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Gender mainstreaming and EU climate change policy

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Abstract: This article uses feminist institutionalism to examine how gender mainstreaming has been sidelined in European Union (EU) climate change policy. It finds that, with a few exceptions largely emanating from the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, EU responses to climate change are gender-blind. This is despite the Treaty obligations to gender mainstream policy in all areas and despite the intersections between climate change and development policy, which is renowned for having taken gender equality and women's empowerment seriously and for instigating gender mainstreaming and specific actions as a means to achieve them. The persistent invisibility of gender can be attributed to various forms of institutional resistance.

Keywords: development policy; environmental policy; gender policy; neo-institutionalism; policy analysis; policy coordination; political science.

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Introduction

‘Global warming is not some male plot to do women down. The climate is the same for males and females, so far as I know. When it rains we all get wet’. (British Conservative MEP, Marina Yannakoudakis, member of the European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, BBC News 19 April 2012).

Contrary to this view, there is now a large amount of literature demonstrating that climate change is having a particularly detrimental impact in the poorest countries and, within them, on the poorest populations (Agrawala 2005; Agrawala and Crick 2009; Gupta and van der Grijp 2010; United Nations Development Programme 2008). Since women constitute the majority of the world’s poor, they are amongst the worst affected (Brody, Demetriades and Esplen 2008; Skinner 2011: 8). Although there is insistence in the literature that women cannot be perceived as helpless victims of climate change, there is also strong evidence to support the argument that their vulnerability to the effects of climate change is increased in relation to men’s by their relative disadvantage in terms of access to resources, land ownership, education and caring responsibilities (Dankelman 2010). Droughts mean that women and girls have to walk further in search of water, which can lead to girls missing school and to women having fewer opportunities to engage in paid work and civil society activities. Women constitute the majority of small holders in developing countries, producing food for the family. When crops fail, this has an immediate effect on nutrition. The increase in natural disasters and extreme weather caused by climate change has a gendered impact, with women often most at risk of dying (Ackerly and Attanasi 2009; United Nations Development Programme 2008). This can be because they are caring for the young and the old and less able to flee, because they have not learnt to swim or climb trees, or because cultural expectations restrict their mobility (United Nations Development Programme 2008: 57). Gendered responses to natural disasters in some cases lead to higher death rates for men and boys, who are pressured into taking more risks (Brody, Demetriades and Esplen 2008). There is also a growing literature on the risk of sexual violence in the aftermath of disasters,

including those which are climate change induced. Climate change accentuates inequalities, and gender is one of the most pervasive of these (Dankelman 2010: 14).

Climate change responses will also have a gendered impact if gender is not taken into account in their design and implementation. For example, measures intended to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and emissions from transport in the European Union (EU) have led to increased demand for biofuels, a demand that can only be met by importing them from developing countries. This leads to land use changes, which are often gendered, since the land used for biofuels production is most likely to be marginal land farmed by women for household subsistence rather than the prime agricultural land farmed by men for export (Concord 2011b).

Feminist climate change advocacy, spearheaded by groups such as GenderCC and the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice (Alston 2013), calls for a gendered approach to climate change which is based on an understanding of existing inequalities between women and men and the ways in which climate change exacerbates them (Brody, Demetriades and Esplen 2008: 2). A gendered analysis of climate change is not just about collecting gender-disaggregated data showing that the impact on men and women is different (MacGregor 2010). Neither does the solution lie simply in ensuring that equal numbers of men and women participate in climate change decision-making; it is about including the knowledge and voices of women and men in designing effective responses to climate change (Kronsell 2013). A gendered approach to climate change is not just about women – it is about gender relations and how to change them (MacGregor 2010).

The EU has been committed to gender mainstreaming since 1996, has declared gender equality a fundamental value of the Union, and has reiterated its goal of achieving gender equality by gender mainstreaming all internal and external policy (Council of the European Union 2011; European Commission 2010e). However, this article shows that EU climate change policy, with a few recent exceptions, has remained gender-blind. How can this be explained?

I use feminist institutionalism as a theoretical framework, asking what formal and informal rules, norms and practices mean that gender mainstreaming has been ignored, resisted or sidestepped in this area of EU policy. I answer these questions through an analysis of EU climate change policy documents, documents produced by civil society organisations and a series of semi-structured interviews. I find that the construction of climate change as a problem which can be solved with market, technological and security solutions excludes a people-centred approach, which could favour gender sensitive policy. This is aggravated by the crosscutting nature of climate change as a policy issue. Since most people affected by climate change live in developing countries, there has been a strong link between EU development policy and adaptation to the effects of climate change, and this forms an important focus of this article. I argue that the intersections between policy areas reveal the difficulties of gender mainstreaming EU policy; actors, institutions and discourses all struggle to keep a hold on gender once policy issues intersect.

The article is divided into five sections. The first provides some background information about the actors and processes involved in EU climate change policy-making and gender

mainstreaming. The second sets out the theoretical framework. This is followed by an outline of the methods used. The fourth section discusses the findings of the analysis of EU climate change policies. This is followed by the conclusions.

