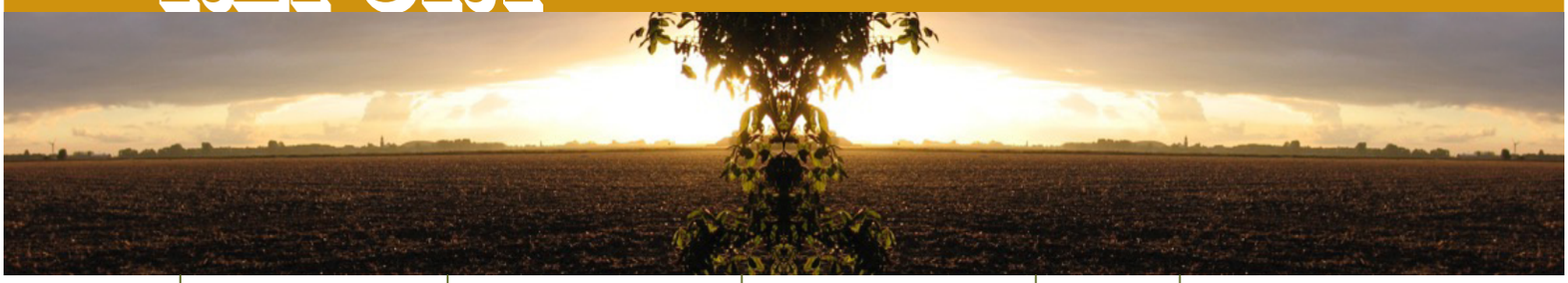
REPORT



1980 1990 2000 2010 2015

GENDER, WOMEN & DEVELOPMENT 1980-2015

SEMINAR 25 SEPTEMBER AT THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES, THE HAGUE

LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE

DAMES FAN ‘E RIEGE

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PROGRAM

14.00
Welcome by **Wendy Harcourt/Loes Keysers** (ISS)
and facilitator **Leontine Bijleveld** (De dames fan 'e Riege)

14.10
Keynote lecture by **Professor Gertrude Fester**
(Feminist Forum South Africa, research coordinator Rwandan Association of University Women, ISS alumna)
Women's movements from a South African perspective 1980 – 2015

14.25
Keynote lecture by **Professor Chhaya Datar**
(emeritus professor Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, ISS alumna)
Women's movements and sustainable development from a South Asian perspective

14.40
Keynote lecture by **Professor Elaine Unterhalter**
(University College London, Institute of Education)
Gender, Women & Development 1980 – 2015, the interplay of academia, policies & practices

14.55
Reflections from the audience

Tea/coffee break

15.20
Round tables, Timeline Gender, Women & Development 1980 – 2015
Side kick **Ireen Dubel**

15.40
Table one 1980 – 1990
José van Hussen (former Co-ordinator International Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Dorine Plantenga (formerly Gender & Development Training Centre, VENA)

Table two 1990 – 2000
Joke Swiebel (former Co-ordinator of International Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment)
Hettie Walters (former chair of Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking,
ISS alumna)

Table three 2000 – 2010
To Tjoelker (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Jeanette Kloosterman (Oxfam Novib)

Table four 2010 – 2015
Mirjam Krijnen (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Isabelle Geuskens (Women's Peacemakers Program)

17.00
Winding up for the future
Elaine Unterhalter, Gertrude Fester, Loes Keysers

17.15
Reception with drinks & bites

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LA LUTTA CONTINUA

"I CONCLUDE THAT WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENT FEMINIST MOVEMENTS IN OUR COUNTRIES IF WE REALLY WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND ACHIEVE WOMEN'S FULL AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP. WE CANNOT DEPEND ON HAND-OUTS FROM GENDER DIVAS OR GOVERNMENTS WHO USE GENDER EQUALITY AS A DISGUISE FOR PATRIARCHAL INTENT. LA LUTTA CONTINUA!"

GERTRUDE FESTER

INTRODUCTION

'IN SISTERHOOD COLLECTIVE' WAS HOW THEY CALLED THEMSELVES. A GROUP OF TWENTY WOMEN AND ONE MAN, FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, WHO TOOK PART IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE WOMEN & DEVELOPMENT SUB-SPECIALISATION AT THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES (ISS) IN THE HAGUE (1980-81). TUMULTUOUS TIMES. THEY REMAINED FRIENDS AND FEMINISTS THEIR ENTIRE LIVES, WORKING AS SCHOLARS, ACTIVISTS, POLITICIANS, ADVISORS AND DONORS. IN SEPTEMBER 2015, SEVERAL OF THEM, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST MOVEMENT, GOT TOGETHER IN THE HAGUE AGAIN, IN THE COSY ATTIC OF THE ISS, TO LOOK BACK TO THE FUTURE OF GENDER, WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRESENCE OF DUTCH CIVIL SOCIETY, ACADEMIA AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. WHAT DID THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ACHIEVE IN THE PAST DECADES AND WHAT IS STILL AT STAKE TODAY?

On behalf of the Dames fan 'e Riege (Ladies of the Riege), facilitator Leontine Bijleveld got things started. She explained the rationale behind the seminar: Ireen Dubel is standing at the crossroads after more than 30 years of professional work experience in the field of Gender, Women & Development. Since her days as both a student and staff member at the ISS, Ireen has worked most of her life for the Dutch development agency Hivos, building up its reputation as a daring, committed and reliable donor and partner in the field of women's rights and gender equality. Crossroads offer an excellent moment to reflect, looking back to the future. Furthermore, it has been twenty years since the World Conference on Women in Beijing and there is still a lot of unfinished business. Leontine referred to the UN sustainable development summit that was about to start that very same day in New York and quoted some of the challenges formulated by the Post-2015 Women's Coalition: translating the Sustainable Development Goal's (SDG's) into action, promising that no one is left behind, the need to include sexual rights and safe abortion, substantial investments in women's empowerment, etc.

Wendy Harcourt (ISS) continued with the introduction "This is a very important seminar. The ISS is always looking for opportunities to take part in politically and socially relevant conversations. What is gender equality all about - here and now, but also there and then? Such historic and context-specific critical perspectives help us to question the fundamentals of the current development framework and to shape a gender-just sustainable future. This

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meeting includes a very engaged and committed audience, representing the transnational feminist movement. ISS wants to engage with this movement. Personally, Ireen and myself have been in contact at many different international meetings of the transnational feminist movement and I have known Ireen to be an ardent, critical, strategic and passionate supporter of the women's movement, e.g. women's movements across the globe. Therefore, both the ISS and myself are very happy to host this seminar today and I look forward to listening and sharing this afternoon, to indeed looking back to the future."

Loes Keysers (ISS) recalled how and when she met Ireen in 1980 in the first batch of Women & Development students here at ISS. The fact that so many feminists from all over the world came together in The Hague to study, to reflect and to strategise on all aspects of "development", inspired them all. They challenged each other and the rest of the ISS-community. They questioned patriarchal power, but also all of the differences and divisions in which women were played out against each other, such as class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality etc.... With the slogan *"Divided in culture, united in struggle"* they formed the In Sisterhood Collective – combining classroom academia with the sharing of their own personal lived experiences as women. They succeeded in creating a full master's course Women and Development at the ISS that groomed and nurtured many feminists from all continents into leadership positions in civil society – the women's movement and other social justice movements across the globe – in both academia and the political and governmental arenas. The Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995 was, in that sense, a big reunion, where many ISS W&D graduates reconnected. Loes:

"WHAT WAS THE STRUGGLE, WHICH UNITED US THEN, ALL ABOUT? THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL, WE SHARED OUR INDIVIDUAL EMBODIED EXPERIENCES AS WOMEN, WE LAUGHED AND CRIED TOGETHER, WE ANALYSED THE SYSTEMIC UNEQUAL GENDER POWER RELATIONS AND WE FELT UNITED IN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE. WHILE THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXTS AND THEREFORE THE CONCRETE ISSUES OF STRUGGLE HAVE CHANGED, THE GRAND THEME AND IDEAL HAS NOT. THEREFORE, THE IN SISTERHOOD SLOGAN IS STILL RELEVANT TODAY. FINDING AGAIN AND AGAIN A COMMON AGENDA AND WORKING IN SOLIDARITY, REMAINS SO IMPORTANT. IT BROUGHT AND STILL BRINGS US TOGETHER FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT IS PERSONAL. IT IS POLITICAL. IT IS BOTH... AND IT IS ONGOING."

