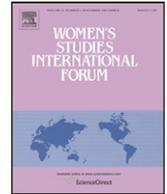


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Mainstreaming gender in European Commission development policy: Conservative Europeanness?

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S Y N O P S I S

This article examines gender mainstreaming in European Commission development aid through quantitative and qualitative analysis of policy documents. The research aim is twofold. First I evaluate whether a genuine shift has been made from a conservative Women in Development paradigm to a transformative Gender and Development paradigm. Secondly I examine whether the European Commission advocates a Europeanness in its gender policy towards developing countries. The quantitative analysis assesses language, format and budgets. Next, qualitative analysis embarks on a deeper reading of how gender (in)equality is approached. I conclude that the shift towards a transformative Gender and Development paradigm has only partly been made and that the Commission promotes a Europeanness in its gender policies, which links the internal and external agenda.

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Introduction

The first attempts to integrate gender equality in European Union (EU) development policy originate from the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–1985) and the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. Following these events the European Commission (EC) established a 'Women in Development' (WID) policy, including its first WID desks, communiqués and references to women in the Third and Fourth Lomé conventions in 1984 and 1989 (Lister, 2006; Petó & Manners, 2006; Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000). This 'Women in Development' perspective addressed the exclusion of women from the development process by creating specific projects for women. Increasingly the WID perspective was criticized by feminist scholars pointing out that focussing on women in isolation is ineffective as it ignores the underlying societal problem, namely unequal gender relations (Moser, 1993). Since WID confirms the gendered status quo, it is considered a conservative approach. Following the 1995 United Nations (UN) Beijing Conference – in which the EU played a significant role – the WID paradigm was officially set aside by the international community and replaced by the Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm and the strategy of gender mainstreaming that implements it.

The GAD paradigm 'does not dislodge women as the central subject', but focuses on gender. This means it recognizes that improving women's status requires analysis of the *relations* between women and men, as well as analysis of 'the concurrence and cooperation of men' (Asian Development Bank, 2003: 28). The innovative element of GAD and gender mainstreaming is that it widens the scope from add-on, small-scale projects focussing on women, to the integration of a gender equality perspective into all policies in an effort to transform society and obtain social justice for all people. Where WID policies – even those policies aimed at redressing the imbalances between the sexes – were directed at women only, the gender mainstreaming approach stresses 'the shared responsibility of women and men in removing imbalances in society' (Council of Europe, 1998: 18). The participation and commitment of men is thus fundamental in the GAD paradigm to change the social and economic position of women. As the ultimate aim of GAD is to change the discriminatory gendered society, it is regarded as a transformative approach.

The aim of the research is twofold. First, I want to determine to what extent the shift from a conservative WID paradigm towards a transformative GAD paradigm has been genuinely made and second whether the EU advocates a

Europeanness in its gender policy towards developing countries, or whether it allows for a variety of gender approaches? If yes, I examine what this Europeanness implies and if it is linked to EU interests. The research analyses EC development policy through two generations of Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) on their inclusion of gender equality with a quantitative and qualitative method, examining formal (language, format, budget) and substantial (frame, roles and participation) aspects of gender mainstreaming respectively and focuses on four regions: Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the European Neighbourhood. To start, the next section defines gender mainstreaming, describes the dataset and the methodological framework and clarifies how the two aspects of gender mainstreaming are measured. Next, I give a global synthesis of the findings on formal (language, format, budget) and substantial (frame, roles and participation) aspects of gender mainstreaming in EC development aid. This section aggregates the findings from four regional studies (on gender mainstreaming in EC aid towards Asia, Africa, Latin America and the European Neighbourhood) and forms the basis to answer the two main research questions in the conclusion.

Gender mainstreaming and how to measure it

After the Beijing Conference in 1995, the Council of Europe set up a Group of Specialists to develop guidelines on how to implement the strategy of gender mainstreaming. Widely used by European policy makers, NGOs and researchers, the Council of Europe's definition on gender mainstreaming is to date the most influential definition in European context (Verloo, 2005a; Walby, 2005a).

'Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, 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.' (Council of Europe, 1998: 13)

The definition conceptualizes gender mainstreaming as a process of changing policy routines where the objects of mainstreaming are all policies, at all levels and at all stages of the programming cycle, while the active subjects are the ordinary actors. This means that gender equality must be an integral part of all policies (Council of Europe, 1998). However, the way in which the experts of the Council of Europe originally conceptualised gender mainstreaming was far more encompassing than the one-sentence definition that has travelled so well into policy contexts (Verloo, 2005a). The original conceptual framework stated that 'gender mainstreaming implies a broader and more comprehensive definition of gender equality' and that its ultimate aim is 'transforming gender relations in the direction of gender equality' (Council of Europe, 1998: 14). The transformative potential of gender mainstreaming is stressed by feminist academics and constitutes the long term agenda to tackle deeply rooted societal norms and practices within which inequalities are embedded. Teresa Rees states that 'mainstreaming entails a paradigm shift in thinking' and that it 'requires being able to see the ways in which current practice

