Abstract

This chapter critically examines gender mainstreaming in EU development aid to assess whether or not the EU can be considered a leading and distinctive gender actor. To answer this question I will analyse the budget, gendered language and frame of high level policy programming documents. First I evaluate whether a shift has been made from a conservative Women in Development paradigm to a transformative Gender and Development paradigm to determine if the EU lives up to European and international commitments on gender equality and can be considered to be leading by example. Second I examine whether the EU advocates a distinctive ‘Europeanness’ in its gender policy towards developing countries. The chapter concludes that the shift towards a transformative Gender and Development paradigm has only partly been made. Moreover, I argue that rather than a distinctive ‘Europeanness’, the EU’s gender equality approach can be called a patchwork of approaches derived from other international institutions such as the UN or the World Bank. This implies that the EU is not the innovative leading gender power it claims to be.
Gender Equality in European Union Development Policy

Petra Debusscher

The Lisbon Treaty considers “equality between women and men” among the EU’s core values and objectives, and since 1996, the EU has committed to integrate gender considerations into all aspects of its operations and policies. In its policy documents and public statements the European Commission frequently stresses that gender equality is a goal in its own right that has been a part of the European project of integration since its beginning (McCrae 2010). Given the rich history and growing importance of gender equality in all kinds of policy domains it is not surprising observers have stated that the EU stands out in its support for gender equality among international organisations (Debusscher and True 2009). The Union (Commission and member states) is also the world’s largest development aid donor, collectively disbursing 55% of official development assistance globally. In several high level policy documents the EU has stressed it “has been increasingly active in promoting gender equality in its external action” as gender equality is one of the five essential principles of development cooperation and a goal in its own right (European Commission 2010, p. 3). But to what extent has the EU actually used its development aid to advance gender equality goals? Has the EU promoted gender equality in its development policies in a transformative way as put forward by international and European standards? Or has the approach towards gender equality in its foreign aid remained rather ‘mainstream’? This chapter critically examines gender mainstreaming in European Union development aid to assess whether or not the EU can be considered a leading and distinctive gender actor, using a budget, language and frame analyses of policy programming documents. Unlike Moser and Moser (2005), I do not review the progress of gender mainstreaming in implementation in general. I limit myself to an assessment of the planning process. After an introduction on gender equality in EU development policies I delve into the analysis of budget, language and frame.
1 Gender Equality in EU Development Policy

Early efforts to integrate gender equality in EU development policy took place in the context of the United Nations (UN) Decade for Women 1975–1985 and the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. Following these events the European Commission (EC) established its ‘Women in Development’ (WID) policy, including its first WID desks, communiqués and references to women in the Third and Fourth Lomé conventions (1984 and 1989) (Pető and Manners 2006). This WID perspective addressed the exclusion of women from the development process by creating specific projects for women. The WID paradigm was increasingly criticised as a conservative ‘add women and stir’ approach by feminist scholars, who pointed out that its narrow focus on women was ineffective as it ignored the underlying societal problems, namely unequal gender relations (Moser 1993; Subrahmanian 2007). Following the 1995 United Nations (UN) Beijing Conference, the international community replaced the WID paradigm by a GAD paradigm and embraced the strategy of gender mainstreaming as “the fundamental GAD buzzword” (Subrahmanian 2007, p. 112). GAD was considered innovative; it focuses on gender without dislodging women as the central subject, as it recognises that improving women’s status requires analysis of the relations between women and men. Gender mainstreaming would widen the scope from add-on, small-scale projects for women, to the integration of a gender equality perspective into all policies (Johnsson-Latham 2010). It stressed “the shared responsibility of women and men in removing imbalances in society” (Council of Europe 1998, p. 18). The participation and commitment of men was thus fundamental to changing the position of women. As the ultimate aim of gender mainstreaming is to change discriminatory gender norms, structures and practices in society, it is regarded as a transformative approach.

