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**Mainstreaming Gender In Global Governance**

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## **Abstract\***

In this article, we seek to explain both the origins of gender mainstreaming as a “policy frame” in international relations, as well as the variable implementation of mainstreaming over time and across various international organizations. We emphasize that in the years since the UN Fourth World Women’s Conference in Beijing (1995), mainstreaming has been endorsed and adopted not only by European organizations and governments, but also by nearly every important international organization, and we compare the adoption and implementation of mainstreaming in two international organizations, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. We suggest, however, that the rhetorical acceptance of mainstreaming by various international organizations obscures considerable diversity in both the timing and the nature of mainstreaming processes within and among organizations. This variation, we argue, can be explained in terms of the categories of political opportunity, mobilizing structures and strategic framing put forward by social movement theorists.

In September of 1995, some 5,000 representatives from 192 countries, together with some 30,000 women and men representing 3,000 non-governmental organizations, gathered in Beijing for the Fourth World Conference on Women, and adopted a far-reaching “Platform for Action.” One of the most important and innovative elements of this Platform was a provision calling on the UN and its signatory states to “mainstream” gender issues across the policy process, “so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made on the effects on women and men, respectively.” Although the notion of mainstreaming gender issues across the policy process had antecedents in the previous two decades, the official recognition and endorsement of mainstreaming as a formal goal of all UN member states has provided a global mandate for change, and a template against which to judge both national and international policies. The concept of gender mainstreaming promises a revolutionary change in the international and domestic policy process, in which gender issues become a core consideration not simply for specific departments or ministries dealing with women, but rather for all actors across a range of issue-areas and at all stages in the policy process from conception and legislation to implementation and evaluation. Equally clear, however, are the extraordinary changes required in the mentalities and organizations of both domestic and international actors in order for the principle of gender mainstreaming to be implemented fully.

In this article, we seek to explain both the origins of gender mainstreaming as a “policy frame” in international relations, as well as the variable implementation of mainstreaming over time and across various international organizations. The origins of mainstreaming, we argue, can be traced to the international development community in the years following the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, and came to fruition a decade later in Beijing. In the years since Beijing, gender mainstreaming has been endorsed and adopted not only by European organizations and governments, but by nearly every important international organization, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, among many others. Indeed, the rapid and nearly universal acceptance of gender mainstreaming seems at first glance to approximate the sociological concept of “institutional isomorphism,” whereby a norm, once adopted in a particular institutional setting, diffuses quickly to a wide range of other institutions whose members accept the legitimacy of that norm. We suggest, however, that the rhetorical acceptance of mainstreaming by various international organizations obscures considerable diversity in both the timing and the nature of mainstreaming processes within and among organizations. This variation, we argue, can be explained in terms of the categories of political opportunity, mobilizing structures and strategic framing put forward by social movement theorists.

The article is divided into three parts. In the first, we outline our social-movement approach to study of gender mainstreaming, and consider and explain the causes of gender mainstreaming as a “policy frame” guiding the activities of international organizations and their member governments. More specifically, we examine the origins of the policy frame of gender mainstreaming within the international development community, positing that the proposal and adoption of gender mainstreaming can be understood in terms of the political opportunities available to international women’s rights advocates in the 1980s and 1990s, the advocacy networks established with and around national and supranational elites in various UN development organizations, and the extent to which gender mainstreaming as a policy frame “fit” or resonated with existing organizational frames.

In the second part of the article, we move beyond the formal adoption of gender mainstreaming as a policy frame to examine preliminary evidence of *implementation* in the two most important international development organizations of the UN system: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Variation in both the timing and the scope of mainstreaming implementation supports our initial predictions. The UNDP, characterized as a relatively open organization with a weak capacity for implementation, has been a leader in the international development community in the early adoption of gender mainstreaming procedures and guidelines. The creation and implementation of substantive policy, by contrast, remains limited, and recent evaluations suggest that gender issues continue to be “largely untreated terrain” in member countries. The World Bank, in comparison, was for most of its history a relatively closed organization with a dominant frame less receptive to gender issues. Not surprisingly, the Bank has only recently incorporated the gender mainstreaming policy frame, largely in response to strong pressure from internal policy entrepreneurs. The Bank’s record of implementation, however, has been more successful, reflecting its greater implementation capacity and resources.

In the third and final part of the article, we conclude with a discussion of the difficulties of measuring gender mainstreaming, and a call for further comparative research on mainstreaming both within and across organizations, and at various levels of domestic and international governance.

## **I. The Origins and Adoption of Gender Mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming is now official policy in many developed countries (particularly in Western Europe) and among international organizations such as the UNDP, the World Bank, and the European Union, but it is neither the only nor the traditional approach to gender equality policy. Teresa Rees, for

example, has argued that one may distinguish among three ideal-typical approaches to gender issues: equal treatment, positive action, and mainstreaming. The earliest and most common approach, *equal treatment*, ‘implies that no individual should have fewer human rights or opportunities than any other,’ and the application of such a policy involves the creation and enforcement of formally equal rights for men and women, such as the right to equal pay for equal work. Such an equal treatment approach is an essential element in any equal opportunities policy, Rees argues, but the approach is nevertheless flawed in focusing exclusively on the formal rights of women as workers, and therefore fails to address the fundamental causes of sexual inequality in the informal “gender contracts” among women and men (1998: 32).

In contrast to the equal treatment approach, Rees posits a second approach, called *positive action*, in which “the emphasis shifts from equality of access to creating conditions more likely to result in equality of outcome” (1998:34). More concretely, positive action involves the adoption of specific actions on behalf of women, in order to overcome their unequal starting positions in a male-dominated or patriarchal society. At the extreme, positive action may also take the form of *positive discrimination*, which seeks to increase the participation of women (or other under-represented groups) through the use of affirmative-action preferences or quotas. Positive discrimination finds many supporters among women’s rights activists, but throughout most of the world it remains a controversial and divisive approach, raising questions about fairness and the individual rights of men who are thus discriminated against.

The third and most promising approach identified by Rees is *gender mainstreaming*. The concept of gender mainstreaming calls for the systematic incorporation of gender issues throughout *all* governmental institutions and policies. As defined by an Expert Group commissioned by the Council of Europe (1998), “Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.”<sup>1</sup> Thus defined, gender mainstreaming is a potentially revolutionary concept, which promises to bring a gender dimension into all international governance. Yet, gender mainstreaming is also an extraordinarily demanding concept, which requires the adoption of a gender perspective by all the central actors in the policy process – some of whom may have little experience or interest in gender issues. This raises two central questions: why, and how, did the international community adopt a policy of gender mainstreaming at Beijing and since, and how has it been implemented in practice?

## Social Movement Theory and the Adoption of Gender Mainstreaming

The answer to both of these questions, we argue, can be found in the recent scholarship on social movements, which emphasizes a combination of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and strategic framing in order to explain the rise of social movements and their impact on both domestic and international governance.

