



# Gender in Development and in Post-Conflict Peace-Building

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- 1. International Relations (IR)
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#### 1. International Relations (IR)

Let me make a few introductory remarks on gender in IR before going into two specific spheres of IR – development and peace and security. In the discipline of International Relations, as in any other academic field, at the beginning of devoting attention to gender we have the invisible woman.

Interestingly, the introduction of the topic of gender into IR is intimately related to security. The underlying messages are:

- international security is compromised without recognition of the centrality of the gender dimension; and
- gender makes a crucial contribution to core issues of international politics.

One of the first key publications – written by Ann Tickner, the grand old lady of a gender perspective on IR – dates from 1992, and is titled *Gender in International Relations* with the subtitle "Feminist Perspectives on achieving Global Security" (Tickner 1992).

Let me quote the very first paragraph from the preface:

"As a scholar and teacher of international relations, I have frequently asked myself the following questions: Why are there so few women in my discipline? If I teach the field as it is conventionally defined, why are there so few readings by women to assign to my students? Why is the subject matter of my discipline so distant from women's lived experience? Why have women been conspicuous only by their absence in the worlds of diplomacy and military and foreign policy-making?"

Tickner deplores the "masculinist underpinnings of the field" (p. ix) and outlines a programme of research and policy formulation.

I want to quote again; I will not go through this lecture quoting, but when I was looking at this book anew after more than 20 years, I found it so strikingly relevant that I want to share this with you:

"Making women's experiences visible allows us to see how gender relations have contributed to the way in which the field of IR is conventionally constructed and to re-examine the traditional boundaries of the field. Drawing attention to gender hierarchies that privilege men's knowledge and men's experiences permits us to see, it is these experiences that have formed the basis of most of our knowledge about international politics. It is doubtful whether we can achieve a more peaceful and just world, a goal of many scholars, both women and men, who write about international politics, while these gender hierarchies remain in place." (p. xi)

Here, we have two key themes of feminist theory and critique:

- the invisibility of women; and
- the epistemological lens (other authors call it the male bias of knowledge production).

Needless to say, these two are most closely related.

Tickner's observations are very much echoed by the other great *vedette* of gender in IR, Spike Peterson. In the same year, 1992, she edited a publication titled *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory* (Peterson 1992). Peterson, too, outlines a programme of the "deconstruction of gender-biased knowledge claims" (p. 6) and "a reconstruction of gender-sensitive theory" (p. 6). And again, the opening chapter of the book discusses "Security and Sovereign States" and asks "What is at stake in taking feminism seriously?" (p. 31).

Let me finish the little book review by pointing to another much quoted publication, edited by Mary K. Meyer and Elisabeth Prügl, *Gender Politics in Global Governance*, published in 1999 (Meyer & Prügl 1999). Here, the issue of visibility is vigorously addressed. The anthology highlights the role of women in international organisations, their impact on shaping agendas,

and the ongoing struggle to make women visible as active agents hidden underneath a quasineutral, gender-blind language. Here, too, we find various contributions on women, peace and security, now already very much under the aspects of women's agency in peace processes and peacekeeping organisations. It is therefore obvious that issues of violence, threat, protection and security have figured prominently in reflections on gender in IR from an early point in time. Before I turn to these, however, I want to take you to another field of IR – that of development and development cooperation.

When I start by retracing the concept of gender in the field of development and development cooperation, the reason is not only that this is my long-term field of professional experience, but also because the policy field of development is in fact the field of IR in which the concept and strategy of Gender Mainstreaming evolved. Ever since the 4th UN International Women's Conference in 1995, policies of gender equality and transformation of repressive gender imbalances have been pursued worldwide under the heading of Gender Mainstreaming (GMS). The EU and its individual member countries have equipped themselves with GMS mandates and procedural rules and regulations to that effect. Most administrative structures have done so, and likewise many civil society organisations. The private sector has largely resisted, but over time has found it increasingly expedient to introduce some type of gender policy, oftentimes blended with diversity and requirements set by the more recent EU anti-discrimination legislation. But Gender Mainstreaming is not only expected to be applied within member countries; its basic tenets apply equally to foreign policy i.e. any policy relating to international arenas.