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WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE 1980-2015

KEYNOTE LECTURE BY PROFESSOR GERTRUDE FESTER
(alumna ISS, based in Cape Town, member of the Feminist Forum South Africa, Research Coordinator Rwandan Association of University Women, professor at the University of Western Cape and at the University of Rwanda, member of the International Creative Committee of MASA (Marché des Arts Spectaculaire de Africa) in Abidjan)

WE WERE THE PIONEER GROUP, IN MANY WAYS, AT THE ISS AND IN OUR VARIOUS FEMINIST ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS. I GREET YOU ALL IN THE NAME OF OUR ANCESTORS, THE BRAVE WOMEN AND SOME MEN, WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR US.

In tracing the 1980 – 2015 period, I will sketch very briefly the 1980 context, the various UN initiated international women's rights instruments, e.g. CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, different African regional instruments, e.g. African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) declarations and protocols, developed over the years, pointing at advances as well as setbacks. With country cases from Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa, I want to question present and past options for feminists and women's movements. Do we dismiss these impressively worded documents and instruments as neo-liberalism; do we embrace them wholly; or use them pragmatically and strategically to advance the feminist agenda and women's citizenship?

I will use the theoretical lens of citizenship, asserting that if women have citizenship, women need to have access to all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Women's work must be valued and also care work must be shared and seen as social action. Like other scholars, I assert that citizenship is male defined. There is an inherent bias in citizenship – war versus childcare - what is equal citizenship? Why is going to war being a good citizen and giving birth not? I will use an insider – outsider perspective, intersectional and feminist with the underlying central issues of power, poverty and patriarchy throughout the period.

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THE 1980S

Bearing in mind that it is impossible to homogenise Sub Sahara Africa, there were certain common features during the 1980s, such as pervading poverty and inequality, especially for women and first nations persons; rapid population growth; decrease in food and agricultural output; with countries like Uganda plagued by atrocities of Amin and human rights violations, South Africa with its oppressive and exploitative apartheid and Rwanda with pre-genocide tensions - economic and major political problems. Many countries were plagued by structural adjustments and the demands placed on them by the Bretton Woods institutions. The situation in the early 1980s confronting women in Africa, of whom the majority were in rural areas, was severe exploitation, overwork, little access to credit, low productivity, and use of only basic rudimentary technology. Women had no or minimal access to land, made up the majority of the poor, and were solely responsible for family and community concerns. There was feminisation of poverty with repercussions for women and children.

Despite the negativity, there was also a sense of celebration and admiration for what was happening in Zimbabwe. At that stage, Robert Mugabe was a celebrated freedom fighter and leader and there was also the African euphoria of post-1974 with the independence of Mozambique and Angola. There was a lot of hope. The Organisation of African Unity (which later became the African Union) stressed the importance of supporting and intensifying the anti-apartheid struggle.

Within South Africa, there were as many debates as there was rhetoric about the inclusion of women's liberation as an integral part of the national liberation. This was the official position of, for example, the African National Congress (ANC). But this did not mean that the practices and experiences of women's issues were not oppressive: patriarchy was alive then and is still thriving today.

There was also the development of the Women and Development paradigm. Women in Development (WID) became Women and Development (WAD). It was an exciting time for many of us with the opportunity as feminists to theorise and reflect on our feminist praxis through participating in the Women and Development course at the ISS; probably one the first master's degrees in the world focusing on women and development.
In the African context, there was the emergence of a women's feminist Pan-Africanism. Unfortunately, even Africa's more revolutionary movements were to lapse into patriarchal state-centred politics and economic policies that ensured that national

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liberation did not mean liberation for women, or victory for Pan-Africanist visions of a liberated Africa. Pan-African feminist movements have emerged since the flags of independence, as women have risen to the challenge of engaging in a whole new struggle, not merely to secure better political representation, but furthermore – to challenge multi-facetted cultural and material oppressions based on gender and sexuality. The long-term commitment of feminists in Africa to transnational organising predates the recent iterations of 'transnational feminism' in Western discourses, and has been further underlined during the last decade. The African Feminist Forum has mounted a series of remarkable continent-wide gatherings that invoke Pan-African traditions to promote solidarities and shared agendas.[1] There are transnational African networks, like AAWORD/AFARD, FEMNET, ISIS-WICCE and ABANTU for Development that continue to actively pressure continental governance to move forward on questions of gender equality and carrying out training, policy advocacy, documentation, publication and other activities pointing to the persistence of material and cultural gender-oppression and injustice.

In sum, feminists in Africa share a regional experience of the incompleteness of the struggle for African liberation. We see the inter-connections between multiple oppressions, and are set to continue pursuing freedom in the firm belief that a just and humane order – another world – is possible. The struggle continues.

THE INTERNATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY

Whereas women's activism was taking place at grassroots and country levels, new international instruments were developed and initiated by the UN, during the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985). The successive international women's conferences in 1975 in Mexico, 1980 in Copenhagen, 1985 in Nairobi and the culmination during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing with the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action inspired many on the African continent – some genuinely for women's liberation and others for political expediency. African women advocated with success for the inclusion of a 12th critical area of concern: the persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child. For African women, the role of women in the family was also critical. South Africa, after celebrating its first democratic elections in 1994, participated in these UN Women's Conferences for the first time in Beijing. The Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994 also benefitted greatly from the input and direction given by the South African delegation. The UN Conference in Beijing was another first

1 Horn, Jessica (2008), 'Feeding Freedom's Hunger: Reflections on the Second African Feminist Forum', in *Feminist Africa Researching for Life: Paradigms and Power*, Issue 11, Cape Town: Africa Gender Institute: 121-126 or http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_11_11_profile_1.pdf

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for South Africa. South African LGBTIQ activist Beverley Ditsie was the first person ever to address the UN assembly on LGBTIQ issues and concerns. This had considerable repercussions and tensions at the NGO Forum in Huairou. As South Africans, many African women from other countries challenged us, that what we promoted at the UN assembly was "un-African". There were personal attacks on Beverly that she was not a 'proper African' as she is of mixed heritage and hence she raised Western agendas. Many of the LGBTIQ issues are still divisive today in 2015.
The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) aimed to strengthen not only the international gender machinery but also national machineries throughout Africa. Unfortunately, many of the BPfA critical areas of concern have not been achieved in Africa. I will illustrate this with contentious issues of women and the family, women in decision-making and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

THE FAMILY

Throughout Africa, women's roles in relation to a diversity of family/household units reflect various feminist contradictions and struggles.
One point of contention is around the family and 'motherism'. In South Africa, there has always been consensus about the disruptive impact of apartheid on the traditional black African family. As a result, the family in South Africa was a source of active agency. The situation of Black African women has been aggravated by the patriarchal family and social restrictions. These very restrictions were catalysts for agency. In contrast to the 'militant mother' image prevalent in literature is the homogenisation of African women as passive victims by some Western feminists.
Because of the diversity of African women in terms of class, ethnicity, access to education and positions of power, or location in rural areas with minimal resources, one cannot essentialise African women.
Some African scholars position 'motherism' as an Afrocentric alternative to feminism.[2]
I do not agree with Acholonu. The interpretation of 'motherism' is so diverse, ranging from radical to conservative; hence it cannot be an alternative to feminism. The diversity of 'motherism' reflects precisely the complexity of African women's situations and also the diverse and contradictory ways in which African women themselves interpret their roles.
I see 'motherism' as an aspect of African feminism.