Social movement analyses often begin with a discussion of political opportunities, defined by Tarrow (1998:76-77) as "consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent—dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting people's expectations for success or failure." Perhaps the most detailed and precise comparative use of political opportunity structures can be found in Kitschelt (1986), who distinguishes two aspects of political opportunity structure, namely *input structures*, which determine the openness of a political system to social movements seeking change; and *output structures*, which determine the capacity of a given state to implement its own policies. Kitschelt hypothesizes that the input and output structures of a given society will play a key role in determining both the strategies of social movements (which are likely to be more confrontational in closed input structures) and the influence that such movements will have on policies and policy outcomes. While Kitschelt's empirical measures of input and output structures are specific to the institutional contexts of domestic politics, and therefore difficult to adapt to the international organizations with which we are concerned in this article, his general conceptualization of opportunity structures in terms of inputs and outputs is useful, and we adopt it here. Specifically, we examine the input structure or openness of an organization in terms of two key variables, namely the existence of multiple points of access to the policy process in a given organization, and the presence of allies among the elites of that organization. By contrast, we associate the output structure of an organization with its implementation capacity, namely its ability to effect internal change in policy within the organization, and secure external compliance of its member states through the application of legal or financial sanctions.

As applied to our analysis of gender mainstreaming in various international organizations, the literature on political opportunities suggests several core hypotheses. *Ceteris paribus*, we expect that, in organizations with relatively open input structures and weak output structures for implementation, social movements such as the international women's movements will find multiple access points and elite allies, and will therefore be able to influence policy at the international level, yet these policies are likely to be implemented weakly or unevenly by the organization and its member states. By contrast,



where input structures are relatively closed but output structures are strong, we expect groups to encounter greater difficulties influencing international policies; but those changes that are achieved are more likely to be implemented at the international and national levels. Where input structures are open and implementation capacity is relatively strong, on the other hand, we would expect social movements to influence both international policy and its implementation in the various member states. Finally, in organizations with closed input structures and weak implementation capacity, we expect that social movements are likely to have little influence on either policy or implementation. These four possibilities are spelled out in Table 1 (adapted from Kitschelt 1986), which also characterizes each of our organizational case studies in terms of its political opportunity structure: the UNDP as a relatively open organization but one with a weak implementation capacity; and the World Bank as a relatively closed organization with a stronger implementation capacity; and the European Union (which we have examined elsewhere; Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000) as an open organization with a strong implementation capacity.

**Table 1: Political Opportunity Structures in Three International Organizations**

		Input Structures (openness)	
		Open	Closed
Output Structures (implementation capacity)	Strong	European Union	World Bank
	Weak	UNDP	

Political opportunities, however, may change over time as governments change, new organizations are formed, and new access points and elite allies create “windows of opportunity” for social movements. In the case of the international women’s movement, the turning point was undoubtedly the declaration of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985), and the convocation of a series of increasingly large and ambitious World Conferences on Women in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), Beijing (1995), and New York (2000). These conferences, and the parallel NGO forums that have become a staple of all major UN conferences, offered women’s groups from both North

and South the opportunity to lobby governments for concrete international policies on behalf of women, as well as the chance to form transnational networks across borders, while the creation of new UN bodies such as UNIFEM and the UN Division on the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) provided new elite allies for women's NGOs.

In addition, the ability of social movements to take advantage of political opportunities and influence policy outcomes depends in part upon a second major factor, *mobilizing structures*, defined as "those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 3). The literature on mobilizing structures first emerged in the early 1970s in response to the challenge from economist Mancur Olson, who pointed out that large, diffuse groups face a collective action problem, in that rational individuals will generally choose to "free ride" rather than to participate in social movement activities. In their early work, McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977) argued that the collective action problem could be overcome through the organized efforts of professional social movement organizations (SMOs), which could centrally organize social movement activities and, perhaps more importantly, mobilize resources from sympathetic supporters. Later studies, however, de-emphasized the importance of professional SMOs and the likelihood of finding support from sympathetic elites, and instead focused on the organizational strengths of indigenous communities (McAdam 1982). Today, the literature on mobilizing structures aims at classifying and explaining the adoption of a wide range of formal and informal, centralized and decentralized mobilizing structures, and the ways in which different mobilizing structures can affect social movement success (McCarthy 1996).

For our purposes in this article, this literature raises the compelling question whether, and how, the international women's movement and other social movements are able to overcome the formidable obstacles to transnational collective action, in which the challenges of distance and language differences are added to the traditional Olsonian obstacles. This question has been addressed most systematically by Keck and Sikkink (1998), who coin the term "transnational advocacy network" to describe transnational movements—including the international women's movement—which "plead the cause of others or defend a cause or a proposition," such as the mainstreaming of gender issues. Such networks are characterized by "voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange," and may include domestic and international officials and parliamentary representatives as well as non-governmental actors (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 8-9). They operate most effectively, according to Keck and Sikkink, "when they are dense, with many

actors, strong connections among groups in the network, and reliable information flows” (ibid.: 28).

As Keck and Sikkink point out, the various UN conferences have allowed women’s NGOs to meet regularly, exchange information, and adopt a common agenda to overcome the North-South quarrels that had created severe divisions at the Mexico City and Copenhagen conferences. By the time of the Beijing Conference in 1995, the international women’s movement had grown to include thousands of NGOs from the developed and developing world, with support from sympathetic governments and international organizations, and increasingly sophisticated communications networks taking advantage of the internet and other advances in communications technology. NGO’s however, are not the only members of the international women’s movement, nor the only advocates of gender mainstreaming; indeed, as we shall see, entrepreneurial actors within progressive donor governments (including the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and Canada) and within supranational organizations (such as UNIFEM, the UNDP, the World Bank, and the European Commission) have also played key roles.

Finally, in addition to political opportunities and mobilizing structures, social movement theorists have focused increasingly on the importance of *framing processes*, understood as “the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 6). The concept of strategic framing was first applied to the study of social movements by Snow and Benford, who argued that social movement organizations (SMOs) may strategically frame issues in order to create a sense of injustice among potential SMO supporters, attribute this injustice to systemic factors, and mobilize individuals to participate in collective action (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). Extending this analysis from social movements to policy-making, Rein and Schon have articulated the concept of a “policy frame,” defined as “a way of selecting, organizing, interpreting and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading, and acting” (1993: 146). In the international arena, for example Keck and Sikkink (1998) have suggested that women’s groups successfully re-framed the issue of violence against women in terms of the broader, existing frame of human rights, thereby making it possible for the UN system to address an issue previously defined as “private” or “domestic.” Similarly, we follow Sonia Mazey (1999) in suggesting that gender mainstreaming is such a policy frame, put forward by strategic actors seeking to ensure a greater and more consistent attention to gender issues in international governance.

Simply proposing a new policy frame, however, is insufficient to guarantee acceptance of this frame by the dominant elites within a state or an international organization. Throughout this article, we assume that all actors—including transnational advocacy networks and the organizations they attempt to influence—are at least boundedly rational, i.e. that they pursue a consistent set of preferences, subject to the inherent uncertainty of the international policy environment which leads actors to rely on policy frames in the first place. In this context, we turn to the arguments of Snow and Benford, who argue that newly proffered frames must "resonate," or fit, with the existing frames within which dominant elites operate, and which they in turn sustain and reproduce (1992: 137). Specifically, we argue that people, states and organizations can be placed along a continuum in terms of their support for either a *neoliberal* frame emphasizing the efficiency of market mechanisms, or a more *interventionist* frame, which accepts the intervention of states and international organizations in the marketplace in pursuit of social goals—including the goal of sexual equality. This approach generates two testable hypotheses. First, we predict that international organizations with more neoliberal agendas—such as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, or the World Bank—should be more resistant to the adoption of a gender-mainstreaming frame than more interventionist organizations—such as the UNDP or the United Nations Trade and Development Organization (UNCTAD). Second, because transnational advocacy groups are equally rational and strategic, we predict that they will strategically frame the issue of mainstreaming differently in different organizational contexts, in the hopes of securing an acceptable fit with the dominant frames of each organization. To anticipate the results of our case studies, we shall argue below that both of these hypotheses find support in our empirical results, insofar as advocates of mainstreaming have indeed experienced greater or lesser difficulty in lobbying for the adoption of a mainstreaming frame in different organizations; yet they have also acted strategically to frame the concept of mainstreaming differently, and employ different arguments in favor of it, across different organizations, or even across directorates of a single organization such as the European Union. Before proceeding to a comparative discussion of these organizations, however, we begin by examining the origins of the concept of gender mainstreaming, within the international development community of the United Nations system.