is gendered in its construction despite appearing gender-neutral' (Rees, 1998: 194). Judith Squires shares this view explaining that gender mainstreaming should facilitate a 'transformative frame of analysis that enables gender relations to be understood as changeable by policy interventions' (Squires, 2007: 68). Closely related to this is Naila Kabeer's idea of transformative agency, which entails the 'greater ability on the part of poor women to question, analyse and act on the structures of patriarchal constraint in their lives' (Kabeer, 2005: 15). The idea of gender mainstreaming as a transformative tool thus involves a transformation of society by naming and challenging the existing gender- and power relations through policy interventions wherein formerly disempowered women, or their organisations participate in questioning, analysing and acting upon the gendered world. Prerequisite to transform the development agenda is an 'agenda-setting approach' towards gender mainstreaming where women who are affected by development interventions or their organisations have a voice 'to shape the objectives, priorities and strategies of development.' (Jahan, 1995: 127) Such an agenda-setting approach to gender mainstreaming 'implies the transformation and reorientation of existing policy paradigms, changing decision-making processes, prioritizing gender equality objectives and rethinking policy ends.' (Walby, 2005a: 323). Gender mainstreaming as a transformative strategy therefore differs from an integrationist approach (Jahan, 1995) which addresses 'gender issues within existing development policy paradigms' (Beveridge & Nott, 2002: 300) and sells 'gender mainstreaming as a way of more effectively achieving existing policy goals.' (Walby, 2005a: 323)

Dataset

I analysed two generations of Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) from 4 regions (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 four key chapters: a country analysis, the national strategy, an overview of co-operation and a response strategy. The country analysis sketches the current situation of a country through sub-chapters looking at different aspects (e.g. political, economic, social, trade, environmental aspects,...). The overview of national policies of the partner country outlines the government's development strategy. The aim is to enhance coherence and find synergies to work together. Next, the CSP gives an overview of the past and ongoing development aid of the EC and other donors. The response strategy establishes 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. In principle, CSPs and NIPs are established through dialogue

between the EC delegation in the partner country in correspondence with the EC in Brussels, the government ministries of the partner country, the EU member states embassies and representatives of civil society of the country. The Commission, however, always makes the first draft, which means that the main content and structure of a CSP/NIP is of EC signature.

To detect possible progress over time in terms of formal and substantial aspects of the gender mainstreaming approach, I compare the first generation CSPs and NIPs (2002–2007) with the last generation CSPs and NIPs (2008–2013) on their inclusion of gender equality issues. For each generation I analysed the same set of 49 countries,¹ which means a total set of 98 CSPs and NIPs.²

Formal aspects

When a gender mainstreaming approach is in place, both men and women should be equally named in the documents analysed (= equal share of specific references to women and to men). An imbalance would indicate that one sex implicitly and consistently is taken as the norm, whereas the other sex is consistently problematised. I count 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). This word count is the first step in assessing the formal presence of gender mainstreaming and gives an indication of whether the shift from the WID discourse, focussing exclusively on women, towards the gender mainstreaming discourse has taken place.

Secondly, I examine whether gender issues are incorporated into all the separate parts of the CSP and the NIP. Texts are scanned on references linked to gender (in)equality. Search terms included gender, sex(es), woman, women, female, girl(s), maternal, sexual, reproductive, mother, father, men, man, boy(s), male(s), feminist(s)/feminism, patriarchy/patriarchal, domestic violence and rape. Since gender equality is a crosscutting issue, it should be found in the entire CSP and NIP. This implies that the programming of EC development aid should contain 'a strong gender analysis and country profile, the integration of gender issues in the political and policy dialogue', and should address 'equality and women's empowerment in the NIP' (European Commission, 2008a: 8). From this follows that I assess to what extent gender issues are incorporated in the four key parts of the CSPs (country analysis, national strategy, overview of cooperation and response strategy) and in the NIPs.

A third cut is provided by an analysis of the budget. A scoring system was developed to estimate the percentage of the total development budget that is gender mainstreamed. Each sector linked to a budget is classified according to its gender inclusiveness. Gender inclusiveness ranges 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' (this 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 lastly 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 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 justice system' as one of its indicators. If this indicator is disaggregated by gender or if there is a specific indicator linked to gender equality included in the set of indicators – for example 'number of gender-based violence cases resolved' – this 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 or reduced disparities (for example number of women's organisations funded or a decrease in gender based-violence). The importance of gender indicators in the gender mainstreaming process has been widely recognised by the international donor community and the EU, which has also made high-level commitments to the use and development of gender indicators in its development aid (European Commission, 2007a). Since gender indicators constitute a critical link between policy aspirations and policy practice (Walby, 2005b), I regard the use of such indicators as the most definite sign available in the programming phase of being fully gender mainstreamed. In the analysis of formal aspects, I consider the policy to be genuinely gender mainstreamed and thus potentially transformative if there is an equal share of specific references to women and men (language), if gender is part of all programming phases (format) and if gender issues and gender indicators are included in all budgetary sectors (budget).