The UN Decade for Women (1975-1985) and the subsequent BPfA had diverse repercussions in many African countries. Some women's groups used the BPfA's twelve critical areas in a narrow

2 Acholonu, Catherine quoted in Lewis, Desiree (2001), 'African Research and Postcoloniality: Legacies and Challenges', Dakar: CODESRIA, http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/LEWIS.pdf?801/1ee08a8efdaab3210603eb0b7a2b6fa19f18f9db

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and politically opportunistic manner and not to the benefit of women in general. Take for instance the area of women in power and decision-making.

WIFEISM OR THE FIRST LADY SYNDROME

Phenomena that I do not classify as feminist are what are termed 'Wifeism'[3] and the 'First Lady Syndrome'[4]. Both phenomena limit women's roles to those of wives/partners, mothers and secondary earners to men, supporting men and promoting narrow party politics. They do not dispute hierarchical gender relations. In 1992, Maryam Babangida in Nigeria and Susan Mubarak in Egypt, and others initiated projects in their capacities as presidents' wives. The 'First Lady Syndrome' falls safely within the mode of patriarchal relations as these women's actions stem from them being wives of the presidents and not presidents themselves, self-restricting women's roles. 'Wifeism' programs were initiated as part of the Decade for Women (1975-1985) by government-sponsored women's bureaucracies in Nigeria. Amina Mama (2004) distinguishes these movements from feminism. Though Nigeria's programme was essentially to 'build a better life for rural women' and to 'eradicate poverty' (first critical area of concern in BPfA), many analyses and findings claim that it was done on a party political card to promote the husbands of first wives.

Since 2003, a variation of the 'First Lady Syndrome' has also emerged in South Africa. Zanele Mbeki, wife of the former president Mbeki, initiated the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID). Whether SAWID promoted an ANC agenda is debatable. There were many innovative and feminist centred projects and programmes by SAWID. In addition, Zanele Mbeki individually and collectively with SAWID criticised the South African government regularly for not doing enough to eradicate poverty and unemployment among women. Scholar Amanda Gouws argues that SAWID did not emerge as a women's movement, but rather was initiated to facilitate the implementation of the New Economics for Africa's Development (NEPAD) policy by the government. [5] Zanele Mbeki has always been an active feminist. I argue for a critical but fair assessment of women leaders who happen to be married to national leaders. The reality is complex, and it may be difficult to categorise all women as part of a 'First Lady Syndrome'. The important contributions of women such as

3 Abdullah, Hussaina (1995), 'Wifeism and Activism: The Nigerian Women's Movement' in Basu, Amrita (1995), *The Challenge of Local Feminisms*, Boulder: Westview Press: 209-225

4 Ibrahim, Jibrin (2004), 'The First Lady Syndrome and the Marginalisation of Women from Power: Opportunities or Compromises for Gender Equality?', in *Feminist Africa National Politricks*, Issue 3, Cape Town: Africa Gender Institute: 48-69 or http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_3_feature_article_3.pdf and Mama, Amina (2004), 'Editorial', in *Feminist Africa National Politricks*, Issue 3, Cape Town: Africa Gender Institute: 1-7 or http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_3_editorial.pdf

5 A. Gouws (2005) (ed) *(Un)thinking Citizenship*, Cape Town: UCT Press

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Winnie Mandela and Albertina Sisulu in the struggle for South Africa's liberation should not be undervalued simply because they happened to have been married to national leaders.

In conclusion, the Beijing Platform for Action resulted in 'femocrats' (and I was one of them) and the gender equality discourse. I personally believe this de-radicalised the feminist agenda. African feminisms are diverse, contradictory, complex, and differ both regionally and within different cultural and faith contexts. Amina Mama succinctly summarises these diverse aspects:
"In African contexts, feminism has emerged out of women's commitment to national liberation, so it is hardly surprising that African women's movements today feature in different social movements characterising post-colonial life. African women are mobilising at [numerous] levels and deploying various strategies. (...) They range from the radically subversive to unashamedly conservative. (...) Today's women activists are as likely to be engaging the World Bank over the deleterious impact of structural adjustment on African women as they are to be lobbying the national governments over the marginalisation of women in the corridors of political power, or challenging traditional and community-based organisations."[6]
The diversity that Amina Mama sketches for African feminists continentally also reflects the situation within South Africa, and even within one single organisation. The ANC Women's League is the largest massed-based women's organisation, and membership ranges from "radically subversive to unashamedly conservative". Some South African women are challenging the World Bank, while the majority remain unaware of its existence.

COUNTRY CASE: UGANDA

Scholar Anne Marie Goetz states: "Moments of political systems change when the distribution of power is in flux. (...) These offer great opportunities to women, provided that women are politically organised. In particular, these situations offer opportunities to make women's social preferences part of the calculus of state legitimacy" (Goetz 1995:11).[7]
Critical areas seven and eight of the Beijing Platform for Action - Women in Power and Decision Making, and Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women - are central to the question of power, representation and women making decisions about their lives.[8] But where does the power lie? Can we speak about women having power now that women are in

6 Mama, Amina (2002), 'Editorial, in Feminist Africa Intellectual Politics, Issue 1, Cape Town: Africa Gender Institute: 1-8 or http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_1_editorial.pdf.

7 Goetz, Anne Marie (1995), *The Politics of Integrating Gender to State Development Processes: Trends, Opportunities and Constraints in Bangladesh, Chile, Jamaica, Mali, Morocco and Uganda*, UNRISD, Occasional Paper 2, Geneva: UNRISD, 11.

8 Hassim, Shireen (2006), *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority*, Scottsville: University of Kwa Zulu-Natal Press.

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politics? Has this improved the quality of women's lives and is poverty something of the past or something that is slowly being eradicated through the actions of these women politicians?

Take the case of Uganda, when in 1986 Yoweri Museveni took over power after having overthrown Idi Amin. How excited we were. It later became a benevolent autocracy, whilst having one of the strongest women's movements on the continent.
In analysing the case of Uganda, I want to question it as a case of the 'Politics of Co-option, or Co-operation or Conflict'. Gender equality is a core principle in the Ugandan constitution and it has resulted in unprecedented numbers of women in legislatures and local government at all levels. This however happened while presidential patronage was on the rise. A series of affirmative action measures were taken to institutionalise marginalised groups. Women benefitted most spectacularly. Each Resistance Council reserved a seat for the secretary of women's affairs. All women's organisations thrived under the earlier years of the National Resistance Movement regime.
Yet the creation of new representatives through women-only competition makes us ask questions. Given the relatively non-democratic means of women's access to power, what does this mean for women's agency and women's effective intervention as an independent lobby? What consequences have the conditions through which women came to office had for their perceived legitimacy and the capacity of women representatives to effectively promote gender equality in new legislation?
Over the years, Museveni has been constantly creating new 'Ministers of State'. "The flood of new ministries was an effort to break up our group. It has worked. Others have been promised ministries, and are on the waiting list." (name withheld on request)
"Meanwhile, the connection between women and Museveni continued to be ideologised in familial terms. For example, the chairperson of Museveni's task force was reported as saying that women were "married" to the Movement:
From today, no one should talk about women apart from Museveni and the Movement. What God has united, no one should separate. (The Monitor Newspaper, February 1, 2001)".[9]
So that is Uganda as a benevolent autocracy.