Since 1995 the EU has adopted a range of high-level policy documents confirming that gender is a cross-cutting issue that has to be mainstreamed in all areas of development and into all programs and projects at regional and country level. In a ground-breaking resolution of late 1995 the EU Council of Ministers first declared the integration of a gender perspective in development co-operation as a transformative approach.

crucial principle underpinning the development policy of the Community and the Member States (European Council 1995). This was followed by a string of high-level policy documents on integrating gender equality in development, including a 1998 ‘Regulation on Integrating Gender Issues in Development Co-operation’ (European Council 1998). In 2001 the Commission published its ‘Programme of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Cooperation’ which stipulates a twin-track strategy to achieve gender equality. Such twin-track strategy implies that “the EC is committed to including gender equality goals in the mainstream of EC development co-operation policies, programmes and projects” (gender mainstreaming), while “concrete actions targeting women (specific actions)” reinforce these processes (European Commission 2001, pp. 8–13). More recently, the EU has adopted high-level policy documents which update the earlier arrangements and reconfirm the twin-track strategy towards gender equality (European Parliament and Council 2004; European Commission 2007a, 2010).

2 Analysing Gender Mainstreaming in EU Development Aid

Guided by these significant political commitments to gender equality, the external services of the European Commission have institutionalized gender equality methodologies and principles across their policy and operational work. In what follows I delve into the analysis of gender mainstreaming in European Union development aid to assess using a budget, gender language and frame analyses. The budget, gender language and frame analysis will be used to evaluate if a shift has been made from a conservative Women in Development paradigm to a transformative Gender and Development paradigm to determine if the EU lives up to innovative international and European commitments on gender equality and is leading by example. The frame analysis will help to determine if the EU advocates a distinctive “Europeanness” in its gender policy towards developing countries (Debusscher 2011). Taken together, the two questions enable me to conclude whether or not the EU can be considered a leading and distinctive gender actor.

2.1 Dataset

I analysed 98 Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) from 2002 to 2013 including countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the European Neighbourhood on their inclusion of gender equality. CSPs and NIPs are bilateral agreements between the EC and the government of the partner country and are the main instruments for programming EC development aid. Given their importance in planning and implementing EC aid, CSPs and NIPs are regarded as the main building blocks to effectively gender mainstream policies.
in development practice. A CSP contains a country analysis sketching the situation of a country, the national strategy, an overview of previous co-operation and a response strategy establishing the development priorities to tackle the problems described in the country analysis. The NIP makes the priorities from the CSP’s response strategy operational by outlining the concrete development programmes in the chosen focal and non-focal sectors and adds timetables, budgets and measurement indicators.

2.2 Budget

As GAD and gender mainstreaming imply the integration of a gender equality perspective into all policies, obviously, the budget should systematically address gender equality to make the commitment credible (Beetham 2010; Elson and Sharp 2010). A scoring system was developed to estimate the percentage of the development budget that is gender mainstreamed. The scores range from ‘not mentioned at all’ (no gender mainstreaming), to ‘a one-sentence reference to gender equality’ (sector will perhaps be gender-mainstreamed), to ‘two to three concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results’ (sector is likely to be gender mainstreamed), to ‘four or more concrete references to gender equality in the objectives or expected results’ (very likely to be gender mainstreamed) and last to ‘gender is integrated in one or more performance indicators’ (fully gender mainstreamed). Since every NIP has a set of performance indicators linked to the sector’s goals by which to monitor and evaluate the success of the development programme, it is reasonable to say that the inclusion of so-called ‘gender indicators’ corresponds to having the development objectives linked to gender equality in practice. For example, an NIP with the focal sector ‘Justice’ and the objective to reform the justice system could have ‘perception of the credibility of the judicial system’ as one of its indicators. If this indicator is disaggregated by gender or if it contains a specific indicator linked to gender (for example, ‘number of gender-based violence cases resolved’), it corresponds to having the development objectives linked to gender equality in practice. These so-called ‘gender indicators’ can be either indicators broken down by sex (for example school enrolment rate for girls and for boys) or specific indicators measuring improved gender equality (for example a decrease in gender-based violence). Since gender indicators constitute a critical link between policy aspirations and policy practice (Walby 2005; Beetham 2010), I regard the use of such indicators as the most definite sign available in the programming phase of being fully gender mainstreamed in the GAD philosophy.