Substantial aspects

The second part of the research embarks on a more qualitative analysis of the gender mainstreaming approach in the CSPs and NIPs. I examine the same set of CSPs and NIPs in order to ascertain whether the gender mainstreaming approach in EC development aid entails 'a broader and more comprehensive definition of gender equality' (Council of Europe, 1998: 14), which would reveal and challenge gender power mechanisms as well as the gender stereotypes that produce inequalities (Lombardo & Meier, 2008). To contrast the understanding of gender equality in the CSPs and NIPs I additionally analysed 28 civil society documents of Asian, African, Latin American and European Neighbourhood women's movements or networks.³ Analysing the views of relevant civil society actors on gender equality not only allows us to detect possible silences in the CSPs and NIPs (what is not said), but also helps to determine whether gender mainstreaming is implemented as an agenda setting approach which gives 'attention to the substantive objectives of the women's movement' (Jahan, 1995: 127).

The methodology used to examine the CSPs/NIPs and the civil society texts is Critical Frame Analysis. Critical Frame Analysis is a methodology that builds on social movement theory and was further developed by the MAGEEQ project to

identify how gender equality policies are framed (Verloo, 2005b). Policy documents generally include a diagnosis (what is the problem) and a prognosis (solution/s) of the issue at stake. Both diagnosis and prognosis can be interpreted in several different ways. It is from these dimensions of diagnosis and prognosis, that implicit or explicit representations emerge of who is deemed to have the problem, who caused it and who should solve it (Lombardo & Meier, 2008). I explore the gender mainstreaming approach in EC development aid by analysing these different dimensions of a policy discourse. Concretely I start by examining which gender issues are identified as problems or solutions in the CSPs and NIPs. I analyse what issues are deemed important and what issues are left out of the diagnosis and the prognosis by contrasting the gender (in)equality frames in the CSPs and NIPs with the gender (in)equality frames of civil society. Secondly, I examine to what extent the problems and solutions are gendered. This means that I analyse what roles are attributed to both men and women and that I assess whether gender stereotypes are challenged or reproduced. Is there a focus on women, on men or on their relation and in what respect? To what extent are standards, norms and behaviour of men and of women questioned? Thirdly I examine who has a say in defining problems and solutions and who is being talked about, to identify which actors are included and excluded in the CSPs and NIPs (Lombardo & Meier, 2008). I consider policies to be genuinely gender mainstreamed and thus potentially transformative when the problems and solutions concerning gender (in)equality are framed in a way that includes civil society voices and concerns and involves both men and women.

Is the language gender mainstreamed?

As seen in Table 1, 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 language used in the CSPs and NIPs is more the typical Women In Development language than a genuine gender mainstreaming 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

Table 1
Number of references to women/men/gender.

CSPs and NIPs	2002–2006		2007–2013		Total	
References to women	900	59.92%	1739	53.66%	2639	55.64%
References to men	165	10.99%	445	13.73%	610	12.86%
References to gender/sex	437	29.09%	1057	32.61%	1494	31.50%
Total	1502	100%	3241	100%	4743	100%

Example: for the first generation (2002–2006) CSPs and NIPs, 59.92% of references relates exclusively to women and only 10.99% relates exclusively to men.

perspective on gender inequality shows features of the WID paradigm.

Comparing the first generation CSPs and NIPs (2002–2006) with the second generation (2007–2013) I noticed a slight improvement in the gender imbalance. The percentage of references to women has decreased (from 59.92% to 53.66%) and the percentage of references to men has (slightly) increased (from 10.99% to 13.73%), as well as the percentage of references to both sexes equally (from 29.09 to 32.61%). This allows us to conclude that a gender mainstreaming language is modestly but increasingly being used in policy documents concerning EC development aid, although a WID perspective that focuses mainly on women as problem and solution holders in the gender inequality question is still predominating over a perspective focusing on both women and men and their relation to each other, which is a core feature of GAD and the strategy gender mainstreaming.

Is gender incorporated into all parts of the policy documents?

As results from Table 2, gender issues are found in each part of the CSP (Country Analysis, National Strategy, Overview of Cooperation and Response Strategy) and in the NIP. This is the case in the first as well as in the second generation CSPs and NIPs. Gender issues were found mostly in the country analysis of the CSP (50.97% of gender issues are present in the country analysis), but over time the distribution of gender issues is becoming somehow more balanced. The percentage of gender issues in the Country Analysis is decreasing from 55.87 to 47.85% and gender issues are becoming increasingly integrated into the response strategy (from 10.55 to 17.68%) and the NIP (from 25.62 to 27.52%), indicating a major improvement in the gender mainstreaming of concrete development programs.

Although it is clear that the main emphasis is on the integration of gender issues in the descriptive and analytical parts (country analysis, national strategy and overview of cooperation), gender issues are fairly well distributed into the strategic parts (response strategy and NIP) as well. The claim in the Thematic Evaluation on the Evaluation of Gender Issues in EC Development Co-operation that gender 'references are primary found in the analysis or policy background sections of the CSP, and are very rarely translated into any strategy'

Table 2
Number of references to gender equality issues.