1. EU climate change policy and gender mainstreaming

EU climate change policy is situated against a backdrop of international negotiations and commitments, which have, until recently, ignored gender (Raczek, Blomstrom and Owren 2012: 194; Skinner 2011: 202; Women's Major Group 2012). It has also emerged from EU environmental policy, itself largely gender-blind. Environmental policy was initiated with a Directive on waste in 1967; and evolved with successive Treaty changes, including the integration of sustainable development into the Community's objectives in the Amsterdam Treaty, and the insertion in the Lisbon Treaty¹ of the objective of promoting measures on an international scale to address regional or global environmental problems, in particular the fight against climate change (Treaty of Lisbon: Article 191). DG Climate Action (DG CLIMA) was created in 2010 and is responsible for climate action proposals. Climate change cuts across other policy issue areas, however, and involves DG Transport, Energy, Environment, Development, Home (for climate migrants) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The European Parliament, Council of Ministers and member states all play important roles.

Like all EU policies, climate action is supposed to be gender mainstreamed, and DG CLIMA has a named gender focal person. Within the European Commission, DG Justice is responsible for the overall gender equality policy of the EU, currently set out in the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-15 (European Commission 2010e). It states that: 'Equality is one of five values on which the Union is founded. The Union is bound to strive for equality between women and men in all its activities' (European Commission 2010e: 3). DGs have set their own targets in relation to this, contained in the Staff Working Document (European Commission 2010a). DG Justice also coordinates an interservice network of officials, intended to encourage them to gender mainstream policies in their own areas. The European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-20, published as the annex to the Council Conclusions of the 7 March 2011, states that: 'The Council reaffirms its commitment to reinforce governance through gender mainstreaming by integrating the gender perspective into all policy areas including external EU actions' (Council of the European Union 2011: 5).

DG Development and Cooperation – Europe Aid (DG DEVCO) has been an enthusiastic and energetic proponent of gender mainstreaming and specific actions in favour of women, as detailed in a number of important documents (European Commission 2007a; European Commission 2010d). A major restatement of EU development policy, the 2005 European Consensus on Development (The Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission

¹ Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, OJ C 326/13-336, 26.10.2012.

2006), established gender equality as one of the four crosscutting issues of importance for development, the others being: democracy and human rights; environmental sustainability; and HIV/AIDS. The European Consensus on Development states that these crosscutting issues will be integrated in all areas of development programmes and political dialogue through a dual approach comprising mainstreaming and special measures. It does not address the relation between the four crosscutting issues, however, and, as will be demonstrated in this article, gender equality and environmental sustainability are mainstreamed into development policy in parallel processes, rather than as issues that are inherently interconnected. Climate change, which is now cited as a crosscutting issue to be mainstreamed into all areas of EU external action, seems to escape gender mainstreaming processes as it cuts across other policy areas.

2. Gender mainstreaming and feminist institutionalism

There is now an extensive literature on gender mainstreaming (Weiner and MacRae 2014, *this special issue*), much of which attempts to explain its failure to achieve its radical potential. Some scholars attribute this to the implementation in the EU of gender mainstreaming as a tickbox bureaucratic exercise which can be incorporated into existing institutions without interfering with business as usual. This has depoliticised gender mainstreaming by ignoring the objective of gender equality and the centrality of gender power relations (Stratigaki 2005; Zalewski 2010). At the same time, the idea of mainstreaming has been enthusiastically adopted by a wide range of organisations, and it has been expanded to apply to all kinds of inequalities and issues, from the mainstreaming of the rights of indigenous people and children, to the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability and climate change. This is an important recognition that none of these can be resolved in policy silos; that a more holistic approach is necessary in the case of inequalities and issues that cut across policy-making institutions. However, it can also dilute the resources available for gender mainstreaming and can make gender equality one of a long list of crosscutting issues, rather than an objective that runs through all of them.

Feminist institutionalism (Chappell and Waylen 2013; Krook and MacKay 2011; MacKay, Monro and Waylen 2009; Waylen 2014) can help offer explanations for the mismatch between, on the one hand, formal commitments to gender mainstreaming and gender equality in all policy areas and at all stages of policy-making and, on the other hand, persistently gender-blind policy in particular areas, in this case, climate change. Feminist institutionalism helps explain why gender mainstreaming rules have not been followed and reveals how institutions constrain actors and gender mainstreaming efforts. It enables us to examine the institutional constraints, opportunities and resistances that affect gender mainstreaming within climate change policy-making.

Feminist institutionalism is useful here for a number of reasons. Firstly, feminist institutionalism emphasises the importance of informal practices, norms and values, exposing the ways in which they can constrain or distort formal rules (Chappell and Waylen 2013; Waylen 2014). A focus on the informal rules of the game provides clues that can contribute

to explaining the gap between the rhetoric and reality of gender mainstreaming in specific areas of EU policy. Focusing on the relation between formal rules and informal practices can help us understand why gender mainstreaming – which is formally compulsory in all policy areas and all stages of policy-making – is ignored, overlooked, pushed down the agenda or out to the margins, while the main business of climate change policy-making continues unperturbed.