2.2.1 What Percentage of the EC Development Budget Is Gender Mainstreamed?

The sum of the reviewed NIP budget was 14,245.51 million euro for the programming period 2002–2013. As seen in Table 1, up to 49.81% of this budget was not gender mainstreamed at all. Gender was not mentioned once in the objectives
or expected results of the budgetary sectors, so it is plausible that this share of the budget was not gender mainstreamed in practice.

Approximately 11% of the budget includes gender as a one-sentence phrase without further specification. This indicates probably only a cosmetic upgrading. For example, an NIP that mentions that ‘gender is a crosscutting issue that will be mainstreamed’, without further specification on what this entails. There is a possibility that this part of the budget was gender mainstreamed in the implementation phase, but I suppose this is highly unlikely. It is more plausible that the inclusion of a gender phrase is only a make-up to fulfil the EC programming standards formally.

Looking at the budgetary categories with up to three references (likely to be gender mainstreamed) or with four or more references in the objectives or expected results (very likely to be gender mainstreamed) are respectively 10.99% and 3.48%. For these two categories, it is reasonable to say that it is (very) likely they will be gender mainstreamed in practice, although gender was not included explicitly in the measurement indicators. Approximately one quarter of the budget is fully gender mainstreamed using gender indicators. As gender is not included into large part of EC development aid from 2002 to 2013 (not gender mainstreamed + standard reference: 61%), I conclude from the budget analysis that add-on WID policies have not yet made place for an integral gender mainstreaming approach where the budget systematically reflects gender equality objectives.

### 2.3 Gendered Language

A word count gives an indication of the extent to which the discourse has changed from a focus on women to a focus on gender relations. When a GAD approach is in place, there should be an equal share of references to women and to men. An imbalance would indicate that implicitly one sex is taken as the norm, whereas the other sex is constituted as a problem. I have counted references that relate exclusively to women (including ‘women’, ‘woman’, ‘girl’, ‘mother’ and ‘female’), exclusively to men (including ‘men’, ‘man’, ‘boy’, ‘father’ and ‘male’) and references that relate to both sexes equally (including ‘gender’ and ‘sex’). A word count is of course only a first step. Next, I will examine what specific roles are attributed to both men and women, and to what extent gender stereotypes are challenged or reproduced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>gender inclusiveness of EC development aid (in million € and % of the total budget)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focal and non-focal sectors in NIPs</td>
<td>2002–2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not gender mainstreamed</td>
<td>€ 7,096.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perhaps gender mainstreamed</td>
<td>€ 1,606.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely to be gender mainstreamed</td>
<td>€ 1,565.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely to be gender mainstreamed</td>
<td>€ 495.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully gender mainstreamed with indicators</td>
<td>€ 3,482.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total budget</strong></td>
<td><strong>€ 14,245.51</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.1 Is the Language Gender Mainstreamed?

As seen in Table 2, language analysis of 98 CSPs and NIPs from 2002 to 2013 shows that there is an overrepresentation of references that relate exclusively to women (55.64 %) compared to references that relate exclusively to men (12.86 %). From this evidence I conclude that the formal language used in the CSPs and NIPs is more the typical Women In Development language than a genuine Gender and Development language that involves both women and men equally in the analysis and solutions for gender equality. The language used in the CSPs and NIPs is thus not genuinely mainstreamed. Although the EC labels its approach as gender mainstreaming, the language analysis reveals that the EC’s perspective on gender inequality shows features of the conservative WID paradigm as gender still mainly equals women.