CSPs and NIPs	2002–2006		2007–2013		Total	
Country analysis (CSP)	604	55.87%	812	47.85%	1416	50.97%
National strategy (CSP)	12	1.11%	46	2.71%	58	2.09%
EC Co-operation (CSP)	74	6.85%	72	4.24%	146	5.26%
Response strategy (CSP)	114	10.55%	300	17.68%	414	14.90%
NIP	277	25.62%	467	27.52%	744	26.78%
Total	1081	100%	1697	100%	2778	100%

Example: in the first generation (2002–2006) 55.87% of all gender issues were found in the CSP's Country Analysis or 604 gender issues in absolute numbers.

(Braithwaite, 2003) seems exaggerated, especially for the second generation. I conclude that the EC approach towards gender equality has the features of a genuine gender mainstreaming approach when analysed from a format perspective. This means that in general CSPs contain an in-depth gender analysis which is translated into strategy.

What percentage of the EC development budget is gender mainstreamed?

As seen in Table 3, the sum of the reviewed NIP budget was 5514.15 million euro for the period 2002–2006 and 8731.4 million euro for the period 2007–2013. For the first generation NIPs up to 68.17% of this total 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. For 2007–2013, the share of the budget that is not gender mainstreamed in the programming phase drops about 30% points going from 68.17 to 38.22%. This breakthrough improvement demonstrates that gender equality is becoming more important in the budget and in the concrete programming phase.

The percentage of the budget that includes gender as a one-sentence phrase without further specification has increased from 6.59% to 14.24% when comparing the two generations. This indicates that part of the improvement is 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 make-up to fulfil the EC programming standards formally.

However, in general gender equality aims are being increasingly specified in the NIPs. 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) have increased significantly, from respectively

3.47% to 15.74% (likely) and from 1.35 to 4.83% (very likely). 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. The part of the budget that is fully gender mainstreamed using gender indicators has increased from 20.43% to 26.97%. I conclude from the budget analysis that addition WID policies have made place for an integral gender mainstreaming approach, since gender is included into large part of EC development aid (62%).

How is gender equality framed?

The most frequently mentioned solutions put forward in the NIPs are focussed on gender-equal access to education (30 NIPs), employment (24 NIPs) and reducing maternal mortality (13 NIPs). When comparing the NIP's main solutions with the framing of these same issues in civil society sources, I detect that the latter talk much more about gender equality in terms of 'the right to ...'. For example, the issue of the reduction of maternal mortality is focussed almost exclusively on maternal health in the CSPs and NIPs (health frame), while civil society frames this issue broader linking it to *sexual* and reproductive health and *rights* (rights frame).

It was also apparent that of the dominant solutions, two out of three 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). 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, 2002c: 11) In this case gender equality is not framed as an aim in itself, but used instrumentally to reach the goal of poverty eradication. 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 an equal amount of cases employment as main solution for gender equality was also framed instrumentally to achieve economic growth or competitiveness of the economy. This was mostly the case in the Southern European Neighbourhood countries and in some Latin American countries. Further, in the same regions I noted that gender equality in education was often framed as supporting goals of economic growth and competitiveness, like for example in the Lebanese NIP were improving the quality of education and increasing the participation of women in the labour force are linked to 'relevance to the labour market' (European Commission, 2007: 26). 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, 2007c: 12). This economic emphasis is convergent with the early WID tradition, where 'the underlying rational... was that

Table 3
Gender inclusiveness of EC development aid (in million € and % of the total budget).

Focal and non-focal sectors in NIPs	2002–2006		2007–2013	
Not gender mainstreamed	3758.955 €	68.17%	3337.41 €	38.22%
Perhaps gender mainstreamed	363.15 €	6.59%	1243.05 €	14.24%
Likely to be gender mainstreamed	191 €	3.47%	1374.21 €	15.74%
Very likely to be gender mainstreamed	74 €	1.35%	421.54 €	4.83%
Fully gender mainstreamed with indicators	1127 €	20.43%	2355.19 €	26.97%
Total budget	5514.15 €	100%	8731.4 €	100%

Example: In the first generation (2002–2006) 20.43% of the total budget was gender mainstreamed with gender indicators (or 1127 million € out of 5514.15 million € in absolute values).

women are an untapped resource who can provide an economic contribution to development.' (Moser, 1993: 2)