### **The Origins of Gender Mainstreaming in the UN System**

The origins of gender mainstreaming predate the Beijing conference by at least a decade, and lie in the efforts of women activists and entrepreneurs to increase the visibility of women and the importance of gender in the policies, programs and projects of international development agencies. Prior to the 1970s, the issue of gender had played at best a marginal role in international governance, limited

largely to a little-invoked reference in the 1948 UN Declaration, which reaffirmed the equal rights of women and men, and an occasional reference to women in the context of the UN's support for economic and social development.

The profile of women in governance was substantially increased by the UN decision to declare 1975 the International Women's Year, and the declaration of the following decade (1976-1985) as the United Nations Decade for Women (UNDW), which witnessed the rise of an international women's movement, most notably in the area of economic development. As is well known, the Decade began in 1975 with the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City, which brought together nearly six thousand women and men, thousands of NGOs, and 133 government delegations. The discussion and activism initiated in Mexico, and then Stockholm (1980), would develop into a coherent plan of action set forward during the Third World Women's Conference in Nairobi, Kenya and the parallel NGO forum, giving gender mainstreaming advocates the first foundations of a policy platform from which to pressure government agencies and states. In July of 1985, almost 1,900 official delegates and a record 14,000 NGO representatives met in Nairobi, Kenya, to review the experiences of the UNDW and to establish the multilateral agenda for women's equality until the year 2000. The culminating document of this conference, the *Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, would have substantial impact not only on the gender policies and programs of international development agencies like the UNDP and World Bank, but on the formation of the advocacy network itself.

Although the slogan of the Decade sought to examine the role of women in the tripartite classification of peace, equality, and development, in practice much of the early activity of the international women's movement was focused on the issue of economic development, and specifically on the question of Women in Development (WID). During the Decade, national development agencies in United States, Canada, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries—each under pressure from their own national women's movements—developed new bureaus and programs to address WID issues, and to provide specific, targeted actions aimed at women in developing countries; and international development agencies like the UNDP and the World Bank followed suit. Such programs represented a major step forward from the previous, gender-blind development orientation of the 1950s and 1960s, but these programs often led in practice to the creation of narrowly targeted projects focused primarily on child-health and on maternal projects which emphasized women's reproductive role but ignored their productive activities and left the vast majority of “mainstream” projects untouched. By the end of the Decade, therefore, women's NGOs and women's advocates within donor governments and development agencies were looking for a new model that would take

women out of the “WID ghetto” and into the conceptual and procedural mainstream of the international development process (Jahan 1995; Reanda 1999: 51-52).

In conceptual terms, this shift was often expressed in terms of a move from WID (Women in Development) to GAD (Gender and Development): “While WID identifies women as a special, or separate interest group, GAD identifies gender as an integral part of a development strategy. Under GAD the situation of women is no longer analyzed independently of, but rather in relation to, that of men” (World Bank 1998: 3). The differences between the two approaches are summarized, rather schematically, in Table 2 below:

In operational terms, the shift manifested itself in the transition from relatively isolated WID bureaus to mainstreaming approaches that sought to diffuse gender analysis and gender procedures outside WID offices to mainstream departments. Early examples of mainstreaming language can be found in the 1984 creation of UNIFEM, the UN agency for women, which was given an explicit mandate to promote the mainstreaming of gender issues across the full range of UN activities, and most notably in the Nairobi *Forward Looking Strategies*, paragraph 114 of which explicitly calls for mainstreaming a decade prior to the Beijing Platform:

Effective participation of women in development [it reads] should be integrated in the formulation and implementation of mainstream programs and projects, and should not be confined solely to statements of intent within plans or to small-scale, transitory projects relating to women (quoted in Pietela and Vickers 1990: 60).

Over the course of the decade between Nairobi and Beijing, women’s advocates in NGOs, in international development agencies, and at the various UN “social summits” held during the first half of the decade, systematically attempted to secure a definitive shift from WID to GAD, and from isolated WID bureaus to the mainstreaming of gender in global governance. Their successes—although at best partial, and variable across different organizations—were both ratified and given an additional impetus by the official endorsement of mainstreaming at the Beijing Conference in September of 1995.

**Table 2: WID vs. GAD**

<i>Description</i>	<i>Women in Development</i>	<i>Gender and Development</i>
Approach	An approach that views women as the problem	An approach to development
Focus	Women	Relations between men and women
Problem	The exclusion of women (half the productive resources) from the development process	Unequal relations of power (rich and poor, women and men) that prevent equitable development and participation
Goal	More efficient, effective development	Equitable, sustainable development with both women and men as decision makers
Solution	Integrate women into the development process	Empower the disadvantaged and women: transform unequal relations
Strategies	Women's projects Women's components Integrated projects Increase women's productivity Increase women's income Increase women's ability to look after the household	Identify/Address practical needs determined by women and men to improve their condition. At the same time, address women's strategic interests. Address strategic interest of the poor through people-centered development.

Source: World Bank (1998: 6)

## II. From Declaration to Implementation: The Cases of the UNDP and the World Bank

Gender mainstreaming, we have argued, is a *potentially* revolutionary concept, which promises to change the way in which “mainstream” policies are formulated, decided upon, implemented and evaluated. However, if gender mainstreaming is an extraordinarily promising principle, it is also an extraordinarily demanding one, which requires international organizations and state governments to alter their policy-making procedures in fundamental ways. Thus, in order to have an impact on the lives of individual women and men, gender mainstreaming must not only be declared—as at Beijing—but also clearly defined, operationalized into a series of policy tools, and implemented by international organizations and governments. In this second section, we therefore examine the efforts of two international development organizations—the UNDP and the World Bank—to define, operationalize and implement the principle of gender mainstreaming in practice. As in the previous section, we argue that successful implementation of gender mainstreaming is a function of the political opportunities, mobilizing structures and dominant frames that characterize each of these two organizations.

In studying the comparative implementation of gender mainstreaming, however, we encounter the central problem of *operationalizing* and *measuring* a process that is both wide-ranging and relatively recent in all of the organizations we examine. This problem of measurement has been acknowledged not only by scholars seeking to measure mainstreaming comparatively, but also by international organizations themselves—and by their critics, who have argued for the development of hard, quantifiable indicators of progress in mainstreaming gender in the “policies, programs and projects” of the various international development organizations. During the last half of the 1990s, the UNDP and the World Bank have begun to collect statistics on, for example, the percentage of total projects and programs which take gender issues into account; even these statistics, however, have been disputed by critics, who argue that development organizations are prone to consider as gender-related any program that mentions women or gender, whether or not these programs are actually guided by a gender perspective, contain specific gender-related projects, or have a positive impact “on the ground.” Because of these problems in measuring the operational *outputs* of international organizations (i.e. policies, programs, and projects) in terms of gender, a number of studies focus on internal *processes* for the diffusion and mainstreaming of gender issues, on the assumption that such processes will, eventually, manifest themselves in terms of policy outputs.