When examining the content of these references it became clear that it is mainly exclusively women who are mentioned when analysing problems concerning gender inequalities. Women are linked to problems with gender inequality while men rarely appear in the country analysis and are almost never explicitly problematized.\(^2\) The 610 times men are mentioned, this is mostly in a general phrase referring to “equality between men and women”, or in quantitative terms (for example percentage of boys/girls enrolled). What is more, women are not only seen as the main problem holders in the gender (in)equality question, they are also made solely responsible for the solution as men almost never appear as a target group to promote gender equality in society.\(^3\) It is clear that—looking at the gendered framing of solutions for gender equality—the EC’s perspective resembles the WID paradigm. One of the core features of GAD and the gender mainstreaming strategy, which is “the shared responsibility of women and men in removing imbalances in society” (Council of Europe 1998, p. 18), is completely missing in the CSPs and NIPs. Neglecting the role of men in solving the gender inequality puzzle is harmful for results. To create a gender equal society men need to be brought on board and higher financial and intellectual investments need to be made to change discriminatory gender norms.

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\(^2\)With the exception of the issue of domestic or gender-based violence, where men are sometimes problematized, when they are conceptualized as perpetrators (but never as possible victims). Most CSPs however, leave men out of the picture when talking about domestic and gender-based violence and talk about the issue as a women as problem only.

\(^3\)With the single exception of the Indian NIP, that proposes to increase efforts for a greater responsibility and participation of men in reproductive health, not a single other NIP mentions men explicitly as target group in the gender-inequality question.
It is also remarkable that references to the gendered distribution of unpaid care work—housework and care of persons that occurs in homes and communities on an unpaid basis—are scarce in the diagnoses and absent in the prognoses. In the country analysis, only five CSPs out of 98 mention women’s double burden or household tasks (first generation CSP Peru, Gambia and Tanzania and second generation CSP Botswana and Sierra Leone), although it is widely recognised that “unpaid care work is a major contributing factor to gender inequality and women’s poverty” (Budlender 2004, p. v; 2008; Razavi 2007; Gammage 2010). This neglect is problematic for several reasons. While the silence on this topic implicitly legitimises the unequal division of care work between men and women, it also implies that such work is valueless and ignores its connection to economic growth and development in general (Budlender 2004; 2008; Razavi 2007). Furthermore, leaving women’s disproportionately large share in non-market care work out of the analysis has implications for the quality of the overall gender analysis. This is because the gender bias in unpaid care work creates a gendered “time and income poverty” (Gammage 2010) that has a direct impact on several of the issues that are put forward in the CSPs and NIPs, such as women’s access to (full-time) education and jobs or their vulnerability to gender-based violence. The invisibility of these links in the analysed documents results in a biased analysis.

Furthermore, I found that several CSPs refer to women as a vulnerable group or even as “the most vulnerable segment . . . of the population” (European Commission 2007b, p. 29). Women are also often lumped together with other groups that are deemed vulnerable such as children, elderly, orphans, and “the disabled” (European Commission 2007c, p. 5). In several CSPs and NIPs, women are conceptualized as passive victims of poverty, sex traffickers, violence, or tradition. This conceptualization of women as the vulnerable victim is stereotyping and leans close to Chandra Mohanty’s (1991) highly criticized objectification or victimization of “Third World women.” This means that women as a category of analysis are defined in terms of their object or victim status, or in the way they are affected by, or not affected by, certain systems or institutions (Mohanty 1991).

2.4 Frame

Policy documents typically contain a diagnosis (what is the problem) and a prognosis (solution/s) of the issue at stake, including ideas on the causes of the problem, “the ends that can be reached through the use of certain means, and on the desirability of certain outcomes” (Verloo 2005, p. 22). In this section I examine which gender issues are identified as problems and solutions in the CSPs and NIPs.