The focus on employment and educational solutions to address gender inequality is indeed apparent. Several authors have claimed that the integration of gender equality into all kind of policies is not only for reasons of social justice and democracy (Braithwaite, 1999; Hoskyns, 2008; True, 2009). In a 1999 gender assessment of the EC structural funds, Mary Braithwaite stated that the full participation of women and men through investments made in human resources (e.g. in raising education and qualification levels) was crucial to attain the main European objectives of economic growth, competitiveness and employment creation. This means that gender equality policies were easily framed to attain other policy goals. Braithwaite stated that increasing the female participation in the labour market was the most important gender equality goal within the EC structural funds. Other gender equality areas, like infrastructure (transport etc.) and agricultural support, were either left out, or served to facilitate women's participation in the labour market. Like for example the issue of 'reconciliation of home and professional life' that was treated as a means to smooth women's 'more active participation in the labour market' rather than 'an equality objective in its own right, i.e. to achieve more equal sharing of domestic and family work between men and women.' (Braithwaite, 1999, 2000). Catherine Hoskyns makes a similar argument about the European Employment strategy stating that gender equality is accepted when it serves the EU's macroeconomic interests. The main reason why gender is mainstreamed in employment is thus purely economic: drawing women out of 'inactivity' into some form of labour market participation is the quickest way to increase employment and growth (Hoskyns, 2008). It seems that the approach towards gender equality in the CSPs and NIPs is a similar one to the EU approach. Women's access to employment and education are, next to maternal and reproductive health, the most frequent solutions put forward in the NIPs. In this sense I distinguish a Europeanness in EC development aid which implies a neoliberal framing of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to maximize human capital (True, 2009).

How are the problems and solutions gendered?

It was also apparent that women are seen as the main problem-holders, since it is mainly exclusively women who are mentioned when analyzing problems concerning gender inequalities. Women are thus linked to problems while men rarely appear in the country analysis and are almost never explicitly problematised.⁴ When 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. With the single exception of the Indian NIP, where increased efforts will be made for greater responsibility and participation of men in reproductive health, not a single other NIP mentions men explicitly as solution-holders in the gender-inequality question. 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: 18), is completely missing in the CSPs and NIPs. Neglecting the role of men in solving the gender inequality puzzle is harmful for the results. This is exemplified by a 2008 study which revealed that increases in 'female agency' due to participation in self-help groups was no sufficient condition for increases in 'female subjective well being', especially if social gender norms were conservative and if strong empowerment gains were combined with relatively low trust of men in women (De Hoop et al., 2010). Empowering women in isolation is thus not a sufficient condition to solve the gender inequality puzzle. 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.

Yet, men are completely absent from the solutions for gender inequality in the NIP and are never explicitly addressed as target group to solve gender inequalities. The absence of men in the solutions for gender equality implies that women have to catch up with the male norm and are made the sole responsible for that. This observation of women as sole problem and solution holders is not unique to EC development policy, but is just as common in internal EU policies on gender equality (Lombardo & Meier, 2008). In this sense I discover a second sign, next to the neoliberal framing, pointing in the direction of a Europeanness in the gender policies of EC aid towards developing countries.

Another remarkable feature of the gendered framing of EC development aid is that references to the gendered division of unpaid care work (household tasks and care for family members) are scarce in the diagnoses and completely absent in the prognoses. In the country analysis, only five CSPs out of 98 mention women's double burden or household tasks as a hampering factor for gender equality (first generation CSP Peru, Gambia and Tanzania and second generation CSP Botswana and Sierra Leone), although it is widely recognized that large part of the gender power imbalance and women's subordination spring from the sexual division of labour between productive (paid) and reproductive (unpaid) work (Elson, 1994; Moser, 1993). Nevertheless, women's disproportionately large burden and men's small burden of socially necessary but economically invisible care work are left out of the analysis. Even in the five exceptional cases where the unequal division of care work is put forward as a problem, this is done in a way that implicitly confirms the traditional conception that care work is a women's responsibility. For example in the Peruvian CSP, it is stated that 'women also suffer from ... work overload because of the doubling of professional and family obligations' (European Commission, 2002b: 14). The problem is a women's problem and men are no part of it. Gender roles are not challenged and the gendered status quo is confirmed.

Further, the neglect of the gendered time burden severely limits the scope for analysis and solutions, since the issue of unpaid work touches upon the core of the gender issues put forward in the CSPs and NIPs. Women's access to (fulltime) education and jobs, gender imbalance in decision-making and gender-based violence among other issues all have direct or

indirect links with the gendered division of (care) work. These links remain invisible in the analysed documents since time burden is not discussed. Even if implicit, the absolute silence on this topic perpetuates men and women's unequal roles in care work. Some authors even go further claiming that the silence on reproductive work is strategic, using women as 'an unlimited supply of unpaid ... labour, able to compensate for any adverse changes resulting from macro-economic policy', (Elson, 1994: 42) and to contribute to the realisation of the formal market through the 'reproduction and maintenance of human resources' (Bakker, 1994: 5).

Who has a say?