The problems of measurement are amplified, finally, by the fundamental distinction in the literature between integrationist and agenda-setting versions of the concept (Jahan 1995, Sandler, 1997). The first of these approaches, which Jahan labels “integrationist,” essentially introduces a gender perspective into existing policy processes, but does not challenge existing policy paradigms. By contrast, a second and more radical approach, which Jahan calls “agenda-setting,” involves a fundamental rethinking, not simply of the means or procedures of policymaking, but of the ends or goals of policy from a gender perspective. In this approach, “Women not only become part of the mainstreaming, they also reorient the nature of the mainstream” (Jahan 1995: 13). According to this view, it would be misleading to measure mainstreaming in terms of either the establishment of procedures or the analysis of operational outputs, since neither of these measures would capture the desired reorientation of the organization and its mission.

As appealing as the latter approach may seem, we agree with the evaluations of Razavi and Miller (1995) and Rees (1998), who argue that international organizations have generally adopted an integrationist approach to gender mainstreaming, integrating women and gender issues into specific policies rather than rethinking the fundamental aims of the organization from a gender perspective. Given the prevalence of this integrationist approach, and the difficulty of measuring mainstreaming through the relatively new, patchy and disputed statistics about policy outputs, we focus here, as in an earlier work (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000) on the introduction of procedures designed to integrate a gender perspective across the entire policy process and diffuse responsibility and knowledge about gender issues across the bureaucracy. These procedures include, *inter alia*:

- *Collection of gender-disaggregated statistics and other indicators.* The identification of gender inequality—the first phase in the process of creating policies and programs to mainstream gender—requires the reliable and replicable collection of sex-disaggregated data for indicators such as employment, income, education, access to health care, etc. Unfortunately, pertinent data are often not available by sex breakdown because gender has rarely been considered an important indicator for analysis during the data collection stage. Such data is important in both the recognition of gender inequalities *ex ante*, and for *ex post* evaluation of implementation.
- *Gender Training.* Gender training of personnel is an essential component in order to build knowledge and capacity for the mainstreaming of gender into all programs and policies, and not simply into specific WID programs and projects. Before an organization can actualize a gender mainstreaming

mandate, all personnel must not only understand and accept the importance of gender equality as an ultimate goal, but must also have the necessary skills with which to create, implement, and evaluate gender mainstreaming programs. Thus the establishment of gender training throughout an organization—including upper-level managers as well as lower-level officials with specific responsibility for gender issues—is both a prerequisite to, and a measure of, gender mainstreaming.

- *Gender impact assessment and gender-proofing.* “Gender impact assessment has its roots in the environmental sectors and is a typical example of an existing policy tool being adapted for the use of gender mainstreaming. Gender impact assessment allows for the screening of a given policy proposal, in order to detect and assess its differential impact or effects on women and men, so that these imbalances can be redressed before the proposal is endorsed” (Council of Europe 1998: 22). Gender-proofing is a less detailed review of policy proposals to identify unintended sexist language or differential effects of policy on women and men. The disadvantage of these instruments, as Rees (1998) points out, is that they constitute an essentially reactive process, in which gender is taken into account before implementation, but after the conceptualization and planning of policy.
- *Checklists, manuals, and handbooks.* Checklists, guidelines, and gender-proofing are additional, commonly used tools to allow policymakers—many of whom have only limited experience in gender mainstreaming—to incorporate basic gender concerns into their activities, short of a complete gender impact assessment. Checklists are often distributed to policymakers, providing a basic list of gender-specific features to be considered in the adoption and implementation of a given policy; they can be designed specifically for use in gender mainstreaming, or alternatively gender-related points can be added to existing policy checklists. Other tools—including guidelines, terms of reference, manuals, and handbooks—may provide additional, and more detailed, information instructing staff on ways to integrate a gender perspective into their work.
- *Monitoring and evaluation.* Once mainstreaming programs have been put into place, monitoring and evaluation tools become necessary to ensure organizational and governmental compliance and to assess the effectiveness of a given policy or method. Monitoring mechanisms may take the form of routine and formal reporting by personnel responsible for specific gender mainstreaming components within an organization or by external assessment agencies, such as NGO’s that serve a monitoring function.

*Ceteris paribus*, each of these tools should be employed as far “upstream” in the policy process as possible, so that gender issues are incorporated into the planning of policies, and not simply added as an afterthought. Nor is this list complete, since it excludes other elements—such as an adequate percentage of women among the high-level staff of the organization, or inclusive methods of decision-making that incorporate women and NGOs into policymaking—that have been put forward by advocates of gender mainstreaming. Nevertheless, these procedures provide a useful “first-cut” or proxy measure of the progress of mainstreaming across various international organizations and over time; and they will be supplemented by additional data about policies, programs and projects where available. With these considerations in mind, let us proceed to examine, very briefly, the UNDP and the World Bank, and their respective experiences in mainstreaming gender into the development process.

### **The United Nations Development Programme**

The rise of gender mainstreaming advocates and their impact on the policies and procedures of The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) can best be explained with reference to the social movements literatures that guide our discussion in the first section of this paper, which call attention to a mixture of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and strategic framing.

The UNDP is today characterized by a mixed political opportunity structure, featuring multiple points of access to the policy process, as well as an influential set of elite donor governments. Since its creation in 1965, advocacy groups seeking to influence the development agenda of the UNDP have found their primary access to policy and procedure through the decentralized structure of the organization, which has been both a curse and a blessing to advocates of gender mainstreaming. Originally built around a small headquarters in New York, the UNDP now hosts a staff of over 5,000 individuals in 132 country offices run by on-site “Resident Representatives” who are responsible for the coordination of all UN activities in their country. Voluntary donations from UN member states or agencies finance UNDP programs, and all country projects require official consent of the recipient government. While the vast majority of UNDP staff members and activities are located outside the central organization and are dispersed over a wide variety of nations, the organization is itself accountable to a 36-nation Executive Board representing all major world regions. This board is itself accountable to the UN General Assembly, represented through the Economic and Social Council (UNDP 2000b). As we shall see, the UNDP’s highly decentralized structure has provided gender mainstreaming advocates several routes of access to the UN development agenda from both above and below the organization, as well as a series of increasingly powerful elite allies (Goetz, 1995). Characterized by these multiple

points of institutional access and sensitivity to the pressures of the international political environment—particularly from donor states and the Executive Board—the UNDP’s open political opportunity structure has paradoxically led to a weak capacity for policy implementation. Donor-driven resources and the lack of political will on the part of many host governments that must work to “nationalize” and sustain UNDP programs present substantial obstacles to the implementation of policy.

This open but weak opportunity structure is central to our explanation of the UNDP’s adoption of the gender mainstreaming mandate, yet political opportunity structure alone cannot explain how and why an organization adopts a specific policy frame. The mobilizing structures both within and around the UNDP’s relatively open opportunity structure have been historically quite strong, ranging over issue-areas such as gender, the environment and the rights of developing nations, and incorporating a broad range of actors including NGOs, internal elite allies, donor governments, and to a lesser extent, recipient states. These strategic advocates of gender equality have, over time, positioned the gender mainstreaming frame within the UNDP’s overall *interventionist* frame, which accepts the intervention of states and international organizations in the marketplace in support of social goals.