Secondly, feminist institutionalism brings from new institutionalism a concern with the role of actors within their institutional contexts. This provides a way of investigating institutional constraints on the introduction of a gendered approach to climate change policy, which takes actors into account, but does not see them as autonomous rational individuals free to choose whether and how to implement gender mainstreaming. Formed as a reaction against the overly actor-dependent behaviouralist explanations of the 1950s and 1960s, new institutionalism only gradually brought the actor back in. Now, however, most new institutionalists recognise that actors exert some agency within the institutional context (Lowndes and Roberts 2013: 44). Actors' behaviour is shaped by rules, norms and discourse. The constraints arise from the interaction between formally codified rules and more informally understood conventions and norms.

Feminist discursive institutionalism also enables us to focus on the construction and contestation of meaning in the interaction between gender mainstreaming and climate change policies (Lovenduski 2011; Schmidt 2012). Gender mainstreaming is interpreted and re-interpreted in day-to-day institutional interactions. Individual and collective actors engage in struggles to impose their understandings of gender mainstreaming, and this is affected by the broader context of institutional power imbalances that push issues such as gender equality to the centre or the margins of particular policy debates. It can reveal ways in which gender mainstreaming is imbued with new meanings in day-to-day policy-making practices. It can highlight the ways in which issues are constructed as certain types of problem requiring certain types of solution. This can act as a constraint on those pushing other meanings. Drawing on sociological institutionalism, feminist institutionalism suggests that actors are constrained by cultural conventions, norms and cognitive frames of reference which privilege a certain way of thinking about a policy problem and ensure that other perspectives remain submerged from view (Lowndes and Roberts 2013: 30).

New institutionalism has contributed much to our understanding of the way in which institutions resist change, whether this is explained in terms of historical institutionalism's 'path dependency' or sociological institutionalism's 'logic of appropriateness' (Lowndes and Roberts 2013; MacKay, Monro and Waylen 2009: 255). Institutional resistance is embedded in day-to-day practices and in policy discourse. A formal commitment to gender mainstreaming can block access to gender equality demands. The use of the term gender mainstreaming and repetition of commitments to gender equality can make it difficult for gender equality advocates to capture an audience for their claims. Gender mainstreaming discourse can function as a way of closing down debate, suggesting the problem has already been addressed. Feminist gender equality advocates attempt to insert a gender equality discourse, but their agency is constrained by institutional structures which limit the extent to which they can bring about change (Mackay 2011: 190). I argue that these limits are even

more constraining when the issue they are attempting to influence cuts across policy-making institutions. This brings them up against the effects of unequal power relations between institutional actors and between different policy agendas.

3. Methods

The analysis of the relationship between gender mainstreaming and EU climate change policy comprised three inter-related aspects. First, I analysed policy and civil society documents to see whether and how gender was included in the construction of the problem of climate change and the proposed solutions to it. The documents selected for analysis were the key EU climate change documents from 2003-13 and all relevant civil society organisation documents from the same time period. A list of these documents appears in Appendix 1. The following questions were applied to each document:

- Are there references to gender, gender equality, gender mainstreaming, women and men? Where there are no references to gender, the documents are defined as gender-blind.
- If so, where in the document do these references appear? Throughout the document or in specific questions? In the main text, footnotes or annexes?
- How is the problem of climate change and proposed solutions to it constructed? Is it constructed primarily as about people, technology and/or security? Are any of these constructions explicitly gendered?
- Who participates in this framing and who is excluded?
- Which individual and collective actors are attempting to insert gendered meanings and which are resisting them?

Secondly, I focused on institutional differences within EU climate change policy-making, using the analysis of policy and civil society documents, combined with a series of fourteen semi-structured interviews in order to explore the institutional constraints and opportunities for gender mainstreaming. The interviews were conducted in May 2011 and October-December 2012 with Commission officials, European Parliament policy advisers and assistants, MEPs and representatives of civil society organisations. These interviews focused on the institutional constraints on, and opportunities for, inserting gender equality and gender mainstreaming into climate change policy.

Thirdly, using all of the document analysis and interview material, I focused on the structures and processes which are designed to mainstream gender in climate change and development policy and asked what happens to gender when explicit efforts are made to ensure that policies in these two areas are coherent, for example, through policy coherence for development and through climate change mainstreaming.

4. Discussion of findings

The findings have been organised into three categories: those obtained from the gender analysis of the policy documents; those which focus on unpicking the institutional differences and the institutional power relations in attempts to gender, or to resist the gendering of, climate change policy; and those which expose the influence of the crosscutting nature of both climate change and gender mainstreaming. Taken together, these three categories of findings highlight the institutional constraints on gender mainstreaming efforts in this area of EU policy-making.