In the following, I will not place much emphasis on the theoretical contents of the category of gender and its discursive changes over time. Rather, I will focus on conceptual changes. Here, the impact of macro-level policy changes is relevant, as are the debates of the international women's movements and their interaction with policymakers. After examining the unfortunately rather sobering results of 30 years of Gender Mainstreaming in development, I will turn to the field of security. Here, I will follow the more recent debate on women, peace and security, and the participation of women in post-conflict peace-building processes. I will discuss the resolutions of the UN Security Council dealing with gender issues in the politics of peace and security, and I will look at some of the issues in the respective debate. Finally, the question will be asked here, too, of how the efforts to bring a gender perspective to the field are doing and what results have been achieved.

## 2. Gender in International Development

As we have seen already, it all started with the "invisible woman" – or, rather, the fact that feminists made the invisibility of women visible. The presence of women in whichever social organisation and therefore the specific experience of women in whatever social processes is now recognised as being systematically obscured by the alleged gender neutrality of the construction of social knowledge. Concepts of what is normal, common and universal are constructed from a hidden male perspective. Women are "the other", the deviation from the norm, a special case to be measured against the norm, and relegated to a secondary rank. In every scientific discipline, feminist research began with efforts to make women visible. The first and primary objective of such research was usually to show that women do exist in the specific field, that their experience differs from that of men, that the difference matters and that overlooking women's different existence yields undesirable and false – if not altogether damaging – results.

In development theory, Ester Boserup's seminal 1970 study *Woman's Role in Economic Development* is based on such research (Boserup 1970). Boserup paved the way for much empirically based research on the contribution of women to production and economic growth, specifically in agriculture. Taken up by the demands for equality of the women's movements of the seventies and embedded into the basic needs strategy and its target group approach of the time, women became a specific target group whose needs were to be explored and met. Thus, we saw the advent of the so-called WID strategy, i.e. integration of Women in Development (WID) – or, rather, to put it more precisely, into development projects. At the centre of the WID strategy was the "discovery" of female labour as an underutilised resource, the potential of which was yet to be fully integrated into development. If only women were moved from their premodern margins into modern "development", they would fully share in the benefits of modernisation.

The experience with the WID approach as practiced during the UN Decade for Women (1975–1985) was disappointing, however. In spite of a wealth of knowledge available about structures and processes systematically disadvantaging women, the financial resources devoted to the promotion of women's productive activities remained very small, and women's production received little attention or recognition. Feminists concluded that the decisive barrier to women's social and economic betterment lay in their subordinated social position, which is not addressed by the WID approach. The language of women's issues and women's problems takes the responsibility away from society – and from men, for that matter – and shifts it exclusively to women: They should do their best to catch up with men. Furthermore, the question of whether modernisation strategies do in fact produce equitable human development is not even raised. This perception and critique reflect very much the debates in the international women's movements on social and gender justice. Gradually, the concept of gender entered the discourse.

The notion of gender had already been used in the thirties by the anthropologist Margret Mead to denote prescribed social differences and to set them apart from sex roles (Mead 1935). In 1972, the feminist sociologist Ann Oakley in her publication *Sex, Gender and Society* refers to the social conventions in grammar (Oakley 1972). She draws a clear line between *sex* designating biological givens and *gender* covering socially constructed differences between men and women. This understanding, still far away from later post-structuralist readings, was eagerly taken up by feminists active in the world of development. Gender is infused with critical meaning referring not to a naturalised division of labour between men and women, but rather to a socially constructed gender order imbued with power and subordination. Gender analysis sought to undo biologistic and culturalist interpretations of social reality prevalent in development discourse and practice, and became the state of the art.