2.4.1 How Is Gender Equality Framed?

In-depth analysis of the EU programming documents reveals that gender inequality in the CSP’s country diagnoses is mainly put forward as a problem of maternal
mortality (48 out of 98 CSPs), access to education (41) and income disparity and poverty (36). Violence against women (32), unemployment and access to jobs (29) and the lack of access to decision-making (24) are also important. The main solutions put forward in the NIPs to tackle gender inequalities are focussed on education (30 NIPs), employment (24 NIPs) and reducing maternal mortality (13 NIPs). Outlining the main problems and solutions reveals two important frames, a poverty reduction frame and a labor market or economic growth frame. The analysis of the main solutions shows that two out of three of the dominant solutions, are located within the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely Goal two to achieve universal primary education, Goal three to promote gender equality and empower women (with the concrete target to eliminate gender disparities in all levels of education by 2015) and Goal five to improve maternal health (with the targets to reduce maternal mortality and achieve universal access to reproductive health). Although “the more optimistic readings of the MGDs” have stressed their contribution “to ‘en-gendering’ the global development agenda” (Chant 2007, p. 10), feminists around the world have criticised the MDGs for their narrow scope and minimal poverty agenda (Chant 2010; Subrahmanian 2007; Mukhopadhyay 2007). In their view, the MDGs ignore systemic political and power issues concerning gender inequality and do not use a human rights framework, which depicts “people as ‘rights holders’ who can mobilise to demand the realisation of their rights” rather than as passive recipients of policies (Barton 2005, p. 29). Furthermore, the emphasis is on girls’ rather than women’s voices and rights and “far-reaching but controversial areas” such as land rights, male violence and sexual and reproductive rights are ignored (Johnsson-Latham 2010, p. 44). Feminists “struggling against the vice of neoliberal theory and policy” even view the MDGs as “a significant step, but in the wrong direction” (Saith 2006, p. 1174). Also gender equality in employment is often framed as a solution to eradicate poverty. Like for example in the Ethiopian CSP were it is stated that “women’s contribution to household income and production is crucial for fighting poverty.” (European Commission 2002a, p. 11) In this poverty-frame the integration of gender equality in employment is also located within the MDGs, namely Goal one to eradicate extreme poverty. In this case, gender equality is used instrumentally to reach the goal of poverty eradication and not as an aim in itself (Debusscher and Van der Vleuten 2012). Such instrumentalist policies serve to maintain traditional gender roles rather than to dismantle gender inequalities (Molyneux 2006; Roy 2010). Moser and Moser aptly summarise the debate on the pros and cons of instrumentalism. It can be defended for pragmatic reasons because “in the ‘real’ world of politics, compromises and strategic alliances are parts of reality”, but it “risks depoliticizing the transformative nature of the feminist agenda” and thus strips gender mainstreaming of its transformative potential (Moser and Moser 2005, pp. 14–15).

In an equal amount of cases employment and education as main solution for gender equality are framed instrumentally to achieve economic goals. This was mostly the case in the Southern European Neighbourhood countries and in some Latin American countries (Debusscher 2012a, b). Women must be educated and
integrated in employment to “contribute to growth,” “build a knowledge society,” (European Commission 2007c, pp. 20–21), bring “industrial modernisation” (European Commission 2002b, p. 27), or “ensure a technologically skilled and adaptable workforce” (European Commission 2007d, p. 24). In several policy documents education is framed as a tool for development and a preparation for the labor market. In general, education is not framed as a basic human right, neither is it framed as a tool to bring gender equality into the intimate sphere. For example, in the Ecuadorian NIP the main objective of the budgetary sector on education is “to train a competitive labor force directed at the country’s productive needs and with a foothold in the market” (European Commission 2007e, p. 34). The aid program also explicitly stresses the importance of participation of girls and young women in technical and vocational education. The goal of gender equality is strategically brought into the education sector and it is framed economically. Gender equality however is not a goal in itself. Other gender policies could be seen as supporting this dominant economic frame. For example reproductive health allows women to control their fertility and be more active on the labor market. Sometimes also less evident policy areas are framed economically, as for example in the Colombian CSP where violence against women is a situation that “entails high economic costs for the country” (European Commission 2007f, p. 12). This economic emphasis is convergent with the early WID tradition, where “the underlying rational... was that women are an untapped resource who can provide an economic contribution to development.” (Moser 1993, p. 2). Also it is convergent with the manner in which gender equality is typically framed by the World Bank. As put forward by several authors the World Bank’s traditional justification for gender mainstreaming its lending programmes, sector projects and policy formulation is “the synergy between reducing gender disparities and achieving greater economic growth.” (Schech and Vas Dev 2007, p. 16) Since 2006 the World Bank explicitly considers gender as “smart economics” raising productivity, growth, and improving other development outcomes such as poverty reduction (World Bank 2006, 2012). Nevertheless the World Bank’s gender equality and growth frame has received many criticism of scholars in the fields of gender studies and development, as policies creating economic growth on the macro level may still turn out to have negative consequences for women’s health and well-being, destroy human capacities or reduce people’s access to goods and services (Elson and Cagatay 2000; Schech and Vas Dev 2007). Furthermore its policies have been criticised for being conservative as they do little improve the position of women and change discriminatory gender roles (Brym et al. 2005).