4.1. Gender in climate change policy documents

Some documents do not contain a single reference to gender, gender equality or women. These include:

- Directives on the greenhouse gas emission trading scheme (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2009b); on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2009a); and on energy efficiency (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2012);
- Commission Communications on greenhouse gas emission reductions (European Commission 2010c); on moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050 (European Commission 2011a); and on renewable energy (European Commission 2012b);
- Impact Assessments accompanying these proposals (European Commission; European Commission 2011c; European Commission 2012a).

The extent of the absence of gender from DG CLIMA's concerns can be demonstrated by an analysis of the European Commission DG Climate Action 2011 Annual Activity Report (European Commission 2011b) and the Green Paper: A 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policies (European Commission 2013), neither of which contains a single reference to gender, gender equality or women. This is despite repeated commitments to gender mainstreaming, despite the Gender Equality Strategy and its Staff Working Paper, and despite the guidelines on Impact Assessments (IAs) (European Commission 2009). Impact Assessments (IAs) are required for important and new policy proposals. They identify likely consequences of policy initiatives or legislative proposals and are published as annexes to them. As stipulated in the Commission's Impact Assessment Guidelines, IAs must be produced by the Commission whenever it submits a proposal of particular significance or in a new area. They must consider the impact of each proposed policy option on 'gender equality, equal treatment and opportunities, non-discrimination'. Commission guidelines also stipulate that every IA should establish whether proposed policy options have an impact on developing countries: 'initiatives that may affect developing countries should be analyzed for their coherence with the objectives of the EU development policy. This includes an analysis of

consequences (or spill-overs) in the longer run in areas such as economic, environmental, social or security policy' (European Commission 2009). However, a study by the Danish NGO, Concord, found that few of the IAs produced so far have included detailed consideration of the impact on developing countries (Concord Denmark 2012). I conducted a search for the term 'gender' in the IAs produced so far in areas related to external relations, and this revealed its persistent absence.

The gender-blind documents, produced mainly by the Commission and the Council, construct climate change as a problem of energy security, competitiveness or security threats (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2012; High Representative and European Commission 2008). They rest on a set of underlying values concerning the EU's place in the world and its role as a global actor. The solutions which are offered as the appropriate and logical responses to these problems focus on market, technological and security measures. For example, proposals for a move towards a competitive low carbon economy are justified on the basis that the EU must not lose competitive advantage to China, India and Korea, and must therefore invest in technological innovations (European Commission 2011a). It is also argued that it is in Europe's self-interest to address the security implications of climate change, since climate change is a threat multiplier, which exacerbates existing tensions and instability, especially in fragile and conflict-prone states and regions (High Representative and European Commission 2008).

The policy documents analysed rarely construct climate change as something which concerns *people* and which is best addressed with the participation of these people. This is in keeping with the findings of the Bridge Report on international climate change policy, according to which 'responses to [climate change] have so far been overly focused on scientific and economic solutions, rather than on the significant human and gender dimensions' (Skinner 2011: 1). This construction of the problem of climate change is in contrast to NGO attempts to insert a people-centred approach, an approach which opens up opportunities for exposing the gendered nature of the issue and the necessity of gender-sensitive responses to it. A people-centred approach also reveals initiatives that are already being taken at the local level by NGOs, communities and individuals and which, in some cases, are leading to transformations in gender and social inequalities (Skinner 2011: 1).

A rare example of an EU climate change policy document which does refer to a people-centred approach is the Council Conclusions on Climate Change and Development (Council of the European Union 2009). In Paragraph 8: 'the Council underlines the human dimension of climate change, including a gender perspective, and that poor people are most at risk, and that their resilience to climate change needs to be strengthened', although this constructs the subjects of this human dimension as poor (gendered) people at risk and in need of help. The document is also unusual in its reference to gender equality and women's empowerment at the end of Paragraph 6 on support for programmes that contribute to a low carbon and climate resilient development path and adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change: 'In providing such support special attention should be paid to gender equality and women's empowerment'.

The reason for this anomaly is that these Council Conclusions are based on the Joint Paper on climate change and development produced by the Swedish Presidency and the Commission in 2009 (Swedish Presidency/Commission Services 2009). Sweden has pushed the gender equality agenda during its presidencies and in Council decision-making and, in this case, worked in partnership with DG Development Cooperation, which has a reputation for being an enthusiastic proponent of gender equality and women's empowerment and of gender mainstreaming, along with specific actions, as the means to achieve it (Debusscher 2014, *this special issue*). These institutional relations and differences are discussed below.