The disillusionment with the results of the WID integration strategy and the encouragement derived from the 1985 UN International Women's Conference in Nairobi with the "Forward Looking Strategy" brought about a new tone and a new perspective. This was due not least to the advent of the DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) network and the concept of *empowerment* which it introduced into the strategy debate (Sen 1989). Empowerment is not about integration; it is about transforming established hierarchical gender orders. It was in this spirit that UNIFEM, the then UN Fund for Women, declared: "The time has come for women to move beyond being on the agenda to start setting the agenda." A transformative claim to Gender Mainstreaming was made. Mary Anderson, who has been very instrumental in bringing about this shift, comments on it in her 1993 book as follows: "Mainstreaming, understood as agenda-setting, highlighted the need for fundamental change in the development paradigm, in the structures of the institutions that are involved in development planning and programming, and in the actual strategies, processes and outcomes of development" (Anderson 1993: 8).

Thus came about GAD, i.e. Gender and Development. The former WID units in development agencies were renamed GAD units and worked with what was henceforth called the GAD approach, at the heart of which lay the *method* of gender analysis and the *strategic objective* of empowerment with a view to achieving gender equality. The Plan of Action of the 4th International Women's Conference in Beijing (1995) was entirely framed in terms of the strategy of GMS. All development organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, equipped themselves with GMS mandates.

The gender approach, it was hoped, would have a dual effect: On the basis of the evidence of discriminatory gender differentials rendered by gender analysis and richer gender data, women would be able to access the resources of aid more effectively. The transformative aspirations of GMS would be addressed with the help of the categories of *practical* and *strategic* gender

needs. The 1995 gender training handbook of the German bilateral development organisation defined these as follows: "Practical gender needs are concrete, immediate needs of men and women and aim to improve their living situation in their given gender roles. Strategic gender needs are derived from the social discrimination that women face and that manifest themselves in the social division of labour and the differentials in access to resources and political decision making processes." (Osterhaus & Salzer 1995: 10).

When DAWN presented the concept of *empowerment* in Nairobi in 1985, this was part and parcel of a radical critique of the basic tenets of modernisation theory and strategy, and of its neo-liberal variant as imposed on indebted developing countries. The experience of the social erosion brought about by neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes pursued by the IMF and the World Bank contributed greatly to the emergence of a feminist critique of economics. Again, visibility was a major theme – this time of the gendered costs of adjustment.

Feminist activists and researchers point to the disastrous social and gender effects of deregulation and the drastic cuts in budgets for social infrastructure, health and education. Privatisation shifts social services not only to what we call the private sector, meaning business operating for a profit, but also into private homes. Care and social services either become payable or they have to be rendered by the unpaid care work of women in their homes. Feminists concluded that there is nothing gender-neutral about the operations of the economy, nor about the theories guiding them. Feminist economist Diane Elson referred to the *hidden agenda* of structural adjustment and the *male bias* of economic theory (Elson 1991). Her colleague, Isabelle Bakker, titled her own analysis *The Strategic Silence* (Bakker 1994).

The experience with and analysis of structural adjustment also prompted the WID / GAD units in development organisations to shift their analysis beyond projects and programmes to the level of macroeconomics and the neo-classics guiding the neo-liberal paradigm. While still busy with the efforts of Gender Mainstreaming, more specifically with infusing the mainstream with the gender dimension, the mainstream as such – or rather, to stay with the metaphor, the direction of its flow – came increasingly into question. During the nineties, nearly all of the development agencies produced studies which looked at the macro-economy with a gender perspective (e.g. Frackmann 1996).

Over the years, experience showed that Gender Mainstreaming efforts are faced with two systematic limitations:

- on the level of administration, the reservation if not resistance on the part of aid bureaucracies to allow gender considerations to become effective; and
- on the macro-level, the continuing neo-liberal flow of the mainstream.

Let me comment on both of these. I will start with the aid bureaucracies.

