in the Decent Work agenda and define objectives” (*ILO Gender Audit 2001–02 2002*, 14). Gender mainstreaming pushes the ILO beyond the equality policies formulated in existing standards and recommendations. Key among the issues to be addressed is the position of women in the global economy, their disproportionate representation in the informal sector, and the unique policy issues that arise from women's disproportionate work in the unpaid care economy.

Given its institutional commitments, such policy issues may be difficult for the ILO to tackle. One of its key commitments is tripartism, that is, social dialogue between unions, employer organizations, and governments as a means toward establishing social justice. With women vastly underrepresented in unions and employer organizations, tripartism constitutes a significant challenge for the ILO's organizational process strategy. For example, at the 2001 International Labor Conference, women made up only 20 percent of all delegates, down from 21 percent the previous year. Only 14.5 percent of the worker representatives were female, and only 13.7 percent of the employer representatives. Moreover, of 410 speakers in the plenary only 12 percent were women (phone interview of Elisabeth Prügl with Jane Youyun Zhang, 10 July 2001; *ILO Gender Audit 2001–02 2002*, 65). The difficulty that unions and employer organizations have had in including women, together with a reluctance to include women's NGOs and women's machineries in tripartite social dialogues, is a measure of the challenge the ILO faces in its efforts to feminize the institution.

Aside from having limited the participation of women, tripartism also has limited what is possible in terms of output. For example, although the 1996 homework convention applied mostly to women who did not easily fit into an employer-employee dichotomy, the convention, applying a tripartite logic, forced the issue into this class-based distinction, excluding the self-employed from protection although they are often dependent economically. Arguably the disadvantaged position of home-based workers cannot be captured by a narrow class-perspective but arises as much from their subordinate gender status (Prügl

1999). A similar difficulty has emerged in current discussions of contract labor, which ran into severe conceptual and political problems at the 1997 International Labor Conference. Like home-based workers and the self-employed, contract workers do not fit neatly into the employer-employee dichotomy (Vosko 2001). The ILO also has had difficulty in dealing with the issue of women's unpaid housework and caring work. It has touched neither of these areas, although the disproportionate burden of unpaid work that women carry is one of the most important determinants of their subordination (Delphy and Leonard 1992).

The ILO's focus on tripartite social dialogue constitutes the equivalent of the World Bank's commitment to market forces and the UNDP's focus on participatory development. The foci constitute core commitments of these organizations that are difficult to change without challenging the very existence of the organization. They demand, from the organization's perspective, a co-optation of feminist purposes (Lotherington and Flemmen 1991). Mainstreaming is unlikely to change such core organizational values; whether this necessarily undermines the goal of gender equality is a matter of debate.

CONCLUSION

Multilateral institutions, at least those studied here, have responded to feminist demands to mainstream gender. To a surprising degree they have incorporated mainstreaming into their practices. They have done so on their own terms, fitting feminist demands to organizational purposes in different ways. For UNDP this has entailed subsuming the goal of gender equality to participatory sustainable development, for the World Bank to the rules of the market, and for the ILO to tripartism and social dialogue. Institutional purposes have allowed for different ways to mainstream. For UNDP, the emphasis on participation precluded writing a gender policy and put the focus on creating national and international capacities and a more accountable, feminine and democratic UNDP. For the World Bank, free market commitments precluded infusing gender into policies and shifted advocates' attention away from process in the early 1990s. However, a tempering of free market dogmatism has opened conceptual space for a gender policy that focuses on the institutions of the market at the turn of the century. For the ILO, a long-standing concern for women workers in its policies led to complacency regarding gender mainstreaming in the organization itself, an issue that is now being rectified. Mainstreaming gender in the ILO poses a challenge to the core value of a class-based tripartism.

Given the different meanings of mainstreaming that organizational pathways have yielded, it is difficult to know what success in mainstreaming would mean. Feminist agendas have been subsumed under organizational agendas in all three organizations. Co-optation is evident particularly in the case of the World Bank, the one organization that actually has spelled out its logic for addressing gender inequality. But all multilaterals have agendas in which gender equality is just one element. Does this mean that organizational strategies toward advancing gender equality are necessarily bound to fail?

Organizations are not social movements; they rarely engage in the single-minded contentious agitations typical of social movements and central to undermining structures of power. Organizational strategies thus are no substitute for movement strategies, and gender mainstreaming will be successful from a feminist perspective only if the movement remains involved in the process. Indeed, feminist activists have recognized the need for movement action to ensure that organizations are held accountable, not on the basis of their own priorities but on the basis of movement goals. Various efforts are underway to accomplish this. The "Women's Eyes on the World Bank" campaign seeks to hold the Bank accountable, and the Consultative Group on Gender has reminded the World Bank of the need to integrate gender issues in the areas of finance and economics (World Bank 2002). At the Security Council, resolution 1325 has provided an important opening, and feminists are now using the resolution to demand meaningful gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations (Cohn et al. 2004). In addition to this type of feminist activism, there is room for considerably more work on the part of feminist scholars. A beginning has been made by the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, which seeks to link feminist academics with feminists in the UN.

The gender and development approach that has informed mainstreaming strategies started from the premise that gender inequality is structurally embedded. Thus, rectifying inequality requires a focus on institutions. Mainstreaming enables systematic attention to the differential impacts of policies and programs on women and men in organizational processes and outcomes and in this way addresses the structural embeddedness of gender inequality. At the same time, the experience reviewed here confirms that processes of co-optation are taking place and supports critics who have long warned of this danger associated with mainstreaming. It cautions feminists not to see gender mainstreaming as the be-all and end-all but to complement institutional with movement strate-

gies. Movement agitation and critical research can take advantage of the knowledge produced by feminists inside international organizations and offer critique from a distance. In this way, movement activists and scholars can be an important source of support to feminists inside organizations, providing ammunition and legitimacy while holding organizations accountable.

NOTES

1. Some donor agencies had adopted gender mainstreaming even before 1995 (Jahan 1995), Northern European agencies prominently among them (Council of Europe 1998, 17).

From "Home Economics" to "Microfinance": Gender Rhetoric and Bureaucratic Resistance

David Hirschmann

This essay begins by tracing changes in both the context of and progress in mainstreaming gender in foreign assistance. (Gender is used here as a shorthand for both gender awareness and analysis and an affirmative focus on women.) Although gender has become an ascendant, often uncontested rhetoric, the essay outlines a series of episodes (beginning with one in the early eighties and ending with another at the start of the new century) that illustrate strategies of bureaucratic resistance to gender. They illustrate changes in the character of that resistance, notably that it has become more professional, conceptual, and reliant on gender-exclusive models, more recently and most powerfully on the precepts of neoclassical economics. These two interconnected and contradictory themes—ascendant rhetoric and ongoing but modified resistance—anticipate the third and concluding section, which observes that implementation lags far behind rhetoric and seeks to explain how the economics and gender divide seriously limits the impact of gender on foreign assistance programs and policies.

My intent is to draw on the literature and record of WID and GAD in donor agencies and to adapt, update, and contribute to the ongoing history of WID, especially in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). While the chapter's primary purpose is not to apply theory to practice, it is nevertheless informed by certain approaches. For a start, it accepts the notion that patriarchy