4.2. Institutional differences

The Council's general indifference to the gender aspects of climate change is pierced every now and then, and this usually coincides with a Danish or Swedish presidency. This demonstrates the continued importance of the rotating presidency of the Council for placing issues on the agenda and pushing for gender equality. The Danish presidency in the first half of 2012 commissioned a report on Gender and Climate Change from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (European Institute for Gender Equality 2012), which fed into the Council Conclusions Gender Equality and the Environment: Enhanced Decision-Making, Qualifications and Competitiveness in the Field of Climate Change Mitigation Policy in the EU (Council of the European Union 2012). These Conclusions are important in that they recognise that: 'Women play a vital role in sustainable development, and that gender as well as social and employment aspects need to be integrated into efforts to combat climate change in order to improve them' (Paragraph 1). They state that: 'Women and men affect the climate differently: their consumption patterns are different and they have different CO₂ footprints, and they are not represented equally in decision-making in this field [...] Studies show that women and men also have different perceptions and attitudes towards climate change: women are in general more concerned about this issue and more motivated to act. Women's potential as agents of change needs to be recognised'.

The Conclusions stress that (Paragraph 9): 'There is an urgent need to improve gender equality in decision-making in the field of climate change mitigation, especially the transport and energy sectors, and to increase the number of women with relevant qualifications in scientific and technological fields as well as the number of women participating in relevant scientific bodies at the highest level'. They claim that gender-based prejudices and stereotypes exclude women from areas of the green economy such as transport and energy, causing human resources to be wasted, and preventing the EU from achieving its full competitive potential. The Council calls on the member states and the Commission to: take active and specific measures aimed at achieving a balanced representation of women and men in decision-making in the field of climate change mitigation at all levels, including the EU level; support women in science and technology at national and European level; eliminate gender stereotypes and promote gender equality at all levels of education and training, as well as in working life; and integrate the principle of gender mainstreaming into all relevant legislation, policy measures and instruments related to climate change mitigation. It calls on

the Commission to provide guidance for gender mainstreaming of policy areas; to consider focusing on the issue of women and climate change in one of the future reports; and to take action, with the participation of civil society, to raise awareness of the gender dimension of climate change policy.

The European Parliament has also been very active in this area since 2011, producing a number of resolutions which address climate change from a gender perspective. These include the Resolution of 29 September 2011 on developing a common EU position ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (European Parliament 2011); the Resolution of 20 April 2012 on Women and Climate Change (European Parliament 2012); and the Resolution of 11 September 2012 on the Role of Women in the Green Economy (European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality 2012). These documents take an explicitly people-centred approach to sustainable development and climate change, which the European Parliament contrasts explicitly with the approach taken by the European Commission. Contestation over the meaning of the 'green economy' is rife: NGOs and the European Parliament insist that it encompasses the whole of the functioning of the economy, within the limits of sustainability and climate protection and that more focus should be given to human, environmental and natural capital (Paragraph 8), whereas a much narrower definition emanates from the Commission, which focuses on jobs and competition in green technologies and renewable energy, and which lacks a gender perspective.

The European Parliament Committee for Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), now chaired by the Swedish male MEP Mikael Gustafsson, has played a crucial and very active role, and its close relations with civil society organisations, in particular the European Women's Lobby (EWL), have influenced its outputs. The documents are impressive, but the question remains whether they will have any serious impact, given the institutional power relations within the EU, which mean that FEMM has less impact internally than many of the other European Parliament committees, and that the European Parliament has less influence in the area of external policy than the Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The European Parliament Resolution of 20 April 2012 on Women and Climate Change (European Parliament 2012) was based on a report for the European Parliament's FEMM Committee by French Green MEP, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Kiil-Nielsen 2011) and is concerned explicitly with exposing and addressing the links between climate change and gender. Despite the title, 'Women and Climate Change', this is a strong gender analysis of climate change as a policy issue. It states that women contribute less to climate change than men, since they consume more sustainably, but that, as the majority of the world's poor, they have fewer resources than men to adapt to its effects. It predicts that climate change will amplify inequalities and worsen gender relations, and climate change policies will also have a negative impact on gender balance and women's rights if they do not take gender discrimination into account from the very start. The report highlights women's vulnerability to the impact of climate change, specifying that 'sources of discrimination and vulnerability other than gender (such as poverty, geography, traditional and institutional discrimination, race, etc.) all combine to obstruct access to resources and to means to cope with dramatic

changes such as climate change’(Kiil-Nielsen 2011: 2). It states that: ‘In some regions, almost 70 % of all employed women work in agriculture and produce up to 90 % of some crops, yet they are virtually absent from budget deliberations and climate change activities’(Kiil-Nielsen 2011: 2).

The report also stresses women’s agency and the importance of ensuring that they are involved in all types of climate change decision-making, and in all measures concerning both mitigation and adaptation. The Resolution calls on the Commission and the Council to mainstream and integrate gender in every step of climate policies, from conception to financing, implementation and evaluation; calls on the Commission and the member states to include – at all levels of decision-making – gender equality and gender justice objectives in policies, action plans and other measures relating to sustainable development, disaster risk and climate change, by carrying out systematic gender analyses, establishing gender-sensitive indicators and benchmarks and developing practical tools; underlines that the climate change negotiation process must take into account the principles of gender equality at all stages, from research and analysis to design and implementation and the development of mitigation and adaptation strategies.