As I mentioned before, by the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties OECD donor agencies had given themselves gender mandates. Gender Mainstreaming is explicitly a top-down strategy. It obliges the management of an organisation to do whatever is required to fully accommodate gender equality – over time renamed *gender justice* – in its activities. An array of gender handbooks, guidelines, checklists, training sessions was expected to assist with the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming. Yet, over the years, evaluations have documented how little development organisations have moved to more gender-balanced structures, processes and activity profiles. A recent meta-evaluation conducted by the African Development Bank, a World Bank subsidiary, on "Mainstreaming Gender Equality" carries the telling sub-title "A Road to Results or a Road to Nowhere?" (African Development Bank 2012).

Let me quickly summarise its devastating findings:

- the top of organisations renders at best rhetorical, and no other support (budget, structural changes etc.); as a result, GMS is not discernable in the operations of organisations;
- gender desks are under-resourced and quite often part-time positions held by junior staff:
- gender competence is called in on an ad hoc basis from external sources;
- gender focal points in sector departments do not have gender in their job description, do not receive training and more often than not are not held in high esteem;
- gender training, if available at all, offers only a few hours of gender sensitisation; it does not enable participants to acquire actual competencies;
- (non)attention to gender attracts neither rewards nor sanctions;
- staff management procedures (job advertisements, management by objectives, accountability mechanisms, etc.) do not contain gender;
- gender impact assessments are rarely conducted and when they are, they are a separate exercise and do not inform project / programme planning;
- organisational openings to women's organisations do not exist;
- local gender competence, if called in, remains entirely without influence;
- evaluations give little attention to gender.

I will leave it at that.

Moving to the level of macroeconomics, politics and the transformative aspirations of GMS, it soon becomes clear that the concern of gender equality in no way commands the power to impact effectively on neo-liberal policies. For most development agencies, *empowerment* has lost its transformative meaning and is watered down to *economic empowerment*. Upon closer examination, economic empowerment, oftentimes by way of microcredit, usually boils down to

women being pushed into marketable activities, while continuing to be the primary providers of care, i.e. they are actually shouldering an extra load.

### 3. Security: Post-Conflict Peace-Building

I will leave the topic of gender in development here and move on to gender in peace and security issues. This shift is not as arbitrary as it might appear at first sight. There are two major developments making the connection:

- worldwide, international women's movements have taken up the issue of violence against women with ever-growing vigour;
- the growing spread and recognition of fragile, failing, failed states with violent internal strife and war.

The International Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 unequivocally stated that women's rights are human rights. This was the final point of a long debate about violence against women. Nowadays, we speak of gender-based violence (GBV). The Vienna conference marks a final point of recognition and an opening to gender-based violence as a topic on the agendas of development agencies and peace-builders alike.

At the same time, we have an important change in the world of development. While in the past acute conflict would have been reason for aid providers to withdraw, we now have a cautious "Do no harm" and "Options for aid in conflict" (Anderson 1999, 2000). Thus, violent conflict no longer brings aid to a halt; rather, it is considered a challenge that opens new areas of activity and requires new competencies centring on conflict resolution and reconstruction. Development organisations have since added issues revolving around violent conflict and specifically post-conflict peace-building to their portfolios. An entire new field of interdisciplinary research and action has started to burgeon. Across the world, feminist activists and women's organisations are lobbying for the gender dimension to form an integral part of matters of peace and war. On the national and international levels, the security sector sees itself confronted with the gender mainstreaming mandates articulated in the Beijing Action Platform.

There is a growing body of literature on gender and violent conflict, and on the impact of gender patterns in various phases of conflict, i.e. conflict escalation, open conflict and post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction. It is now generally acknowledged that men and women experience violent conflict and war in significantly different ways. Concepts of masculinity and femininity and of a "proper" and "right" gender order play a major role in all phases of violent conflict, and extend far into to post-conflict phase.