COUNTRY CASE: SOUTH AFRICA

It was with excessive lobbying and making alliances with Mandela that the women's lobby in the ANC managed to get a thirty per cent quota. They wanted fifty per cent but with Mandela, this was the compromise agreed upon. Since 1994, South Africa has been in the top four globally in terms of women's parliamentary

9 Akhire, Josephine (2004), 'Towards Women's Effective Participation in Electoral Processes: a Review of the Uganda Experience' in *Feminist Africa National Politricks*, Issue 3, Cape Town: Africa Gender Institute, or http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-3-2004-national-politricks, 8-26.

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representation. The 1996 constitution is the first one in the world that includes comprehensive rights including gay rights. The first period of having a democratically elected government (1994 -1999) was also characterised by the adoption of impressive gender sensitive laws such as the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Offences Act. This was the period when various women's organisations and groups, committed to making the theoretical contents of the Constitution a reality, worked together constructively.

An example of this is the Rural Women's Movement that appealed to feminist academics at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the University of Witwatersrand to work on submissions to parliament on customary marriages that relegate women to permanent minors. What is important here is also the personal connection with former trade-union activist Lydia Kompe being the founding member of the Rural Women's Movement, which organised rural women who were forcibly removed to the bantustans during apartheid. Like me, 'Mama Lydia' was elected into our first democratic parliament. At first, she shared that she felt out of place in parliament, irrelevant to the very women who voted her into office. However, she realised how she could make a difference on the issue of customary law. Within customary marriage, women did not have access to land and were not entitled to their children in the case of separation or divorce. She initiated the partnership between the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement for the Quality of Life and Status of Women at parliament and grassroots rural women and feminist lawyers at the Centre of Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the University of Witwatersrand. This culminated in the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998. This act addresses the equality of women within customary unions and ensures access to constitutional rights.

New projects and policies were initiated, like free health care for pregnant women and children under the age of six and one-stop shops for treatment for sexual offences - from reporting to counselling. The Commonwealth-funded project on Gender Budgeting created far-reaching projects and policies. In our euphoria, we feminist 'femocrats' were very busy and overwhelmed – as it was our first time from anti-apartheid activists, street politics and political prisoner status to now being legislators - a quick and demanding learning curve. I do recall being overwhelmed and the subsequent interviews with others, including recent ones, emphasise the stress of the demands on our, their time as politicians. Did we not see the writing on the wall? Were we, they too busy, too much in a state of euphoria, working too hard for poor women and men, that we did not see two very big crises early on in our new democracy?

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The women and people-centred national Reconstruction and Development Programme that gave ordinary people the right and responsibility to plan and design their own communities and amenities, was scrapped in 1996. It was replaced by the neo-liberal Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy. Scholar Shireen Hassim (2006: 232) points out that women cabinet ministers did not object to this programme and that this had disastrous consequences for women and the poor. (I must admit that I did not either.)

COUNTRY CASE RWANDA

There is the country case of Rwanda with more than fifty per cent of women in parliament, that largely came about through the genocide of 1994. It does raise the issue of men deliberately creating space for women in office, yet seeking women who in their view are 'acceptable'.

Women-friendly states de-radicalise or de-politicise the feminist or women's agenda: Women's movements become demobilised or fragmented because of over-reliance on the state structures and women in the state.[10]

"Quotas are a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they oblige the men to think about including women in the decision-making process, since men must create spaces for women. On the other hand, since it is men who are opening these spaces for women, they will seek out women who they will be able to manage – women who will more easily accept the hegemony of men."[11]

On the other hand, the question whether women should be part of political parties or whether they can achieve much without it is a rather vexed question that has confronted many women's structures.

Hope Chigudu and Wilfred Tichagwa share their sentiment: "Do women have an alternative power base (to the party)? Would they survive if they relied solely on the alternative power base? To both questions the answer is probably NO!!"[12]

Annemarie Goetz also questions to what extent do and can women make a constructive and effective difference while in government. She makes the distinction between women's descriptive (numerical) and women's strategic (substantive) presence. In the case of strategic presence, women act in the interest of women, effectively, enhancing voice and accountability.[13]

10 Hassim, Shireen (1999), 'From Presence to Power: Women's Citizenship in a New Democracy' in *Agenda*, No 40, Durban: 6-17

11 Ballington, Julie and Azza Karam (eds) (1998), *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)

12 Chigudu, Hope and Wilfred Tichagwa (1995), 'Participation of Women in Party Politics', Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network Discussion Paper No. 9, Harare: ZWRCN

13 Goetz, Anne Marie (2003), 'Women's Political Effectiveness: A Conceptual Framework', in Goetz, Anne Marie and Shireen Hassim (eds), *No Shortcuts to Power, African Women in Politics and Policy Making*, London: Zed Books: 29-80

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LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE

In 2015, religious fundamentalism is present and has increased all over the continent with multiple challenges for women and gender equality. Violence against women continues, and is by and large not debated about.

Should we push for a 5050 campaign without being co-opted?

How can we make use of the new Sustainable Development Goals and push for implementation?

Is a matter of "To integrate or to disintegrate?"

I conclude that we need to strengthen independent feminist movements in our countries if we really want to make a difference and achieve women's full and active citizenship. We cannot depend on hand-outs from gender divas or governments who use gender equality as a disguise for patriarchal intent. La lutta continua! The struggle continues!

CHALLENGES

"I CONTINUE TO BE A FIRM BELIEVER OF THE DUAL APPROACH TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING: MAINTAINING A CORE OF DISTINCTIVE EXPERTISE AND SPECIALIST FEMINIST POLITICS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY DISPERSING SUCH FEMINIST EXPERTISE INTO ALL POLICY AREAS AND INTO THE WORK OF ALL (MAINSTREAM) POLITICAL ACTORS."

IREEN DUBEL

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FROM A SOUTH ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

KEYNOTE LECTURE BY PROFESSOR CHHAYA DATAR

(alumna ISS, based in Mumbai, emeritus professor Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, South Asian Feminist Alliance)

BEFORE I JOINED THE ISS AS A STUDENT AT WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT COURSE, TWO MILESTONE EVENTS IN INDIA WITH REGARD TO AGENDA SETTING OF WOMEN'S ISSUES OCCURRED. IN 1974, AT THE EVE OF THE FIRST UN WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN MEXICO, THE FIRST EQUALITY REPORT TITLED '*TOWARDS EQUALITY, REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA*', WAS PUBLISHED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF VINA MAZUMDAR. ONE OF ITS KEY FINDINGS WAS THE DECLINING STATUS OF WOMEN ON EVERY FRONT OF LIFE, ECONOMICS, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND POLITICS, WITH AN ALARMING EVIDENCE OF A DECREASE IN THE INDIAN SEX RATIO. THIS PHENOMENON IS STILL WITH US IN INDIA TODAY. THE SECOND MILESTONE EVENT WAS THE ANTI-RAPE CAMPAIGN TAKEN UP ALL OVER INDIA BY MANY WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ON MARCH 8,1980. IT WAS TRIGGERED BY THE SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT IN 1979 ACQUITTING TWO POLICEMEN, WHO ALLEGEDLY HAD RAPED A YOUNG DALIT WOMAN NAMED MATHURA IN 1972 ON THE PRETEXT OF INTERROGATION AT THE POLICE STATION. THE RULING OF THE SUPREME COURT LED TO PUBLIC OUTCRY AND PROTESTS THAT EVENTUALLY LED TO AMENDMENTS IN INDIAN RAPE LAW.

Thus there were two clear themes emerging for the direction of the women's movement. The issues of development and the issues of violence, which constituted the major barrier for the emancipation of women, were to become buzzwords for the women's movement in India. We also call these events the beginning of the second phase of the Indian Women's Movement, the first phase consists of the social reforms under the British Raj and also the participation of women in the freedom movement on a large scale.