In her explanatory statement, the Rapporteur, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen argues that ‘if gender is not incorporated into political discussions from the outset, the resulting projects and proposals are in danger of being biased by default, through use of an implicitly white, able-bodied, heterosexual male in permanent employment as their reference model’. She uses a dual justification for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all climate related policy: not only is it a question of justice, but it will make our actions more effective: ‘at the moment we are failing to tap a vast reservoir of ideas, actions and leverage mechanisms by unconsciously excluding half the world’s citizens from our climate policies’. This way of justifying claims for gender equality action – both as a goal in itself, but also because it will reap much larger benefits in terms of efficiency and effectiveness – is common in EU development policy (Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission 2006; European Commission 2007a; European Commission 2007b).

With the few exceptions discussed above, the absence of gender considerations from many climate change policy documents shows that they emanate from policy-making processes apparently untouched by the EU’s frequently reiterated commitment to gender mainstreaming policy in all areas. Commission officials interviewed referred frequently to other people who are doing gender mainstreaming. Those most frequently referenced were Viviane Reding (Commissioner responsible for justice, fundamental rights and citizenship), Catherine Ashton (high representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security policy) and Connie Hedegaard (Commissioner for Climate Action), along with DG Justice, UN Women and the Mary Robinson Foundation. There was awareness that there is a connection between climate change and gender, but little evidence of depth of understanding of the relation, and no evidence of active attempts to integrate gender into the work of the Unit. Although the officials selected for interview were the named contacts for gender equality queries and were the DGs’ representatives in the interservice gender mainstreaming group, they tended to be new, junior appointments, who had received little, if any, gender equality training, and whose

role was mainly focused on other issues, with just a fraction of their time allocated to gender. This confirms findings by Rosalind Cavaghan (2012) and Lut Mergaert and Emanuela Lombardo (Mergaert and Lombardo 2014, *this special issue*) in their studies of DG Research. In contrast, some officials interviewed, mainly from the EEAS and DG DEVCO, as well as members of the European Parliament's secretariats for the FEMM and DEVE committees, were very committed to gender equality and very well informed, although some have been slow to pick up on the gender aspects of climate change and development. One official said: 'On climate change, we don't do much. We should be mainstreaming in principle, but it's a bit new. [...] We've been trying to keep a close eye on it, but the problem is the lack of resources, human in particular'.² They all saw the problem as one of a lack of resources to implement gender equality measures properly. More human resources and more training were seen as the solution. For example: 'There used to be six of us working on gender mainstreaming; now we are working on gender, child rights, minority rights and indigenous people. We're understaffed [...] We try to focus on those fields which are the most difficult to mainstream, where there is a lack of awareness: energy, transport, infrastructure, justice'.³ Two interviewees cited 'gender mainstreaming' itself as an obstacle to gender equality, demonstrating the extent to which it has drifted from its initial meaning and purpose to become a bureaucratic box-ticking exercise.

This confirms the findings of the EWL in its Beijing+15 Report (European Women's Lobby 2010: 128), according to which gender mainstreaming 'remains predominantly a practice of integrating women into existing institutions as opposed to challenging and transforming the institutions themselves so that they fully reflect the particular needs and situations of women' and a 'tick box approach to pursuing gender equality which excuses inequality between women and men if there is evidence of some mainstreaming tool having been employed'. It finds that the implementation of gender mainstreaming is heavily reliant on committed individuals and is lost when they leave. In the absence of visible well-resourced institutions, with the authority to drive an effective gender mainstreaming strategy, it is individuals who are playing the critical role. The EWL calls for the institutionalisation and coordination of gender mainstreaming responsibilities, with sufficient resources to meet its gender equality commitments.

4.2.1. *Policy intersections*

There has been a strong thread linking climate change and development as policy issues throughout the whole period 2003-13. This section asks what happens to gender when these policy areas intersect. In contrast to climate change policy, which has been largely gender-blind, EU development policy is renowned for being amongst the first to embrace gender equality and gender mainstreaming along with specific actions as the means to achieve it. DG-DEVCO has produced impeccably gender mainstreamed documents, such as the Communication Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation

² Interview 9, Commission official, Brussels 14 November 2012.

³ Interview 7, Commission official, Brussels 13 November 2012.

(European Commission 2007a) and the Gender Action Plan (European Commission 2010d), although scholars have shown that there is still a large gap between rhetoric and reality (Debusscher 2011, 2014 *this special issue*). Recent research has shown that when development policy intersects with other related policy areas through the Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) framework, gender slips off the agenda (Allwood 2013). This section asks whether this is also the case for climate change and development intersections.