In light of our predictions in the first section of this paper, we therefore expect the UNDP to be comparatively open to the adoption of the policy frame of gender mainstreaming, but we also expect serious obstacles to the implementation of actual policies and programs at the country level.

The process of mainstreaming the UNDP has been a gradual one. In the early years, the organization’s attention to women’s rights and roles in development policy centered around a weakly mobilized constituency of advocacy groups, which proffered a rather vague conception of how to incorporate gender into economic and social development. It was not until the UN Decade for Women that the UNDP made its first visible response to pressure from women’s advocacy networks and sympathetic donor governments, becoming one of the first international organizations to address women’s concerns with respect to development. In addition to its establishment of WID guidelines, and the creation of institutional “focal points” to monitor efforts to include women into development policy, the UNDP gained a series of elite allies in the mid-1970s through the creation of UNIFEM (the Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women). While these developments would come to play a vital role in the establishment of a gender mainstreaming mandate down the road, UNIFEM’s initial function and influence within the UNDP remained under-funded and institutionally marginalized (Sandler 1997). The UNDP’s early attempt to incorporate women into development, therefore, did

little to secure the actual advancement of women within the ranks of the organization's hierarchy and early assessments of WID policy found that fewer than 16% of development projects affecting women actually incorporated women into the process of implementation (see Kardam, 1991).

The political opportunity structure for women's rights advocates, however, has changed over the last twenty-five years, becoming progressively more open as a result of the various UN World Conferences on Women, which provided both the occasion and the incentive for collective action and networking between governmental and non-governmental actors concerned with placing gender on the agendas of multilateral organizations. It is the post-Nairobi period in particular that marks the beginning of a fundamental shift in the UNDP opportunity structure, providing a new and strengthened set of elite allies that would present women activists with additional access points to the development agenda.

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, for example, the governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland took leading roles, both unilaterally and as members of the Governing Council, to integrate women into the development process and to hold the UNDP accountable for the implementation of gender policy (Kardam 1991; UNDP 1998b). During this same period, UNIFEM was strengthened by the General Assembly and given the first mainstreaming mandate within the UN system as an autonomous arm of the UNDP. "Women in Development" was for the first time established as an official theme of the UNDP policy platform and the Division of Women in Development was created and staffed by three members to ensure the systematic incorporation of women into planning and programming through the promotion of gender responsiveness among all staff (Razavi and Miller, 1995). To advocate for the early mainstreaming of gender within the UNDP, the staff at the Division utilized a new series of planning instruments, which included the creation of an updated set of gender guidelines, and a WID/gender training component for UNDP constituency (Schalkwyk 1998).

In conjunction with these important changes, a series of internal assessments in the late 1980s concluded that WID/gender concerns were beginning to be incorporated into development areas outside the traditional realm of reproduction and child health (Kardam, 1991). However, it was also clear that both human and financial resources allocated for WID remained drastically insufficient, leaving significant gaps in the implementation of programs (Goetz 1995). Thus, by the end of the 1980s, WID was conceptually placed on the UNDP agenda and supported by a small number of weak institutional mechanisms and allies. Substantive progress to integrate women into mainstream policies and programs, however, remained limited by the

organization's decentralized structure and lack of enforcement machinery, a severe lack of human and financial resources, and ideological constraints on the part of both UNDP staff and host governments.

Despite these limitations in its implementation capacity, the UNDP has offered women's advocates not only a relatively open political opportunity structure, but also a set of dominant frames that have been relatively conducive to the acceptance of WID and gender issues, particularly since the early 1990s. By comparison with the World Bank, the UNDP has always maintained a greater commitment to social justice, and a greater openness to government intervention in the economy; and these characteristics were sharpened during the early 1990s with the formal adoption of two specific policy frameworks, namely Gender and Development (GAD) and Sustainable Human Development (SHD).

Until the early 1990s, both the UNDP and its gender advocates, in conjunction with the overarching themes of the international women's community, had framed their policy regarding women as a process of Women in Development (WID) (Jahan, 1997). In the early 1990's internal UNDP gender advocates were to follow a larger move in strategic framing on the part of the women's development community, shifting the focus from WID to a "Gender and Development" frame as a means to place the concept of gender inequality into the broader context of international development policy (Goetz 1997; Schalkwyk 1998). This shift to a GAD frame represents an important conceptual change in the way the UNDP incorporated women into the development process, based upon the understanding that meaningful and systematic change in the disadvantaged status of women world-wide could not occur *solely* through programs to address WID concerns in isolation from larger cultural, political, and economic contexts of inequality (UNDP 1999b). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, women's advocates seized upon this new attention to "gender" in the articulation of the gender mainstreaming frame.

Perhaps even more important for our purposes is the extent to which women's advocates within the UNDP (particularly UNIFEM and the GIDP) strategically framed the concept of gender mainstreaming to resonate with the organization's new sustainable human-centered development (SHD) mandate. Although advocates within the UNDP had worked toward the integration and advancement of women for over two decades, the incorporation of the gender mainstreaming frame has taken its specific form in partnership with the shift to SHD in the mid 1990s. Whereas women were at one time relegated to subsidiary or specialized development programs within the UNDP, "The Advancement of Women" is now one of five official priority goals of the SHD platform, linking progress for women to the goals of poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, environmental protection and regeneration, and sound governance (UNDP

1997). By strategically framing the issue as a fundamental element of human development, therefore, advocates have assured that the UNDP is now committed to the systematic incorporation of gender mainstreaming strategies throughout all issue-areas of development policy (UNDP 1998b).

Thus, by the early 1990s at the behest of both active donor governments led by the Nordic countries and a mobilized group of internal and external policy entrepreneurs, the UNDP had articulated a specific policy frame of gender mainstreaming, built upon its pre-existing policy frames of GAD and SHD. In September of 1995, this UNDP commitment was in turn generalized to the UN system as a whole at Beijing. Since this time, the UNDP has made substantial gains in the articulation of policies to strengthen institutional mechanisms for the formation and implementation of gender mainstreaming, both at the central organizational level and at the regional, country, and local levels. Evidence of this progress over the last decade includes a significant increase in human and financial resources devoted to gender issues, as well as the creation and adoption of increasingly sophisticated planning mechanisms and tools to implement UNDP gender policy. The most important elements of the UNDP's gender mainstreaming effort—at least in terms of the process variables discussed above—are summarized in Box 1.