Looking at the inclusion of organisations working on gender equality in the CSP drafting process I noted that only six out of 98 CSPs mention that women's organisations were included in the CSP drafting process (1st generation CSP Rwanda and Botswana and 2nd generation CSP of Botswana, Ghana, Swaziland and Pakistan). Further three CSPs out of 98 mention that gender was discussed during the drafting process, without mentioning the inclusion of women's organisations (2nd generation CSP of Ethiopia, Cambodia and Paraguay). Up to 16 CSPs refer to women's organisations in other parts of the text. Furthermore, the sources referred to when giving information on gender equality issues are predominantly UN, World Bank or government sources. National or regional women's organisations are not given a legitimate voice in providing information on gender inequality. The exclusion of women's organisations from the CSP drafting process and the silence on their existence and importance, combined with the almost exclusive use of institutional sources on gender equality indicates that the approach towards gender equality is not a participative one. Although the EC has made several high level commitments towards a gender mainstreaming approach that is more participatory, these commitment stay rhetoric and are not implemented in practice. Some civil society voices are explicitly resisting their exclusion from the programming phase and demand to be included (EMHRN, 2008; NEWW, 2007).

What is more, when analysing the views of regional civil society working on gender equality on the main topics – employment, education and maternal health – I detect a different framing of the same issues. When talking about employment, civil society voices take a critical perspective stating that simple growth of women's participation in employment does not lead automatically to gender equality or greater economic autonomy due to vertical and horizontal labour market segregation, unequal domestic constraints (childcare and looking after dependants), unequal pay and discrimination in job promotion (CLADEM, 2005a; EMHRN, 2003; NEWW, 2007). Further, they raise other employment-related issues which are forgotten in the CSPs and NIPs like sexual harassment at work (EMHRN, 2003; *Red Mujer y Habitat*, 2006), the quality, type and context of women's employment (EMHRN, 2003; REMTE et al., 2003), childcare, maternity leave and social security protection (CLADEM, 2005a; REMTE et al., 2003). Also the problem of access to education is framed a lot broader. Education is not framed instrumentally, as a tool to bring economic growth or combat

poverty, but as a right in itself or as a transformative tool for emancipation. The '*Red Mujer y Hábitat*' for example states that educational actions – especially for boys and young men – should be 'aimed at achieving fairer relations between genders' (*Red Mujer y Habitat*, 2006: 45).

As in the CSPs and NIPs, reproductive health and rights are a major concern for civil society actors. Yet, in the CSPs and NIPs the focus is on maternal or reproductive health, where in civil society texts the focus is on *sexual and reproductive rights*. The CSPs and NIPs use a health frame where civil society uses a rights frame. One Asian women's organisation even explicitly demands that a language of 'sexual "rights" and reproductive "rights"' is used and 'not just health' and stresses the importance to separate 'sexual autonomy rights from reproductive rights' (APWLD, 2008: 46).

It was also apparent that civil society analyses were in general more structural and system-critical aiming at 'structural transformation' (*African Feminist Forum*, 2006: 6), discussing the gender effects of globalisation (AWMR, 2002; REMTE et al., 2003; CRTD-A, 2004; CLADEM, 2005b; CLADEM et al., 2006; AFF, 2006; ARWC, 2008; UFDWR, 2007; CAW et al., 2007; APWLD, 2008, 2009), trade liberalisation (APWLD, 2007, 2009; *Asian Rural Women's Conference*, 2007; CLADEM, 2005a; CRTD-A, 2004; SOAWR, 2005) climate change or environmental degradation (AWMR, 2002; ARROW, 2008; ARWC, 2008; APWLD, 2008) and approach patriarchy explicitly as a changeable system over time and space stressing its interrelation with systems 'of class, race, ethnic, religious and global-imperialism' (*African Feminist Forum*, 2006: 11). To give an indication of the difference in tone, the term 'patriarchal or patriarchy' was mentioned six times in about 7000 pages of examined CSPs and NIPs and appeared 140 times in about 1000 pages of examined civil society documents.

Also in the outlining of solutions, important silences were noted. In contrast to the solutions in the CSPs and NIPs, civil society puts significantly more intellectual energy in discussing ways out of the 'deeply rooted societal norms, attitudes and practices' (GBVPN, 2008: 2) in a way that involves both women and men. Examples include new masculinity campaigns (GBVN, 2008; *Red Feminista Latinoamericana y el Caribe contra la violencia Domestica y Sexual*, 2002), promoting change of the workplace culture and providing adequate parental leaving schemes shared by both parents (NEWW, 2007), educational programmes on gender for representatives of all branches of power and mass media (NEWW, 2008b), role model strategies through education on exemplary women's lives (FEMNET, 2007) and the questioning of norms of masculinity and femininity (APWLD, 2008; CREA, 2008).

The civil society analysis reveals, not only that there is a lack of participation in the programming phase of EC aid, but also that there is a wide breach between how the EC frames the gender (in)equality and how regional civil society frames this. The latter adds further proof to a one-size-fits all EC approach towards gender equality that is not context sensitive, pointing in the direction of a blind Europeanness. What is more, Jahan's earlier mentioned prerequisite to a genuinely transformative gender mainstreaming approach where women who are affected by development interventions or their organisations have a voice 'to shape the

objectives, priorities and strategies of development' (Jahan, 1995: 127) is clearly not fulfilled here.