There are two ways in which EU climate change policy intersects with development policy. First, the main focus of EU climate change policy, which is reducing greenhouse gas emissions by the EU and other industrialised countries, can have an impact on developing countries, as can be seen with the effects of the Emissions Trading Scheme. Secondly, because the impact of climate change is being felt mainly in developing countries, EU development policy has engaged with how to support these countries in devising and implementing adaptation strategies. Adaptation to the effects of climate change in developing countries has been driven by a number of agendas, including fear of insecurity caused by civil unrest in affected areas and fear of climate induced migration. Not all of these agendas are gender sensitive.

As early as 2003, a Commission Communication Climate Change in the Context of Development Cooperation (European Commission 2003: 3) stated that: ‘Climate change is not only an environmental problem. It is also clearly a development problem, since its adverse effects will disproportionately affect poorer countries’. The Communication advocates mainstreaming climate change into development cooperation, so that responses to climate change are ‘conceived within and in coherence with existing development frameworks, rather than in isolation from them’ (European Commission 2003: 3). This fits with the PCD agenda, which emerged gradually during the 1990s (Carbone 2009) and was given prominence in the 2005 Consensus for Development (Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission 2006). PCD aims to ensure that EU policies in all areas do not undermine development objectives. Since 2011, climate change has been one of the five priorities for PCD. In other words, climate change policies are supposed to take into account development objectives at all stages, including policy formulation. The IAs are supposed to identify the potential impact of policy proposals on development objectives and developing countries.

One of the problems with PCD has been the relative weakness of the development policy actors and of the development policy agenda. Scholars have argued that policy coherence in fact appears inverted, in that development policies are used to serve the agendas of other EU policies, for example the external aspects of migration policy (Carrera 2011). The documents analysed here suggest that development policy can end up serving the interests of climate action policy, itself strongly reflecting the interests of trade, energy and transport.

Moreover, where climate change and gender are brought together within a PCD framework, gender disappears. For example, the section on climate change, energy and biofuels of the Commission Staff Working Paper Policy Coherence for Development Climate Change/Energy/Biofuels, Migration and Research (European Commission 2008), is

completely gender-blind. This demonstrates the problem of gender mainstreaming policies which cut across the segmented policy-making institutions. Gender mainstreaming processes have been designed to deal with policy issues separately, and, although gender mainstreaming networks (European Parliament) and inter-service groups (Commission) exist, these focus more on encouraging members to take gender mainstreaming issues back to their single policy area, rather than on examining how crosscutting issues, such as PCD, might be gender mainstreamed and by whom. Officials responsible for PCD claim that it is hard enough to get policymakers to integrate development objectives into their main policy concerns, without asking them to mainstream gender as well. The Commission's Work Programme for Policy Coherence for Development 2010-13 (European Commission 2010b) makes no reference to gender in the section on climate change.

The 2003 Commission Communication reiterates 'the principle that development strategies and processes should be country owned and driven, and that the partner countries themselves are responsible for identifying and responding to environmental issues' (European Commission 2003: 3). However, it then makes a strong case for EU control of the climate change agenda, on the grounds that climate change concerns, and environmental concerns in general, often have low priority in developing countries. What this means is that local voices, local concerns and local knowledge may be excluded from the problem-definition and agenda-setting stages, and this has gender implications. For example, as food producers, and water and fuel collectors, women hold a great deal of knowledge that can increase local resilience to climate change, and can inform local and context-specific adaptation strategies (Skinner 2011: 8). This is not recognised in Commission documents addressing climate change and development intersections.

Gender mainstreaming works best in discrete policy-making arenas. DG DEVCO, for example, has been able to gender mainstream its policy documents through a combination of detailed written guidelines, staff training and the actions of committed and informed individuals. It has not been able to gender mainstream policies related to development through PCD or, indeed, PCD itself. IAs have the potential to investigate the connections between gender and areas of policy intersection, such as climate and development, and to anticipate gendered outcomes, but staff guidelines separate the consideration of gendered impact from the consideration of impact on developing countries, and there is no evidence of a mechanism for assessing the gendered impact of policies which intersect.

4.3. Summary

The analysis of EU climate change policy documents reveals, firstly, that references to gender, gender equality or women were almost entirely absent prior to 2012, and often absent after that date. The analysis of the gender-blind documents, which for the most part originate in the Commission, reveals that they construct climate change as a market/technology/security issue. The problem of climate change and proposed responses to it are constructed in such a way that gender is irrelevant: climate change is to do with markets, technology and security; it is not to do with people. When the dominant construction