Despite the remarkable success of gender mainstreaming advocates in institutionalizing this new and potentially revolutionary policy frame of gender mainstreaming into the core of UNDP programming, the record on the implementation of actual policies and programs in the late 1990s is far less impressive. While the UNDP has undergone a fundamental transformation of organizational procedure in the last three decades, making the incorporation of gender equality a legitimate goal, it is far from clear that these policies have brought about the institutional changes in structure and culture that are necessary for a mainstreaming approach. It is also unclear that many of the organizational mainstreaming efforts have trickled down to the country level, where recent evaluations suggest that gender issues remain “largely untreated terrain” (UNDP 1998c). While there have been a significant number of procedural advancements, such as those summarized in Box. 1, substantive policy for the realization of this goal has been more limited, and the capacity for meaningful implementation of the gender mainstreaming mandate remains restricted by the nature of the UNDP as a voluntary organization that ultimately rests on the sovereign will of recipient as well as donor states. While certain donor governments have been key in the realization of a gender mainstreaming mandate,

## **Box 1: UNDP Structural Advancements Toward Gender Mainstreaming (1990-2000):**

### **Human Resources.**

- **Gender Units.** The Division of Women in Development—renamed the Gender in Development Programme (GIDP)—is no longer isolated as a separate division, but now forms a component of the larger Social Development and Poverty Elimination Division as part of the new platform for SHD (UNDP 1999). This unit—which holds organizational responsibility for gender programming—does not currently have the mandate or resource base to initiate or sustain the range of policy needed for effective gender mainstreaming (UNDP 1999:6).
- **Gender Personnel and Women in UNDP Staff.** Since the mid-1970s the UNDP has taken a variety of administrative and institutional actions to support the employment and training of gender experts throughout the organization. In addition, *The Gender Balance in Management Policy (Phase II) 1998-2001* sets out targets for the retention and advancement of women to management and high-level decision-making positions within the UNDP, ensuring women's participation through career advancement opportunities and an improved quality of work place. Currently, women staff about 30% of senior management positions within headquarters (UNDP 2000a).
- **Regional Human Resources.** At the Regional Bureau level, each headquarters now has one senior-level staff position specifically responsible for the monitoring of WID/Gender programs. In addition, UNDP Country Offices have been given individual "Gender Focal Points" that consist mainly of technical staff who consult on the planning phases of country programming.

### **Financial resources**

- **Direct Line 11** mandates an increase in the percentage of the overall budget dedicated to the category of the Advancement of Women, which includes a commitment on the part of Resident Representatives to allocate 20% of TRAC funds to WID programming. As one of five components, gender mainstreaming received roughly US\$600,000 from the overall WID/Gender budget of nearly US\$ 8 million during the 1992-1996 cycle, placing third on UNDP budgetary priorities with respect to gender (UNDP 1996). Nevertheless, internal assessment suggests that financial resources for WID/Gender remain marginalized with respect to the UNDP's focus areas, with the majority of funding allocated to governance during the most recent programming cycle (52%) (UNDP 1999).

### **Tools and Planning Instruments**

- **Data.** The UN now has one of the best databases of sex-disaggregated indicators, which are updated annually for most countries in the world. In addition, the GIDP offers a UN Department of Economic and Social Information training manual on the production of gender statistics and the UNDP maintains a data base formulated by its Division for Information Management and Analysis (DIMA), which includes over 200 WID or gender classified projects within the UNDP (UNDP 1999).
- **Gender Training.** The Capacity Building Support Program (1996-2000) is designed to build UNDP capacity for mainstreaming gender through conceptual and technical learning and to help establish inter-organization networks on gender. The GIDP also manages the 1996-2000 Global Gender Programme to help UNDP personnel develop analytic, methodological, and research skills for gender equality and offers a Gender Mainstreaming Information Pack with a training component for country offices.
- **Gender Impact Assessment.** The GIDP has been particularly important with respect to gender impact assessment through its role on project appraisal committees and on the Program Review Committee by monitoring reviews of WID projects carried out at the local level. It is also responsible for the creation of a gender mainstreaming checklist disseminated to country offices, as well as the public circulation of a Gender Briefing Kit (UNDP 1999).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Recent initiatives include the Countries of Experimentation (COE) evaluation, which identified and tracked UNDP experience of gender mainstreaming in twenty countries (UNDP 1998c).



On the whole, recipient governments have rarely been enthusiastic about WID/gender issues. And, as UNDP's "value system" emphasizes the self-reliance and self-determination of recipient governments, it 'avoids imposing external definitions of development' such as WID/gender (Kardam 1993). Unless pressure is brought to bare on governments by national level women's movements, the WID/gender mandate is not likely to be taken seriously in UNDP country programs (Razavi and Miller 1995).

In sum, we explain the adoption, transformation, and implementation of gender mainstreaming in the UNDP in three acts. In the early years during the UN Decade (1975 to 1984) women's advocates both within the UNDP—in the form of sympathetic donor governments and UN gender units—and around the UNDP—in the form of NGOs in the early stages of transnational networking—promoted the advancement of WID policies and programs. These early activists were remarkably successful in placing women's issues broadly on the development agenda, making the UNDP an early leader amongst international organizations in the incorporation of a gender component into their organizational structure. These initial procedures, however, suffered from a severe lack of resources and decentralized coordination, which relegated women's issues into specialized "gender ghettos" and witnessed a low level of implementation. In the second act, from Nairobi to Beijing (1985 to 1995), an increasingly cohesive group of gender advocates reframed demands, not as "Women in Development," but as "Gender and Development," thereby placing gender mainstreaming squarely within the dominant *interventionist* frame of the UNDP. In the third act, from Beijing to the present, we have seen both a remarkable increase in mainstreaming procedures within the UNDP—but also a more checkered record of implementation, particularly at the country level, due to the decentralized nature of the UNDP and its weak leverage over recipient states.

## **The World Bank**

As in the case of the UNDP, the World Bank's adoption and implementation of a gender mainstreaming mandate has also been shaped by its characteristic political opportunity structure, mobilizing structures of women's advocates in and around the Bank, and the dominant frame of the organization. By comparison with the UNDP, however, the World Bank has traditionally been a more closed and centralized organization, with few internal allies on women's issues, a decision-making structure that places significant discretion in the hands of Bank management, an overwhelming majority of staff located in the Bank's Washington offices, and few links to the NGO community. In formal institutional terms, the Bank is responsible to its Board of Governors, characterized by a weighted voting scheme that gives the largest donors the greatest voice in setting Bank policies and appointing its leaders. The Board of Governors, in turn, appoints the Board of Executive Directors, who meet under

the chairmanship of the Bank's President (who is always an American national). By all accounts, however, much of the day-to-day decisionmaking about the Bank's Country Assistance Strategies, as well as the identification of programs and projects, takes place within the Bank's Washington-based management (see e.g. Ayres 1983; Ascher 1983). Given this relatively closed political opportunity structure, the mobilizing structures around the Bank prior to the 1990s were considerably weaker than those around the UNDP, consisting primarily of progressive donor states, a few relatively isolated officials inside the Bank, and a highly critical but not very influential NGO community outside the Bank.

Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, however, the dominant frame of the World Bank has been widely characterized as neoliberal, with a strong emphasis on "hard" economic criteria, and a traditional resistance by Bank management to the addition of non-economic or social criteria for Bank lending (Ascher 1983; see also Ayres 1983; Kardam 1991; Razavi and Miller 1995). As Razavi and Miller (1995: Section III) point out,

the dominant language in the Bank remains economics. A large proportion of staff are economists and those who are not economists "generally acquire the economic way of thinking quite quickly, whether they believe in its merits, or because of its dominance within the Bank." William Clausen, president of the World Bank from 1981 to 1986, has been quoted as saying, "the Bank is not a political organization, the only altar we worship at is pragmatic economics." Accounts of staff attitudes and value systems confirm that although many staff members are interested in problems of social justice and equity, they are uncomfortable with these issues because they lack rigor, and are "value-laden and subjective."

In light of our predictions, we would therefore expect the World Bank to be more resistant to the policy frame of gender mainstreaming, and we would expect that advocates of mainstreaming would strategically frame the issue to resonate with the economic efficiency concerns of the Bank staff—and this is indeed what we find.