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The period after returning to Mumbai on completion of the course 'Women and Development' was one of intellectual excitement in my life particularly because of opportunities to carry out research on women's issues using the research methodology passionately advocated by Professor Maria Mies, at that time teaching at the ISS. The two research projects I initiated were very dear to my heart. Also, I believed that the findings would contribute to the development efforts that the Indian government was making in the period from1982 to 2005.

The first project (1983-85) focused on women factory workers getting organised and fighting for their rights in a small town of Nipani on the border of the Maharashtra and Karnataka states. There were 3000 of them, working in the factories and godowns, pounding Bidi tobacco. Bidi is a substitute of cigarettes, where tobacco flakes are wrapped in dry Tendu leaves and bound by a thread. It is a traditional way of smoking, mainly by men but also by women in some rural areas. It is remarkable that manufacturing bidis (leaf cigarettes) provides work to a very large number of women – second only to farming! Rolling of bidis is a home-based activity but preparing the proper tobacco powder and flakes is done in the factories, where the tobacco gets its proper flavour with combustion. I learned that these women were organizing for the first time. They were demanding better wages and security from their employers as well as from the government. Their demand was that the government should levy a special tax on the factory owners as was done for the Bidi Industry where workers were provided with housing grants. I considered the women organizing to be part of the women's movement, as they were creating awareness about the basic rights of rural women. This study that I undertook of their struggles could be called action research since I was going to Nipani for over two years and staying in the town for several days while their struggle was going on. We had consciousness raising workshops during that period. I could see the rise in leadership among illiterate women. A book was published on this study, sponsored by the ISS, as it was part of the literature being produced for the first time about women's organising in five different Third World countries and one region using a similar research methodology.[14]

The second project came along in 1986, when the Human Resource Development Ministry of the Government of India asked me to study women's participation and development in the program

14 The ISS research project on 'Women's Movements and Organizations in Historical Perspective' brought together researchers from India, Indonesia, Peru, Somalia, Sudan and the Caribbean. The research by Chhaya Datar was published in 1989, *Waging Change Women Tobacco Workers in Nipani Organise*, New Delhi: Kali for Women. Case studies of all the different country studies can be found in the publication edited and with an introduction by Saskia Wieringa (1995), *Subversive Women: Women's Movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean*, New Delhi: Kali for Women.

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called ‘Employment Guarantee Scheme’ in Maharashtra, that had the objective of providing work for food. The work was to focus on building percolation tanks and other measures to protect against future droughts due to low rainfalls. The scheme was devised against the background of a severe drought in 1973 when landless workers as well as farmers had to literally beg for food from the government. The work in that period created thousands of small structures for water accumulation (ponds), which were also useful as percolation tanks feeding water aquifers to get flowing and filling the wells in the villages. The program was appreciated by the World Bank. It was noticed that the work guarantee scheme had become particularly favoured by women, since such worksites were closer to homesteads than the usual construction sites in cities and towns. Women’s attendance used to be more than forty percent of the total workers, which attracted the attention of the World Bank and other researchers worldwide. They were keen to see the *gender component* of this program in various aspects such as equality in wages, wages in kind, setting up childcare facilities on the spot, maternity benefits, etc. Though I categorised my project as a part of women’s studies, I included men as one third of my interviewees out of total 600. I was taught that we had to refer to women’s status in comparison with men in the same sector. I realised later that what I was doing was both women’s studies as well as gender studies, although the concept of gender became popular in development literature later (in 1990s). One contested point was whether the wages were to be provided in kind or in cash. Women’s demand was for coupons provided for grain distribution through ration shops seeing that men would be more likely to use the cash for drinking. This question was crucial to understanding separate gender perspectives. Since the work was to be provided throughout the year, except in the so-called rainy season of four months, it substantially contributed to the family income because of the steady work assurance, thus aiming at poverty alleviation.

I enjoyed the field trips and talking to women, individually and collectively, to understand their attitude towards this work and the gaps they experienced in the design of the scheme, the types of earthen assets chosen for the construction as well as the implementation of rules on the ground. It gave me exposure to the environmental issues emerging in Maharashtra because of the wrong emphasis on water guzzling crops – notably sugarcane, for which water supply was virtually unlimited - at the expense of food grains, which were sturdy and stress resistant! Inequality in the distribution of water through the many dams built in the 1960s and 70s also increased inequality among the farmers in rural areas. Many elected leaders in Maharashtra have gained a political base through cooperative sugar factories established through the water politics.

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Later, when I worked on the watershed development programme carried out in a village for five years, alongside my colleagues at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), my understanding that Employment Guarantee Scheme was a very good solution for the water scarcity problem of Maharashtra was confirmed. Putting small bunds was the answer, not building big costly dams and centralising the authority in the hands of politicians to distribute water. As a background for this experience, I was included in the committee to rethink about the Employment Guarantee Scheme, to include gender issues.

Several developments took place on the national level to install similar schemes in all the states, but then Maharashtra government officials lost the interest in the scheme. Earlier there were news items of large-scale corruption in the scheme. The new scheme was more decentralised and more powers were given to the labourers to supervise the staff handling of wages, etc. This may be the reason for the loss of interest. In many other states, the new scheme called Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was working reasonably well.

Unfortunately, after coming into power, the current new government has pronounced that this scheme is a waste of money and works as alms distribution with no returns and no contribution to the economy. The allotment of funds for the scheme in this year's budget has been cut down in this light.

From 1992 onwards, I was part of another community development project that provided drinking water through pipelines and taps, covering almost all of the districts in Maharashtra where encouragement for toilets and sanitation was also envisaged. TISS, where I was appointed as a professor, was an anchor organisation for some areas where the project was funded by the British Department for International Development DfID. As a part of India's entry into the WTO, the funds started coming to India as a loan; however, they nevertheless helped to accelerate development of some of the basic issues. The new process was called participatory development, which I appreciated because I could see opportunity to work with the people and train them in planning and making decisions, particularly where women were accorded an equal status in the project. Furthermore, I could see that these programs offered a scale of activities that reached out to a larger number of people to help them get organized and empower themselves, rather than smaller NGOs working with people in two or three nearby villages. The programs were like a booster dose provided from above.

This was precisely the criticism offered by some of my friends with leftist leanings. According to them, unless the people themselves united and asked for some provisions from the government, it

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wouldn't become really participatory and the rich in the villages would either grab the funds or they would make political capital out of this opportunity and the real needy, the untouchables, tribals, i.e. those who live at the margins of villages, would not be able to exercise power to make decisions. According to my friends, the plan was mockery of the word 'participation'.
There was a plethora of literature and training manuals produced for *'participatory development'*. The concept was quite crucial for both countries - donor as well as the recipient national government concerned - for strengthening and maintaining the infrastructure within Third World countries at a low cost with voluntary involvement of women especially, adding unpaid community work to the other unpaid workload of women. The government bureaucracy was clueless about the 'participatory ethos'. I suppose at that point in time, many feminist activists and intellectuals got assignments at the UN and other international aid agencies. At the national level too, women activists and bureaucrats were sought after. Against this background, this new crop of feminist activists got jobs to organise women, train them, educate them, and document the processes. They became economically independent. But at the same time, it appears that they were co-opted by the top-down development ethos. They had to face the dilemma of how to remain conscious and true to their earlier aims and objectives of transforming the society, realising equal rights in the economic, social and cultural realms, and at the same time how to remain loyal to their job mandate that was steeped in a market-oriented development framework.