In this second part of my lecture, I do not want to look in any detail at the organisational features of GMS in peace and security, nor discuss security strategies as such, although both are intriguing subjects. Instead, I will choose another level – that of resolutions of the UN Security Council, the highest authority on issues of peace and security in the world. There are 5 UNSC Resolutions, usually discussed summarily under the heading of "Women, Peace and Security", which seek to mainstream gender into post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction activities. The resolutions offer interesting insights into the tendencies and ambivalences at work in the security sector.

**Resolution 1325:** The story of the making of Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, has been frequently recounted, if so differently interpreted. There is consensus that it took an unprecedented effort of sustained networking and lobbying on the part of women's and human rights' organisations, individual office holders of United Nations member states, agencies and networks of women advocates within the UN system to build a case and offer a wording which eventually resulted in the unanimous adoption of the resolution.

The resolution addresses four areas:

- 1. equal representation and participation of women in all stages of peace processes and all United Nations field-based operations, aspiring to a 50/50 gender balance;
- 2. mainstreaming a gender perspective in all activities of peace processes and reconstruction;
- 3. recognition of the particular needs of women and girls, and protection from gender-based violence; and
- 4. an end to impunity regarding sexual and other violence against women and girls, and the exclusion of such crimes from post-war amnesties.

Resolution 1325 does mention sexual violence, the need to protect women and girls, and demands an end to impunity for such acts, but its main thrust and emphasis lies in the area of representation and participation. The resolution carefully avoids essentialism, remaining strictly on the level of the practicalities of gendered communication and a gender balance of experiences and perspectives to inform and guide the peace process. The resolution has been translated into over 80 languages and, through the annual debate on "Women, Peace and Security" in the Security Council and respective reporting, has become a key reference point for women's organisations around the world. Although not binding, the resolution carries great normative weight – all the more so as it has been reiterated in subsequent resolutions and numerous statements by international and national political bodies and actors.

However, there is also consensus that the pace of implementation is lamentably slow. Even though guidelines, handbooks, checklists, training manuals and the like have been elaborated, gender components have been built into the training of peace forces to an extent, and gender

advisors and focal points have been put into place, the participation of women in UN peace formations remains low. Figures for 2010 show the proportion of women is as yet far below the 50/50 gender balance to which the UN aspires. Only three peace missions are headed by women. The number of women among military experts and in military units as well as police lies below 4 percent. Nine years after the adoption of Resolution 1325 and in apprehension of what it had to show for itself on its tenth anniversary, **Resolution 1889** is passed, expressing "deep concern about the underrepresentation of women in all stages of peace processes".

Following reports from various conflict zones on systematic violence against women, activities within the UN system are stepped up. In June 2008, **Resolution 1820** was passed, again by a unanimous vote. While it refers to Resolution 1325, its primary concern is with sexual violence. The resolution stresses that "sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war in order to deliberately target civilians or as a part of widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security". It reiterates the provisions on impunity and exclusion from amnesty, and demands a "policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations".

Little over a year later, **Resolution 1888** opens on a highly troubled note: "remaining deeply concerned over the lack of progress on the issue of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict in particular against women and children, notably against girls". While it reaffirms the urgent need for action in the area of protection and prevention, it created stronger linkages to issues of participation and representation. Neither *empowerment* nor *mainstreaming* can be found in Resolution 1820, but both resurface repeatedly in Resolution 1888 as part and parcel of an elaborate and detailed list of steps to be taken. "Inaction can send a message that the incidence of sexual violence in conflicts is tolerated." The resolution demands the appointment of "a Special Representative to provide coherent and strategic leadership". In February 2010, Margot Wallström, a former member of the European Commission from Sweden, took up the position of Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In December 2010, **Resolution 1960** re-endorse the "concern over the slow process in the issue of violence".

The five resolutions, all of which seek to mainstream gender in peace and security operations, have been the subject of much debate among feminist scholars and activists. Again, we find concerns similar to those raised in the field of development

- 1. Has the concept of gender been narrowed down to women's issues, and is it losing its transformative claim?
- Have women been integrated into the respective units and activities?
- 3. Is the mainstream flowing into the right direction?

