



Horizontal policy coordination and gender mainstreaming: The case of the European Union's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility



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SYNOPSIS

This article asks how we can better understand the limitations of gender mainstreaming in the context of horizontal policy co-ordination. The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), which is the framework for mainstreaming migration into all of the EU's external activities, is taken as a case study to investigate what happens when gender mainstreaming intersects with another form of horizontal policy coordination. It finds that the structures and processes which have been set up in order to gender mainstream EU policy do not work well in the case of horizontal policy coordination. This is shown by the absence of gender mainstreaming in policy documents, and from interviews with policy makers and representatives from civil society organisations. This is a problem for gender equality, especially as horizontal policy coordination is on the increase.

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Introduction

Fifteen years after the European Union (EU) adopted gender mainstreaming as a way of ensuring that the goal of gender equality would be integrated into all areas of the EU's activities and at all stages of the policymaking process, the European Commission produced a Communication setting out the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), which contained just one reference to gender and one to women (European Commission, 2011d). The first concerns trafficking in human beings and the second, which appears in the Annex, refers to the need to focus 'on protecting vulnerable migrants (unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, stranded migrants, etc.) and the specific needs of women.' The rest of the document is gender blind, despite the availability of evidence not only from academics (Askola, 2007, 2010; Kofman, 2003; Kofman, Phizacklea, Raghuram, & Sales, 2000; Kofman, Raghuram, & Merfield, 2004; Lutz, 2010), but also from international organisations, such as the United Nations (Zlotnik, 2003), the International Labour Organisation (International Labour Organisation,

2008) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2008), that migration is highly gendered and requires gender-sensitive policy approaches.

Drawing attention to the limitations of gender mainstreaming is not new. Much of the extensive literature on gender mainstreaming focuses on the gap between rhetorical commitment and failure to achieve gender equality (Abels & Mushaben, 2012; Beveridge, Nott, & Stephen, 2000; Kantola, 2010; Meier & Celis, 2011; Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000, 2010; Stratigaki, 2005; Walby, 2005; Woodward, 2008). Interest has expanded from employment and social policy (Hoskyns, 1996; Stratigaki, 2005) to less obviously gendered policy areas, such as trade (True, 2009) and agriculture (Prügl, 2012). However, few studies have focussed on gender mainstreaming in relation to policies that cut across the EU's highly sectoral policymaking structures. The central theoretical challenge is how to extend our understanding of the limitations of gender mainstreaming to cases of horizontal policy coordination. Beyond this, we can open up discussions about the broader implications of the interaction between different processes of

horizontal policy coordination, including, but not limited to, gender mainstreaming. This is particularly salient as the mainstreaming of issues such as human rights, climate change, migration, good governance, and sustainability meet one another in increasingly complex webs of horizontal policy coordination. This article therefore combines an analysis of gender mainstreaming in an area not normally considered gendered with a focus on horizontal policy coordination. It contributes to feminist policy studies which are trying to fill the gaps and expand their reach to policy areas further away from the core EU gender equality areas, and seeks to answer questions about what happens to gender, gender equality and gender mainstreaming, when policy areas intersect and when crosscutting issues co-exist.

The GAMM was selected as a 'most likely' case, firstly, because it is a new area of policymaking, introduced long after the EU had committed itself to gender equality and to gender mainstreaming and specific actions as the means to achieve it. Secondly, the GAMM is closely related to development policy, which is widely recognised by practitioners and scholars as being one of the areas of EU policy making in which gender mainstreaming has been taken the most seriously. The influence of gender and development advocacy, the presence of committed individuals, the establishment of institutional structures, staff training and the publication of staff guidelines have all contributed to creating a culture in which awareness of gender equality is high (Allwood, 2013; Kantola, 2010). The effectiveness of its implementation and its impact on the ground have been more harshly criticised (Debusscher, 2011, 2013), and this is important, but in comparison with other areas of external policymaking, development stands out.