Some of us in the field of development were involved in processes of empowering women to participate in the day-to-day decision making processes for managing drinking water and being active in the Grampanchayats, i.e. the village councils. At the same time, violence against women was perpetuating and the different dimensions of violence were becoming visible. The women in the health sector took up the issues of harmful contraceptives and sex selective abortions. Violence became a major issue for feminists in urban areas, partly due to increased consciousness among women to raise their voice and ask for justice and partly because many journalists in the media took up the issue quite seriously. In fact, many autonomous women's groups were established in the wake of the much publicised Mathura rape case which I mentioned earlier as a milestone. Since then, the feminist movement focused on the issue of violence against women in a big way. Demand for changes in the rape law, i.e. violence outside the home premise, the law for domestic violence including dowry harassment and later the demand for protection against sexual harassment in the workplace were followed up consistently by the feminist organisations resulting in the enactment of new

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laws assuring women safety from violent environments. The credit for bringing the issue of all pervasive violence to the centre stage and as a critical barrier for women's development goes to the feminist movement and especially feminist lawyers within it. Like the Mathura rape case of 1980 the 'Nirbhaya' gang rape case of 2012 in Delhi created quite an uproar, not only among feminists but also in the general public, and the government was forced to set up the Justice Verma Committee to look into changes in the rape law, including setting up of fast track courts, etc. Whether or not these kinds of cases should be considered the rarest of rape cases and the death sentence could serve as a deterrent were some of the issues debated at that point in time and feminists had a hard time resisting the death sentence as retributive justice. Another important development that has been noticed in the last few years about the emerging men's groups that are educating young people about the concept of "Masculinity". Their conversations within the training programmes encourage young students and men of any age to analyse their personal experiences from childhood onwards to see how they were socialised and thus help them to demystify the present concept of masculinity as nothing but natural rather than a result of a socialisation process. In Maharashtra, two annuals are published every year where well-known writers and actors are invited to write about their personal experiences. This year, feminist groups helped men's groups to organise a one-day conference on "PURUSHBHAN", the "consciousness for a new male hood". Thus empowering women to work in the governance structures on the local level and bringing safety issues into the process of development formed a quite successful two-pronged approach by the feminists working on both the rural and urban levels. The movement against violence also gave momentum to making issues of sexuality and lifestyle more visible. The queer movement is gaining ground day by day and feminists are contributing towards that.

India's development story has changed once India signed the WTO agreement in 1991 and became part of the 'Globalization, Liberalization and Privatisation' ethos. The new track of development is a fast track development. The entry of markets into the social, educational, and health sectors has created havoc in the life of poor people. The budgets for education and health have gone down. The money-starved central and local governments have subsequently tried to abandon their responsibility to important areas such as education and health, since the governments did not want to increase their revenue by taxing the middle classes and the rich. On the one hand, these were the classes that got benefits out of privatisation and thriving stock markets, but on the other hand, they were also the most vocal and hence the government did not want to displease them.

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The salaries of government employees have gone up substantially, apparently to keep pace with the private sector and also for creating a consumer market for durable (white) goods. This dichotomy has exacerbated the already grounded inequality in the Indian society. The new economy gave more scope for bribes and kick backs to both politicians and bureaucrats. Within the vision of fast track development to catch up with the West, the emphasis is on big infrastructure projects such as big dams, fly-overs, bullet trains and very recently, the plan of a coastal road in Mumbai that is going to be developed with the assistance and loan funding from the Dutch government. Large projects for exploitation of natural resources gain momentum without heeding environmental impact assessment. Previously, the government had at least some concerns for the idea of a safety net and poverty elimination whilst also investing in infrastructure development. But the new government seems to ignore the poor by not providing food security (through ration shops) and offering low-skill jobs such as the Employment Guarantee Scheme, which had helped in the past to fight water scarcity by using the technique of watershed development in drought driven areas. The new government believes in the trickle-down model of economic development and hence is withdrawing from the slow development projects. It appears that we are on the path of fast food rather than the slow food traditions.

Since joining the WTO, inequality in India has increased and people are more confused about their future prospects. This confusion gives rise to people looking for solace, submitting themselves to the Gurus in the hope of getting blessings from God. Many fake Gurus have emerged amassing wealth from their followers. In general, fundamentalism has been gaining ground over the last ten years. Caste politics and identity politics have become a point of contention in the elections on all levels. Secularism, the moral principle essential for unity in diversity, has been eroded. Recently, three rationalists have been killed openly. I am afraid that the fast track development agenda carries fundamentalism as an essential underlying current that seeks to curb the freedom of expression and instils fear of interrogation in the minds of the people. Women are becoming victims of this conservative atmosphere.

Still I must say that this ethos has pushed the women's movement to be more active and build alliances with the other social movements and working people's movements. The Indian Association for Women's Studies has been inviting the South Asian Feminists to their tri-annual conferences. Kamala Bhasin has been organising women farmers' meetings for the South Asian countries under the banner of the FAO. Recently, the South Asian Feminist Alliance (SAFA) has been formed. It is one of the many efforts in that direction.

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THINKING BACKWARDS TO THE FUTURE: SOME REFLECTIONS ON GENDER, WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

KEYNOTE LECTURE BY PROFESSOR
ELAINE UNTERHALTER
(University College London, Institute of Education)

I FIRST MET IREEN IN 1986. I WAS WORKING IN THE RESOURCE CENTRE OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE AND AID FUND FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA (IDAF) IN LONDON. I REMEMBER THREE THINGS ABOUT THAT FIRST MEETING – HER ENGAGEMENT WITH CRITICAL ANALYSIS, HER LOVE OF ARTS AND CULTURE, AND THE WARMTH OF HER FRIENDSHIP. ALL THREE REMAIN UNDIMMED TODAY.

I would like to try to use these facets of my first conversation with Ireen as part of an analysis of what we as a community are working on, with and through gender, what women and development have achieved over three decades, and how we might engage some contemporary challenges. My method for doing this is an approach I have been trying to work out over the last few years and which I have started to call 'reflexive comparison'. This is a kind of critical reflection on being in one place and thinking about another. It is, I think, a very generative feature of research, politics and practice. In thinking about the theme of the seminar, I have been very taken by what I understand to be the linguistic form of the Aymara language spoken in the Andes, which alerts us that we walk backwards into the future. The past and present, with all their joys and sorrows, are in front of us. The future lies behind us. We go forward looking at what we are doing in the present and the past, as this seminar encourages. I think, given that we are walking backwards, reflexive comparisons can help us evaluate and hopefully try to judge how to go carefully, critically and hopefully enough in some of the rather bleak contexts set out by Chhaya and Gertrude.

My talk is an analytical look at the four periods from the 1980s onwards, considering how gender, women and development have been linked. The ways I am connecting them and my perspective on development comes partly from my position as an academic and someone who works with transnational policies on gender