I will quickly touch on these three aspects before closing with some cautious conclusions.

- 1. In 2002, commissioned by UNIFEM, Ellen Sirleaf, President of Liberia, and Elisabeth Rehn, former Defence Minister of Finland, evaluated the implementation of Resolution 1325. They criticised the identification of gender with women and girls in the resolution and the absence of an analysis of gender orders and their dynamics (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002). Indeed, the insights of research inspired by feminist theory on the gendered terrain of violent conflict and the gender dynamics at work are gaining ground only slowly within the UN system. Particularly under the impact of systematic mass rape in Darfur and Congo, a shift towards victimhood and protection can be discerned. Sexual violence against women has moved to centre stage – so much so that in 2009, Resolution 1889 founds it necessary to stress "the need to focus not only on the protection of women but also on their empowerment in peace-building". Indeed, many fear that the construction of women as a special group in need of protection re-victimises them and loses sight of women's agency. It runs the risk of falling back on the old social construct of the male protector. In short, placing women in the position of vulnerable victims privileges established military and security actors and sideline issues of participation and empowerment. Possibly even more importantly, the construction of masculinities and femininities runs the risk of being obscured. As a consequence, and irrespective of the body of knowledge available, the gender dynamics of conflict with militarised masculinity and politicised femininity have little chance to inform analysis and strategy (e.g. Kimmel 2003, Myrttinen 2003).
- 2. Gender mainstreaming has the ambitious objective of combining an integrative approach with a transformative claim. There is as substantial disillusionment with the gender mainstreaming thrust of these resolutions as there is with gender in development, particularly on the part of the organisations and activists who have militated and lobbied for their adoption. As we have seen, participation rates of women in all stages of peace processes continue to be low. In addition, far too little attention has been devoted to the hierarchical and patriarchal thinking which shapes, in structure and prevailing attitudes, the actors called upon to provide protection and to respect equality. Also, much depends on the terms and conditions of participation. It is by no means evident that the presence of women, particularly in such low numbers, generates empowering interaction and negotiations, or that the introduction of a gender perspective stands a chance.
- 3. Finally, how about the mainstream of post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction? As I have pointed out before, feminist development discourse long ago moved to a critical analysis of corporate-driven globalisation with its social polarisation on the international and national levels. When gender mainstreaming made its entry in developing countries, it quickly became part and parcel of a confrontation with the neo-liberal agenda of macroeconomics and macro-politics. Today, we increasingly hear voices warning that the terms and conditions of "liberal peace" might not be all that conducive to social and political justice in post-conflict peace-building. The focus on civil and political rights with elections as a centrepiece of political reconstruction tends to downplay social and economic rights and to remove social welfare policies from the peace-building agenda. The transition to a post-conflict situation usually is not accompanied by any reform designed to undo or even merely curtail the formal and informal, legal and illegal –

socioeconomic power structures, alliances and networks that the war has generated and fuelled. As a consequence, warlords and war profiteers re-enter the scene in the shape of successful businessmen and politicians with well-established global connections and ready to profit from open markets.

#### 4. Conclusion

Let me close: I personally tend to think that much of the disappointment with gender mainstreaming in development, in peace and security or in any other area, is brought about by high expectations – if not a strategic overload – which it may be time to review. The Beijing Platform for Action lays down essential objectives of international women's policy and demands gender analysis for systematic self-reporting on gender effects and gender-differentials. The wording does not suggest that gender mainstreaming as such is expected to cover all the objectives of the Platform. The time might have come to take a step back and reconsider what gender mainstreaming can achieve and where complementary or independent strategies are called for.

We all cry for a change of attitudes, but personal change does not come about easily and might require a little leaning. I think that two steps could be useful:

- the introduction of mandatory quotas; and
- the installation of obligatory accountability mechanisms regarding gender in career development into policy administrations.

I will leave it at that. You have been patient listeners and I thank you!

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