The World Bank first turned its attention to Women in Development in the early- to mid-1970s, when US women first put WID issues on the agenda of American development institutions (such as AID, the Agency for International Development), and when the UN system as a whole began to pay attention to women's issues with the declaration of the Decade for Women. Specifically, the Bank appointed a former UN official as its first WID Advisor in 1977. Unlike the UNDP's WID program, the Bank's WID advisor was not allocated a budget for women-only projects, but was rather assigned the task of providing advice on WID issues throughout the Bank. Prior to the mid-1980s, however, the office of the WID Advisor was provided only with a half-time secretary, a half-time

assistant, and a small budget to hire outside consultants; perhaps more importantly, the WID advisor was located in the research and policy side of the Bank, not in the operational departments where lending decisions were made on a day-to-day basis. The Bank itself, moreover, issued no WID policy or guidelines that might have provided the management with specific guidance or incentives to incorporate women's issues in lending decisions. In addition, Kardam reports, the office of the WID advisor—staffed initially by a sociologist rather than an economist—fit poorly with the dominant frame of the Bank, which emphasized economic rather than social considerations in lending decisions. As a result, WID issues received only sporadic attention in the Bank's lending decisions prior to the mid-1980s, reflecting the interests and expertise of individual managers (Kardam 1991: 64-81).

The mid-1980s—during which time the Bank, like other international organizations, participated in the preparation of the Nairobi Conference—witnessed an upgrading of the position of WID in the Bank. In 1984, the Bank adopted the first explicit (albeit not mandatory) WID guidelines in the Bank's Operations Manual. And the following year, in 1985, the office of the WID advisor was upgraded to a division with a substantially increased budget (funded in part by outside grants from the UNDP and the Norwegian government). In September 1985, Barbara Herz, a senior economist within the Bank, was appointed as the new WID advisor, and the Division engaged upon a deliberate and sustained effort to make an intellectual case for WID in terms of *economic efficiency*, which provided a better fit with the Bank's overall mandate than the more sociological, or “social justice” approach adopted by Herz's predecessor (Razavi and Miller 1995: Section III; see also Kardam 1991: 77-81; World Bank 1998: 6).

From the mid-1980s forward, the Bank produced study after study demonstrating the gains in economic efficiency to be realized from investments in women. Investments in health care for women aged 15-44, for example, was shown to provide the greatest return on health care spending for any economic group; and investments in women's education, provision of micro-credit to women entrepreneurs, and other investments were shown to make sense, not only in terms of social justice, but also—and primarily—in terms of the Bank's primary development mission. These studies were then followed up with specific guidelines for operations, and by the creation of WID coordinators or “focal points” within each of the Bank's regional offices, which by the 1990s employed a growing number of full-time professional staff working on regionally specific gender plans. Finally, in 1994, the Bank issued its first official policy paper on gender (World Bank 1994a) as well as a new Operational Policy which provided specific guidance for efforts to “reduce gender disparities and enhance women's participation in the economic

development of their countries by integrating gender considerations in its country assistance program” (World Bank 1994b, quoted in World Bank 2000: 2).

By the Fall of 1995, therefore, the Bank had already embarked upon an official program to mainstream gender in Bank lending, in the name of economic efficiency. The Bank’s gender policies, however, were given an additional impetus at that time by two events. First, as we have seen, the Beijing Conference on Women explicitly called for the mainstreaming of gender issues by international development organizations; in addition, a number of women’s groups at Beijing launched a campaign called “Women’s Eyes on the World Bank,” and presented the Bank with a manifesto urging the Bank to take action on four sets of initiatives:

- Increasing participation of grassroots women in the Bank’s economic policy-making.
- Institutionalizing a gender perspective in its policies and programs, including the Bank’s poverty assessments and country assistance programs (CAS);
- Increasing Bank investments in women’s health services, education, agriculture, land ownership, employment, and financial services; and
- Increasing the number and racial diversity of women in senior management (Women’s Eyes on the World Bank 1995).

The group also agreed to monitor the Bank’s response, and did so in a major 1997 report (Women’s Eyes on the World Bank 1997).

A second and related development within the Bank was the nomination in 1995 of a new, reforming Bank President, James Wolfensohn. A Clinton appointee and former Wall Street entrepreneur, Wolfensohn came into office promising to re-focus the Bank’s attention on the reduction of poverty, simplify the loan-approval process, decentralize the management of the Bank (with an increasing percentage of staff in the field), and open the Bank’s operations to include NGO’s and members of civil society in the developing world. As part of this effort, Wolfensohn promised to implement reforms in the Bank that would address all the criticisms raised by feminist critics in Beijing. The results of the Bank’s efforts are described in a series of Bank reports and publications since Beijing (World Bank 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000), the most important elements of which are summarized in Box 2.

## **Box 2: World Bank Structural Advancements Toward Gender Mainstreaming (1990-2000):**

### **Human Resources.**

- **Gender Units.** Since 1995, the Bank has made a number of organizational changes to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender issues, including the restructuring of the Gender and Development Group, which is now housed in the Bank's Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network; the creation of a Gender Sector Board composed of representatives from all areas of the Bank and chaired by the Director of Gender and Development; and the creation of thematic groups such as Gender and the Law and Methods of Gender Analysis (World Bank 2000: 20-21). In addition, the Bank has established an External Gender Consultative Group to advise it on gender issues (ibid.: 18).
- **Gender Personnel and Women in Bank Staff.** In addition to the employment and training of a growing number of gender experts throughout the organization, the Bank has made a major effort to increase the number of women in high-level positions. The percentage of women among the Bank's professional staff has risen from 29 percent in June 1995 to 34 percent in June 1999, and the Bank has announced a goal of 45 percent by 2002. At the upper levels of management, the figures are less impressive, but have nevertheless increased from 12 percent in June 1995 to 19 percent in June 1999, with a target of 30 percent by 2003.
- **Regional Human Resources.** GAD coordinators and focal points have also been established within each of the Bank's regional vice presidencies, each of which undertakes specific gender actions; the Latin American region is regarded as the most advanced of these (World Bank 2000: 21).

### **Financial resources**

- Although the Bank has not released budgetary figures for its commitment to mainstreaming per se, it has clearly increased spending for women's health, education, and microfinance in recent years. In its most recent publication on gender, the Bank reports having provided some \$3.4 billion in lending for girls' education in the developing world. In addition, the Bank reports that two-thirds of its 1999 loans in the area of health, nutrition and population include actions aimed at promoting gender equality, most notably in the areas of reproductive health, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS (World Bank 2000).

### **Tools and Planning Instruments**

- **Data.** The Bank's Gender and Development Group has developed a large database of sex-disaggregated data at the country level, which is employed in policy-making and made available to the public at: <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/>.
- **Gender Training.** Since 1995, more than 30 workshops, seminars and formal courses have been offered to Bank staff, covering areas such as gender in agriculture, education, and reproductive health. The Bank also offers formal training in gender issues to client countries, and has sponsored two annual meetings of High Level Women in Finance and Economics (World Bank 2000: 28).
- **Gender Impact Assessment.** Since 1994, all Country Assistance Strategies should include a gender perspective, although the effectiveness of such mainstreaming is acknowledged to vary across countries and across the Bank's regional vice presidencies. During the period from 1995 to 1999, the percentage of projects including some consideration of gender issues increased to 40 percent (World Bank 2000: 9).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation.** The Bank now monitors on a regular basis the percentage of projects that integrate gender issues and provide specific funding for gender-related activities. Specific indicators for monitoring and evaluation, however, vary from one regional office to another, leading to calls for the Bank to develop a single Bank-wide set of indicators (World Bank 1998: 18-20).