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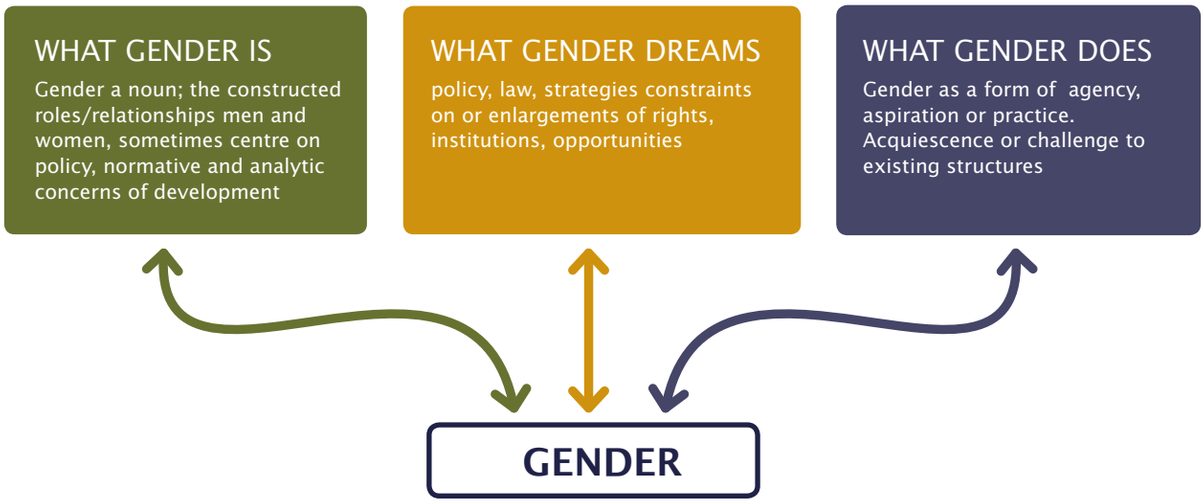

and education. I want to invite you to think about the detailed contexts you know and ways in which these analytical framings I am going to suggest do or do not fit. I hope this will raise questions about the theoretical approach and the specificities of context. This is part of using reflexive comparison and thinking backwards to the future.

The analysis starts from the plasticity of the term gender, what it means to us, how it connects to women and what this means about our approach to development. I want to distinguish three kinds of meanings of gender and draw out some of the dynamics of what that does for work on development. The three meanings are concerned with what gender *is,* what gender *dreams* or aims at ethically, and what gender *does*.

Mapping this continuum of ideas about gender needs to be connected to another set of ideas regarding intersectionality, and I think some of the same distinctions between formations might be useful. Thus we can map a continuum regarding what intersectionality is, what it does and how the idea of intersectionality invokes a set of values about connected equalities and human rights. These slides are my attempt to map historically how these different interpretations of the meaning of gender and intersectionality have played out in the politics and practice of development.

Understanding gender in terms of what gender *is,* and defining gender in terms of the socially constructed roles and relationships of men and women, often came to be interpreted through taking the part for the whole. That is, particular women or men came to stand for the social construction of gender, race or class in which these particular women and men were positioned. You thus had a politics of development that focussed either on WID, bringing women into development, with rather minimal sketching of

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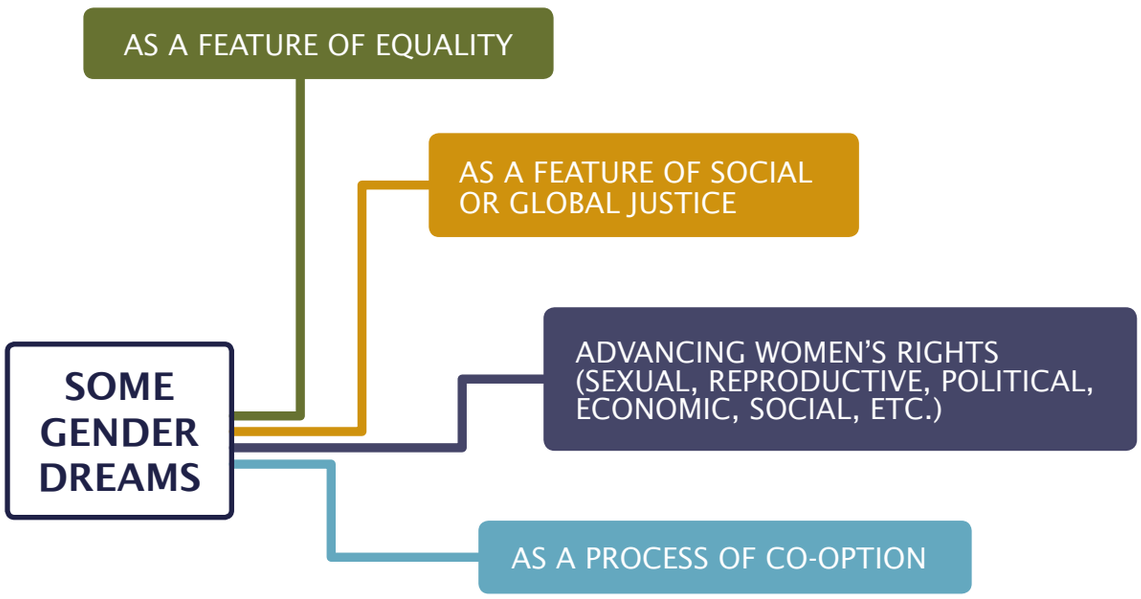
social location, or GAD, specifying some of the institutions or formations of power which formed some of the social relations, and intertwined with intersectional dynamics.

A second approach concerned with the political aims and strategies entailed with invoking the term gender, I want to mark out as concerned with 'what Gender dreams'. In work on development and more general social aspiration gender dreams are about equality, addressing intersectionality and social justice and advancing and protecting women's rights. Dreams, often gain part of their potency from not being fully realised in practice. Thus they are particularly fluid, even as we try to write them down in policies or laws. Alongside the positives and aspiration of gender dreams, we may also need to look to not so comfortable or inspiring messages, associated with co-option or the undermining of the wider social justice and women's rights vision of gender dreams.



The third thread in the meaning of gender I want to distinguish is associated with what gender does analytically or politically in terms of a range of forms of social activism. Thus gender becomes a frame that is used to describe the world differently, to organise personal and public lives in new ways, or to describe the perpetuation of existing power structures. The notion of understanding what gender does is intended to draw attention to unravelling the complexities of social relationships, which are often intersectional, to explaining aspects of distribution, interpretation and participation. Considering 'what gender does' invokes particular kinds of action, either doing gender linked to aspects of identification, or engaging with others to try to shape the world mindful of gender as a key social relationship.

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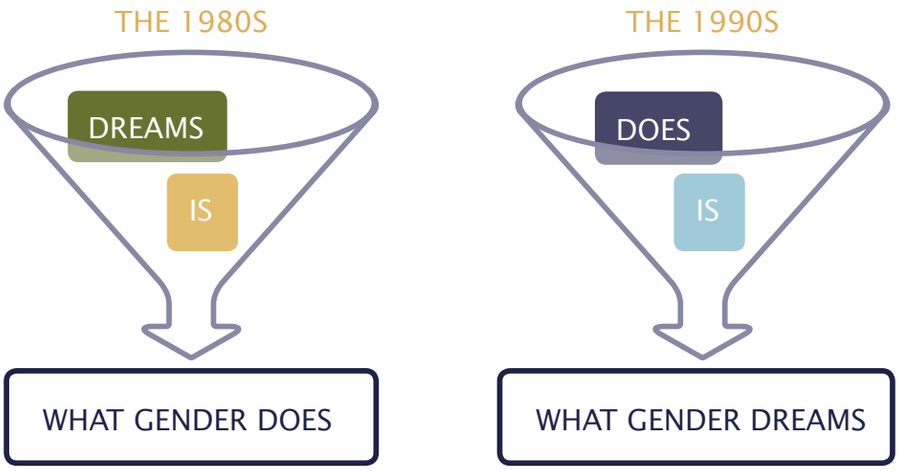
VERSIONS OF GENDER: CONTRASTING CONNECTIONS (1980S & 1990S)



These three facets of the meaning of gender are not the only meanings, and are not separate from each other. But I want to draw on these to review the three and half decades of work on development to show that in different decades for different reasons particular meanings of gender were prominent. In each decade one meaning of gender becomes an envelope, which enfolds the other meanings.

From my reading of the history, during the 1980s the emphasis was on what gender *does*. An analysis was formulated through political activism and academic analysis of how gender formed the relationships of production, distribution and participation. This was the politics of the Nairobi conference, articulated by DAWN, and formalised in the scholarship of GAD. The emphasis on what gender does came to frame analysis of the social construction of gender and to express the aspirations for change associated with what gender dreams.