Conclusions

The main aim of the research was to pinpoint the actual meaning of gender equality policies in EC development aid through quantitative (language, format, budget) and qualitative (frame, roles and participation) analysis of 98 CSPs and NIPs. The general research question was broken down into two sub-questions. Firstly, whether the shift from a conservative WID paradigm towards a transformative GAD paradigm has been genuinely made and secondly whether the EC advocates a Europeaness in its gender policy towards developing countries, or whether it allows for a variety of gender approaches.

From WID to GAD?

The research clearly shows that the shift from WID to GAD in EC gender policies has only partly been made. Although I discovered success in terms of the gender mainstreaming format and budget, the language, roles, frame and participation analysis exposed serious shortcomings. First of all the language analysis unveiled a conservative Women in Development language which focuses solely on women as problem and solution holder is the gender inequality question. Second, the frame analysis also points in the direction of a traditional WID perspective, showing that gender is mostly mainstreamed in typical soft sectors (like primary education and maternal health) or otherwise in sectors that are framed economically (employment and education). Thirdly, the participation analysis further reveals that there is no real place for the voices of women or their organisations 'to shape the objectives, priorities and strategies of development', which is severely hampering a genuinely transformative gender mainstreaming approach. (Jahan, 1995: 127)

It is clear that, although the EC 'labels' its approach as an innovative gender mainstreaming approach, the reality proves otherwise. Doing gender mainstreaming is equalled to including women in 'easy' development projects, like education or employment. Further gender is not seen as a *relation*, but it is simply seen as women. Interviews⁵ with EC gender experts within the external Commission services made it clear that expertise and knowledge on what gender mainstreaming entails are sometimes rather limited. For example, the words 'men' (or 'male', or 'boy') were barely mentioned in the interviews, only when explicitly put into a question. Policy-makers seem unaware that 'women' as a category and the discrimination of women depend on and only exist because of the existence of a category 'men'. In that sense the introduction of gender mainstreaming as official strategy in EC policies did not change the understanding of gender relations at the EC internally. If the basic concept of gender *relations* is not understood, how can it be expected that concrete development programs are transformative and address unequal gender relations. When gender relations are understood as women only, it is thus no more than logical that women end up to be the only problem and solution holders in the gender inequality puzzle. It is undeniably complex to think beyond gender as 'including girls in schools' and to think of creative solutions to change deeply rooted stereotypes that are

discriminating. It demands significant intellectual energies to imagine a changed society and the ways forward. Because of the complexity of this task the EC should not want to go this alone and should combine its knowledge with civil society's experience.

Europeaness or context-sensitive?

In examining the EC gender equality policies towards developing countries, I discovered a clear-cut Europeaness which links the internal and external policy agenda and consists of two dimensions. First, as in its internal policies, gender mainstreaming is often framed as an instrumental strategy to unleash the female human capital through education and employment strategies. Second part of this Europeaness involves the EU leadership in promoting the MDGs and draws from the normative power literature. Several authors have claimed that the focus on values and norms in the EU's foreign policy is something that is particular to the EU (Manners, 2002), whether or not its motive is 'pure' or an attempt to construct its image in the world as a force for goodness in international society. Apart from the normative question whether the EU actually is or merely presents itself as a force for the good, I consider normative power as a feature of the Europeaness next to the instrumental neoliberal frame. Although these two dimensions of Europeaness might seem incompatible, in practice they are not, especially when looking at the internal EU dynamics. Within the EU there is a constant struggle between advocates of a more social and advocates of a purely neoliberal Europe. This schizophrenic European character is clearly also present in external policies, where on the one hand the EU shows the philanthropic desire to push the MDGs forward, while on the other hand it is led by an economic motive where women are merely human capital.

Let us start with taking a closer look at the first dimension of Europeaness – the neoliberal frame – by looking at the region where the emphasis on gender equality through employment and education was most visible and explicit, namely the Southern European Neighbourhood. From the beginning of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, economic objectives and women's economic role have been central to the gender dimension (Orbie, 2006) and also this research seems to indicate that gender is framed instrumentally to achieve objectives of economic growth, enhance trade, maximize human capital and remove barriers for economic cooperation. Since the establishment of the European Neighbourhood, the Commission has stated in the Wider Europe Communication that the European Neighbours 'are the EU's essential partners: to increase our mutual production, economic growth and external trade, to create an enlarged area of political stability and functioning rule of law, and to foster the mutual exchange of human capital...' (European Commission, 2003). Especially concerning the Mediterranean region Europe has stressed 'the determination to favour human resource development and employment in line with the Millennium Development Goals, including alleviating poverty.' (European Community – Mediterranean Heads of State and Government, 2008) The focus on increasing the female participation rate in the Southern Mediterranean region is thus not surprising because it is clearly linked with EU economic objectives. Given the fact that the

Southern European Neighbourhood has among the lowest female participation rates in the world – 25.4% in the Middle East and 28.1% North Africa – (ILO, 2009) there is a vast untapped female human resource for economic development and poverty-reduction. It is indeed a crucial EU interest to be surrounded by good neighbours, where the economy is thriving and where people are highly educated so that the exchange of intellectual human potential becomes possible. In addition, poverty-reduction in the European Neighbourhood (by including women in education and employment) is an important tool for reducing the influx of low-skilled migrants towards Europe, which is one of Europe's most pressing unsolved problems. Or as put by Holden, EU aid policy towards the Mediterranean neighbours is driven by 'clear security interests' as well as by intensified cooperation in the economic and commercial sphere which demands that institutions and policies change 'in line with liberal 'rational economic models'' (Holden, 2009: 47, 52).