**Box 3: What the Bank Would Look Like if Gender Were Mainstreamed:  
The Views of Gender Practitioners**

1. A clear strategy, with goals and targets, would be in place to supplement the Bank's gender policy; all levels of management would actively support the strategy.

Top management would send a clear, consistent message to borrowers and staff that gender is important for development effectiveness and should be an integral part of country-focused analysis. Management would set truly specific goals and minimum standards. One practitioner said that in the truly mainstreamed Bank, a "clear-cut, articulated policy for achieving gender goals has been framed and definite targets have been set."

2. Gender would be considered an integral part of analytical work for economic and sector work, country strategy, and lending work; interventions would be planned to meet the needs of both men and women.

Country directors would ensure that gender is addressed in the country work program and would allocate resources accordingly. Country managers would be held accountable for carrying out the work program. As another participant noted, "Reporting on country activities must explicitly include the extent of attention to gender."

3. Staff would be aware of the relevance of gender for Bank work and would know enough to bring in technical support when needed.

All staff would recognize gender as an issue of efficiency as well as equity. Staff, especially the country teams, would receive guidance and technical support from gender practitioners with formal responsibilities for contributing state-of-the-art knowledge on gender issues in Bank work. The Bank budget would allocate funds to meet gender concerns.

4. An institutional framework would be designed to support mainstreaming.

Country teams, not just staff working specifically on gender, would be given incentives to carry out gender-related actions and would be held accountable. The country teams would be the focal point for systematic efforts to raise awareness of gender issues, for training tailored to specific needs, and for information dissemination and cross-region exchanges. "It is important to penetrate the country team," a practitioner pointed out.

*Source: World Bank 1997: 46.*

In sum, the progress of gender mainstreaming in the World Bank can also be told as a story in three acts. In the first act, from the early 1970s through the mid-1980s, women's advocates lobbied the Bank for the creation of vigorous WID policies, only to be met by a relatively closed organization with an organizational mandate that seemed hostile to social objectives such as gender equality. In the second act, during the decade from 1985 to 1995, advocates of WID and gender policies within the Bank reformulated their demands to fit the dominant frames of the professional economists within the Bank, emphasizing the economic rationale and the efficiency gains of "investing in women." Although criticized by some, this approach had already produced substantial results by 1995, when the third act of the story begins with the appointment of Wolfensohn and the Fourth World Conference in Beijing. During this period, the Bank itself has changed—albeit gradually, and with considerable internal resistance—in terms both of its openness to women and in its dominant frame, which now places increased emphasis on poverty and on the social dimensions of development. The result is a World Bank which, from its initial period of reaction in the 1970s and early 1980s, has embraced both gender mainstreaming and its advocates, and continues to make progress towards the Bank's ideal-typical vision.

### **III. Conclusions: The Comparative Study of Gender Mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming as a policy frame can be traced to the international development community, and in particular to the international women's movement of the 1980s and 1990s, which took advantage of the political opportunities offered by the UN system and its World Conferences on Women to create a "mainstreaming" frame to appeal to elite allies in various national governments and international organizations. The acceptance and implementation of mainstreaming by international organizations, however, has varied considerably as a function of the key causal variables (political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and strategic framing) emphasized by social movement theorists. Specifically, we have argued that the political opportunities surrounding the UNDP, as well as the dominant frame of that organization, provided a more hospitable environment for advocates of gender mainstreaming in the 1980s and 1990s, resulting in its relatively rapid acceptance by the UNDP. By contrast, the World Bank was traditionally more closed to the international women's movement, given the relative paucity of elite allies and access points and the dominant neoliberal frame within the Bank, resulting in a relatively late acceptance of WID and gender mainstreaming by the Bank. However, when the World Bank did eventually adopt mainstreaming as official policy, its greater implementation capacity resulted in a record of implementation that arguably exceeds that of the UNDP.

The findings of this study, furthermore, tend to support the results of our earlier study of mainstreaming in the European Union, where we found a similar pattern of variation in the acceptance and implementation of mainstreaming across five issue-areas, depending upon the political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and dominant frames of EU institutions in each issue-area (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000). Like that study, this study of global development institutions suggests that certain *structural* factors render specific international organizations more or less promising candidates for gender mainstreaming, but also that individual *agents* may strategically frame the case for mainstreaming to fit with the dominant frames of target organizations, as seen most strikingly in the case of the World Bank.

Moving beyond the specific cases of the UNDP and the World Bank, however, we conclude with two methodological points to guide further research. First, we raise once again the problem of *measurement* in the study of gender mainstreaming. Not only in scholarly articles and books, but also in the political debate between international organizations and their critics, the lack of a clear measure of mainstreaming has thus far placed limits on our ability to assess progress in gender mainstreaming. For the purposes of this article, we have relied primarily on procedural measures, and only secondarily on policy outputs, to measure progress in mainstreaming gender across the policy process; but our results are less precise, and more impressionistic, than we would like. If mainstreaming is to be measured with greater precision in the future, both international organizations and the scholars who study them will need to develop more precise (and less disputed) measures of (1) the *procedures* used to mainstream gender across the policy process; (2) the operational *outputs* of those organizations in terms of policies, programs, and projects; and (3) most difficult, the final *outcomes* of policy “on the ground” in each organization’s member states. Similarly, for scholars seeking not only to measure but also to *explain* variable progress in gender mainstreaming, greater effort needs to be expended in measuring not only the dependent variable of mainstreaming itself, but also the independent variables—such as political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and strategic frames—that have been put forward here as the determinants of success or failure in gender mainstreaming.

Second and finally, we believe that scholarship on gender mainstreaming should focus increasingly on *comparative studies*, rather than single case studies, if we seek to understand the determinants of success and failure in mainstreaming. As we have seen in this article, gender mainstreaming has now become official policy in many of the world’s most important international organizations, and among many national and subnational governments as well. Despite the apparent universality of gender mainstreaming, however, the actual implementation of mainstreaming remains highly variable both within and across organizations; such variation, we would argue, cries out for both



measurement and explanation, for which the comparative method is best suited. Comparative studies of mainstreaming may, of course, take many forms, examining various issue-areas or administrative units within a single organization (as we have done in our EU study; Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000) or they may examine mainstreaming across multiple organizations (as we have tried to do here). Such studies may, furthermore, be conducted by a single researcher, or by a team of researchers; in the latter case, however, it is vital that the various researchers apply a common set of criteria and measurements of mainstreaming and its determinants, so that their studies combine to provide a genuinely comparable set of observations of mainstreaming within and across organizations. Finally, such studies may examine the mainstreaming of governance at various levels, ranging from global organizations like the UNDP and the World Bank, to regional organizations such as the EU and the OECD, national governments such as the United Kingdom, and regional or even local governments. In sum, the rigorous, comparative study of gender mainstreaming has just begun.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> In its 1997 resolution on the subject, the UN Economic and Social Council provides a similar definition:

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." [*E.1997.L.10.Para.4.Adopted by ECOSOC 17.7.97*](DOC #A text from ECOSOC 23).

<sup>2</sup> For good post-Beijing evaluations of the Bank's progress, see *Women's Eyes on the World* Bank 1997; Frade 1997; and Krut 1997.

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