of the problem is one of markets or technological fixes, gender is absent. Only when the focus is on people does gender stand a chance. Secondly, there is a noticeable difference in the inclusion/exclusion of a gender perspective in policy documents produced by the Commission and the European Parliament, with the former often ignoring gender, and the latter producing detailed gender analyses of climate-related issues, originating in its committee for women's rights and gender equality. The European Parliament takes a more gender equality/people-centred perspective, as do gender and climate change advocacy groups, who emphasise power, gender relations and change. The European Institute for Gender Equality's report on Gender and Climate Change focuses on the numerical representation of women, adopting a gender discourse which reduces gender equality to the equal presence of women and men, thus depoliticising the issue. Council documents are largely gender-blind, with the exception of those produced during the presidency of Denmark or Sweden. Thirdly, the EU's highly sectoral policy-making structures make it difficult to gender mainstream crosscutting issues such as climate change. When policy issues intersect, gender disappears. Where climate change and development intersect, there is a complex set of effects. A generally gender-sensitive development policy can have gender squeezed out by the arrival of another crosscutting issue, in this case, climate change. Gender mainstreaming structures and processes do not seem able to gender mainstream complex crosscutting policy issues, but instead seem limited to addressing gender issues within discrete policy issue areas. They also seem to engage once the policy-making process is already relatively well advanced and, importantly, once the problem has been defined. This is despite frequent sweeping rhetorical declarations of commitment to gender mainstreaming at all stages and in all areas of EU internal and external policy. Interviews with Commission officials, EP policy advisors and NGO representatives reveal the extent to which policy intersections exclude gender.

Conclusion

Despite the gender mainstreaming provisions in the Lisbon Treaty, the Gender Equality Pact and the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men, despite the commitments reaffirmed in Council Conclusions and Commission Staff Working Papers, despite the series of Resolutions adopted by the European Parliament, and despite the advocacy of the European Women's Lobby, and climate change and development NGOs, many EU climate change policy documents continue to ignore gender completely. There is not necessarily active or malicious resistance, but a systematic failure to recognise the relevance, importance and Treaty-based obligations to gender mainstream policy in this area, as in all areas. In some of the relevant DGs, including Climate Action, the Commission officials responsible for responding to queries about gender and for attending interservice gender mainstreaming meetings do not perceive their role as being at all active. They are junior, temporary and uncommitted to gender. They are not trained and not accountable for their gender mainstreaming actions or inactions.

What stands out is the different ability of the various institutional and individual actors involved to define terms and to determine the agenda. Powerful institutional actors –

particular DGs and Council configurations – are able to ignore the gender agenda and gender mainstreaming obligations. Underlying norms and values which are central to the very being of the EU – competitiveness and the free market – take precedence, and gender appears to be a luxury which, at best, is added onto already formulated policies. Gender is sidelined by dominant discourses of markets, technologies and security. Climate change is constructed as a problem of competitiveness and protection from external threats, whether these are caused by energy insecurity, civil unrest in affected countries or migration. Institutions for inserting gender, in particular gender mainstreaming strategies, are given rhetorical support but few material or political resources. Gender mainstreaming often takes place downstream in the policy process instead of at the outset, and many of the measures, such as the requirement that gender be taken into account in all IAs, are simply ignored.

The Gender Equality Pact, the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men and the Communication on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation are all reaffirmations of a commitment to a set of gender equality norms and practices which do not appear to be having an impact in practice. This could be because of the gap between rhetoric and reality, because of the difference between the transformative version of gender mainstreaming and the integrationist version or because, despite everything, there are policy sectors where gender is simply ignored, for example, the CAP (Prügl 2012), trade (Garcia and Masselot *forthcoming*; True 2009) and climate change.

The article shows that questions of gender are not considered in EU climate change policy. Moreover, it shows that in many policy documents, neither women nor men are taken into consideration. One of the reasons for the exclusion of gender is that climate change is rarely constructed within EU policy-making as a problem which concerns people, whether men or women. Instead, it is constructed as a problem of technology or of security. When Conservative MEP Marina Yannakoudakis says 'when it rains, we all get wet', this hides the fact that the majority of those who die as a result of floods are women. The male gender bias is constructed in and perpetuated by discourse which is apparently gender neutral and which has successfully incorporated and neutralised the idea of mainstreaming.

One of the reasons why gender mainstreaming has failed to produce gender-sensitive climate change policy is because of the hijacking and dilution of the term 'mainstreaming'. Once a radical proposal for far-reaching change in policy-making, infusing all stages of the process with a gender perspective, gender mainstreaming has been transformed into one of a growing list of crosscutting issues that policy-makers must take into account. When the list could be described as diversity mainstreaming, feminists were concerned about the dispersal of resources, but could still see the logic. Now, the list of issues to be mainstreamed is long, heterogeneous, and interconnected. So climate change has to be mainstreamed into development, development has to be mainstreamed into all EU policy, and gender is a fundamental crosscutting issue.

When climate change policy intersects with development policy, either through climate change mainstreaming, or the other way round, through policy coherence for development, gender seems to be sidelined. In contrast to development policy, however, which is gender mainstreamed until it intersects with other policy areas through PCD, climate change is not

gender mainstreamed at all. It is already hard to demand change around the intersection of climate change and development policy, as the Brussels-based NGO Concord does (Concord 2011a; Concord 2011b), but then to gender mainstream this demand is not only complex, but risks dismissal of the whole argument by policy-makers who are mainly concerned with just one area of policy. Unlike the other papers in this special issue where gender was initially considered but later filtered out, in the case of climate change discussed here, gender has been invisible from the outset.

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