The reason why gender is not a priority in the employment and education strategy towards the Eastern European Neighbours is because female participation rates, as well as educational levels are similar to those within the EU⁶ (ILO, 2009). However, the educational and labour market equality in the Eastern European Neighbourhood is merely a formal equality and not a substantial one,⁷ as shown by the significant vertical and horizontal segregation and by the various labour market discriminations put forward by NGOs working on gender equality in the Eastern European Neighbourhood (WIDE, 2004; NEWW, 2007, 2008a,b; KARAT, 2009).

The second dimension of the Europeanness – the EU as a normative power – is linked to the EU ambition to become an important player on the international scene and the leadership role it wants to take in the MDGs, as exemplified by the Commission Communications from 2005 and 2008 where the EC stresses that it should step up its efforts (European Commission, 2005) and reconfirms 'the EU's key role on the international scene and its commitment to the MDGs' (European Commission, 2008b: 3). A strong external policy enables the EU to position itself further as a normative power in the global arena and strengthens the EU's internal legitimacy. Taking into account the legitimacy problems as exemplified for instance by the rejection of the European Constitutional Treaty by French and Dutch voters in 2005 and the problems surrounding the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2008–2009, it is not surprising that the EU is determined to succeed in this very visual and measurable ambition. Or as put by Diez in a more poststructuralist way, normative power Europe constructs the EU's identity 'against an image of others in the "outside world"', which 'has important implications for the way EU policies treat those outsiders, and for the degree to which its adherence to its own norms is scrutinised within the EU.' (Diez, 2005: 614) Focussing on the MDGs thus not only further forms the EU's cherished identity as a normative power, it also draws the attention away from problems in the internal kitchen – whether being it legitimacy problems or problems with gender inequality within the EU – and gives Europe a more social face without changing something from the inside.

I conclude that there is a strong connection between the internal EU agenda which is related to the EU as a market oriented normative power and the external EU agenda which focuses on gender equality in employment and on attaining the MDGs (See also Novitz, 2008 on this matter). These findings

imply that a continuous awareness and scrutiny towards internal EU motives and goals and the influence of these same motives and goals on external EU policies is in its place.

Endnotes

¹ CSPs and NIPs from Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Maldives, India, Mongolia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Syria.

² Countries were selected when their NIPs contained complete financial information for both generations to guarantee maximal specificity and comparability.

³ Organisations included are the Asian Rural Women's Coalition (ARWC), the Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the Committee for Asian Women (CAW), United for Foreign Domestic Workers' Rights (UFDWRs), CREA, the African Feminist Forum, the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde, Synergie Genre et Développement (ENDASYNFEV), Gender-Based Violence Prevention Network (GBVPN), the Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR), Comité Latinoamericano y del Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (CLADEM), Red Latinoamericana Mujer y Hábitat, Red de Mujeres Transformando la Economía (REMTE), Red Feminista Latinoamericana y el Caribe contra la violencia Domestica y Sexual, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres-AL, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, Agencia Latinoamericana de Información, Red Latinoamericana de Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, CIDEM, Campaña 28 de Setiembre, Comisión Internacional de Derechos Humanos para Gays y Lesbianas - Programa para América Latina, Cotidiano Mujer, Flora Tristán, Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe, Rede Feminista de Saúde, Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y los Derechos Reproductivos, REPEM-DAWN, Sos Corpo, the Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region (AWMR), the Collective for Research and Training on Development – Action (CRTD-A), the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the KARAT Coalition and the Network of East-West Women (NEWW). All selected civil society organisations or networks are directed by a board of women and men from the Asian, African, Latin American or European Neighbourhood region. Some of the organisations are (partly) funded by Western NGOs or governments.

⁴ With the exception of the issue of domestic or gender-based violence, where men are sometimes problematised, 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.

⁵ Including three interviews with gender experts from DG Development in July 2007, March 2008 and January 2010 and one interview with the gender expert from DG External Relations in January 2010.

⁶ The ILO estimates that the female labour force participation is 49.8% in developed economies and the European Union and 49.5% in Central and South-Eastern Europe (non-EU) and the CIS.

⁷ The female participation rate is relatively high in the Eastern-European Neighbourhood due to the Communist legacy. The participation of women in employment and political life became the basic postulate of communist regime. Yet, this equality was a formal equality, since Lenin and the communists became detached to real socialists theory and used women's liberation as tool to make women a cheap work force serving also for propaganda of the communist system and refusing to include women in real decision-making bodies and in the highest structures of the country. After the downfall of the Soviet Union no attempts were made change the situation since gender equality was assumed to exist from Soviet time. (NEWW, 2008a,b)

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