I argue that the limitations of gender mainstreaming in the context of horizontal policy coordination are both institutional and conceptual. They are institutional in that the structures and processes for mainstreaming gender and migration are parallel, rather than crosscutting or integrated. They are conceptual in that each crosscutting issue (including migration and gender, but also human rights, indigenous peoples' rights, children's rights, and sustainability) is seen as discrete, rather than intertwined with each of the others and inherently gendered.

The article is organised in the following way. First, I will provide the theoretical framework in which the analysis is situated and set out the methods used to conduct the research. I will then outline the key aspects of the GAMM, before presenting the analysis and the conclusions.

Horizontal policy coordination

Horizontal policy co-ordination is used here as the generic term encompassing all attempts to coordinate policy across sectors, including those which aim to mainstream or integrate crosscutting issues throughout all EU policy making. Attempts to integrate environmental concerns into all EU policy have been referred to as Environmental Policy Integration; similar attempts to integrate gender have been referred to as Gender Mainstreaming; and attempts to integrate development objectives have been referred to as Policy Coherence for Development. All are based, as a minimum, on the idea that policies in one area (for example, development) should not be undermined by policies in another (for example, trade or agriculture). Moving beyond this, they suggest that the issue in question

(environmental protection, gender, development) cannot be addressed in isolation, but must be an integral part of policy design, formulation and implementation in a wide range of policy sectors.

Mainstreaming cannot be seen as something which takes place at the implementation stage of the policy process, and it is important to avoid conflating discussions of the implementation of mainstreaming, which is internal to EU policy processes, and the implementation stage of policymaking. Indeed, Hill (1997: 133) cautions against perceiving implementation as a separate stage, arguing that this suggests that policy is a completed entity, which simply needs to be implemented correctly. He writes, 'It is dangerous to regard it as self-evident that implementers are working with a recognisable entity that may be called a policy [...]. Policy is [...] an extremely slippery concept. It may really only emerge through an elaborate process that is likely to include those stages which are conventionally described as implementation.' In the case of gender mainstreaming, for example, this would miss one of the fundamental novelties of the approach, which was that gender would be integrated from the planning stage, rather than trying to take a fully formed gender-blind policy and somehow gender mainstream it during its implementation.

Much of the literature on environmental policy integration, gender mainstreaming, policy coherence for development and, more recently, climate change mainstreaming, has focused on institutional obstacles that these processes have encountered. Studies refer to the EU's 'fragmented legal-institutional structures' (Portela & Orbie, 2014); the highly compartmentalised character of EU policy fields and the disjointed decision making machinery (Elgestrom & Pilegaard, 2009); and the EU's policy framework, which 'can hardly be said to display a clear pattern or coherence' (Carbone, 2009). Kok and de Coninck (2007), in their study of climate change mainstreaming, state that organisational structures were not designed for cooperation, coordination and joint decision making on different levels. There are power imbalances between different Commission Directorates General (DGs); between different configurations of the Council of Ministers; and between the Council, the European Parliament, and the Commission. The European Parliament, and in particular its various Committees on the environment, development, and gender equality, have been increasingly active in advocating the mainstreaming of these issues throughout all European Parliament decision-making, but the European Parliament can be squeezed out of forms of decision making dominated by intergovernmentalism, and this applies to most of the Union's external activities. Power imbalances and inter-institutional rivalries mean that issues such as development and environmental protection can struggle to impinge on policies shored up by powerful economic interests such as trade and agriculture. Institutional resistance, often based on economic interests, is identified as the main obstacle by Gupta and van der Grijp (2010) in their study of climate change mainstreaming. They argue that climate change mainstreaming threatens the status quo and unsettles the vested interests of industry and the energy lobby. Resistance is therefore strong. Any policy competition or struggle for scarce resources will expose these imbalances, and rhetorical commitment to mainstreaming may lack underlying substance, particularly in times of economic crisis. Endemic in the literature is the finding that attention to procedure does not guarantee substance (Carbone,

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