3 Conclusions

This article has examined gender mainstreaming in the programming of EU development cooperation for the period 2002–2013 using a budget, language and frame analysis, in order to evaluate whether or not the EU can be considered a leading and...
distinctive gender actor. To answer this question I combine two sub questions. First I evaluate whether a shift has been made from a conservative Women in Development paradigm to a transformative Gender and Development paradigm to determine if the EU lives up to European and international commitments on gender equality and can be considered to be leading by example. Second I examine whether the EU advocates a distinctive ‘Europeanness’ in its gender policy towards developing countries. The analysis of budget, language and frame shows that the shift from a conservative WID to a transformative GAD paradigm has barely been made in practice. Over 60% of the budget from 2002 to 2013 does not include gender issues and only one quarter of the development budget from 2002 to 2013 was fully gender mainstreamed using gender indicators. Furthermore, when the policies talk about gender, they mainly refer to women. Conceptions of masculinity and femininity, as well as the gendered division of care work are not questioned in policy texts. On the one hand, women tend to be victimized and are referred to as ‘vulnerable.’ Men, on the other hand, are barely mentioned. In general, men are the silent norm that women have to catch up with as problem holders. This conception of women as sole problem and solution holders in the gender inequality puzzle fits the conservative WID paradigm, and is contradictory to a genuine GAD paradigm where men and women share responsibility in removing imbalances in society. The applied approach is also limited to the extent that apart from the ‘usual suspects’ (health, education and work) gender issues have been included in few new domains (e.g. transport). Such approach clearly does not fit a gender mainstreaming strategy which includes a gender equality perspective into all policies. Furthermore, the approach remains predominately instrumentalist as gender issues are framed within the dominant development policy paradigms and as they are ‘sold’ as a way of more effectively achieving other policy goals such as economic growth or poverty reduction. The frame analysis thus shows that rather than a distinctive ‘Europeanness’ in its gender policy towards developing countries, the EU’s policy has few innovative elements. The two major gender frames that are used in the EU’s programming documents—a poverty frame and an economic growth frame—correspond to the frames that are used in the UN’s MDGs and the World Bank’s gender policies. It seems that rather than an innovative and distinctive gender actor, the EU’s gender equality approach in its development policy can be called a patchwork of approaches borrowed from the UN and the World Bank. This may not be surprising. Although the EU has always been involved with developing countries, its main mandate concerns economic integration on the European continent, whereas development occupies a central place in the mandates of international organizations such as the World Bank or the UN (Orbie et al. 2012). What is often stressed in the literature to explain why the EU “is usually a taker of policy from other sources rather than an institution that sets the international agenda on contemporary problems in development”, are the bureaucratic procedures, the limited analytical capacity and competences of the EU in development aid policies (OECD-DAC 2002, p. 60).
(Baroncelli 2011, p. 646) or the UN. This chapter shows that these general conclusions on EU development policy are also valid for the EU’s gender equality policies. In conclusion, the EU fails to live up to European and international commitments on gender equality and cannot be considered to be leading by example. Also, as the EU’s gender frames are derived from other international institutions, the EU is not the distinctive and innovative gender power it claims to be.

References


## Author Queries

**Chapter No.: 17**

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