During the 1990s, however, the emphasis, both analytically and politically was on gender *dreams*. And gender dreams came to enfold and shape analysis of what gender is and does. The dreams were expressed in the many UN conferences of the decade (Vienna, Cairo and Beijing), and they expanded the scope and formulation of what had previously been dreamed. For example at Vienna expressing the view that women's rights are human rights, at Cairo placing health and population concerns in a frame of women's reproductive rights, and at Beijing including sexual rights with discussions of equality and emphasising clear strategies for institutional change. In 1995 at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, a dream was formulated with a framework which affirmed people were the centre of development, that equality and equity between women and men, sat together with a range of other commitments to equalities, and valuing pluralism, tolerance and the empowerment of women.

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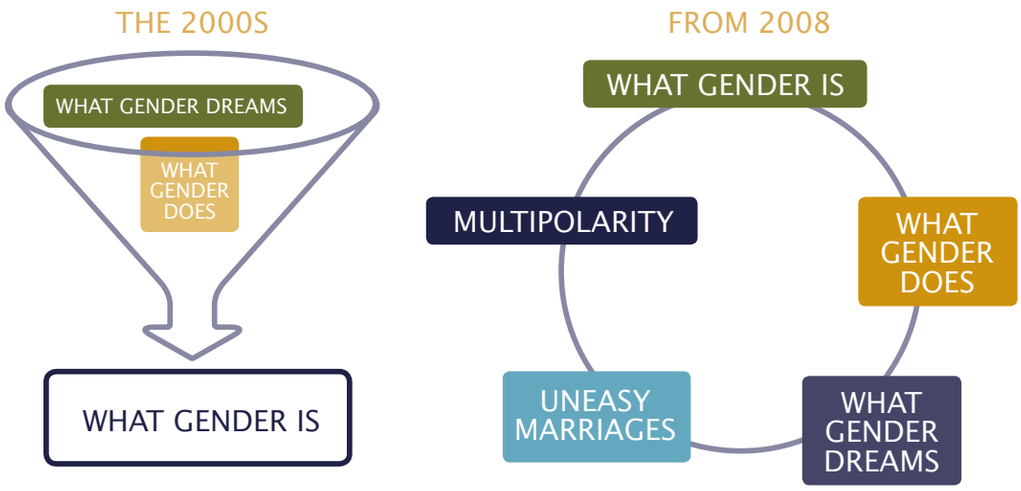
In the 2000's the emphasis was on what gender *is*. It got narrowed down to the Millennium Development Goals, counting numbers, men and women, boys and girls. Gender dreams and thoughts of what gender does came to be forced down this development tunnel. Often the available funding for the MDGs, with the emphasis on what gender is, constrained transformative initiatives for what gender does or dreams. Indeed some considered that in the MDG politics the dreams of the 1990s got co-opted.

One can make a bleak reading of our contemporary times and highlight how the global financial and economic crises from 2008 onwards turned some of our gender dreams into, if not a nightmare, some kind of restless uneasy accommodation. Versions of gender dreams are sometimes now articulated by political movements with a very fragmented range of positions on what gender does.
Here are some examples. In 1979 Heidi Hartmann published the *Unhappy marriage of marxism and feminism*. An area of discussion in the contemporary period has become the all too happy marriage between feminism and capitalism. In the context of a multi-polar world, where development itself takes many forms, it is hardly surprising that there are many contestations over the meaning of gender, and that pragmatic or political alliances are built without examination or critical review of some of the differences of position.
Take for instance the United Kingdom. Currently the government is imposing extremely harsh austerity policies with an explicit attack on trade union organisation, the provision of social welfare and substantial undermining of access to housing and health care through a process of financialising the means of social reproduction and selling off many of the substantial assets linked with the welfare state. Large numbers are in the work force with zero hour contracts, and women, many struggling to fulfil

obligations of care, are a flexible work force, whose rights at work are squeezed. But this same government is a prominent defender of women's rights in relation to development. It hosted a large international conference on violence against women, and is putting development assistance into that area of work. How do we hold together these two presentations on women's rights, one that undermines those for the poorest at home, and one that supports those in relation to aspects of development assistance? How do we understand, Cheryl Sandberg, the COO of Facebook and author of *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*. Is she a standard bearer for women's rights and women taking leadership when she tells us that for the most part it is women themselves are to blame for the glass ceiling? Is her motto 'Don't lean back, lean in!' a co-opted dream or a useful mantra in thinking about what gender does? Can we read her as supporting gender mainstreaming or subverting it? Does her analysis confirm the critics of gender mainstreaming, who point out that the technical changes it brings about subvert more demanding forms of social transformation? Or should we see her engagement, and that of the UK aid policy as one of a wide array of different un-coordinated ways in which gender has come to mean just about anything, linking it with just about everyone, and not directing particular kinds of politics of strategies of change?

VERSIONS OF GENDER: CONTRASTING CONNECTIONS AFTER 2000



In concluding this review, and thinking about *how* we look back at decades of work with gender and development, and therefore what we choose to see from the past in feeling our way towards the future, I want to highlight three spaces. I want to try to connect

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them to those aspects of a feminist movement Ireen presented to me when we first met – critique, cultures of friendship, and searching for new languages, such as art or different kinds of politics, to express what was difficult or unsayable.

First, we can look back and see the space of feminist work on structures and institutions invoking what gender is, does and dreams as a place of disappointments. But we can also look back and see those spaces as unfinished projects, where critique and different kinds of cultures can be deployed, where new languages can be made or older meaning remembered that defend a non co-opted form of social democracy, where, for example, there is no queasy trade-off between austerity at home and women's rights in development. Instead strategies to address poverty are held together by a strong critical culture around equality and feminism.

Second, we can look back and celebrate the space of a feminist politics that has not been co-opted, and that has the critical edge to confront all kinds of colonialisms associated with inequalities, racism, and oppression. Often this survives below the radar of unjust structures and networks and deploys a language that describes the world differently.

Thirdly, we need to remember the friendships that drive many of these networks and sustain the ideas that animate them. These provide us with strength, inspiration and hope, and I think this is a theme repeated in many personal histories in this room.

Initially in speaking about critical reflexivity, I spoke about pasts, presents, and futures, using metaphors about what lies behind and what lies in front. In these three spaces I have linked with hope – building institutions, sustaining a feminist politics which confronts injustices, and celebrating friendships and care - I want to think that the metaphor of time can be bent a little in two directions. Working on gender and development in all the spaces I have sketched require not only looking forward and back, but also an evaluative look to the side to understand the context and personal and political histories. And this critical consideration of what one sees, how one interprets it, and whom one talks to about it, requires articulation. In English there are two senses of articulation, one is about connecting and another is about talking out. I think understanding our histories of gender and development is about making connections. We need to understand *what* and *who* is linked together, and *why*. Which facets of gender are we linking together and which facets are we ignoring. But this linking together is not just a mechanical exercise. It is also about speaking up and I hope we will never stop talking about the injustices that we confront!

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DISCUSSION ON KEY NOTE SPEECHES WITH THE AUDIENCE

Niala Maharaj (writer and gender consultant): what is happening with gender in neo-liberalism, given the debates and issues concerning women's work? Women's right and access to work we fought for, yet the trend is a disappearance of work 'traditionally' done by women. How do we strategise on this issue?

Silke Heumann (ISS): Multiple dimensions, is that always bad? In the wake of the financial crisis, feminist organisations have taken social justice issues back onto the agenda.

Wendy Harcourt (ISS): What do you really mean with co-optation?

Ireen Dubel to Gertrude Fester: As you were a member of parliament, can you share more insights about how it works from the inside? Pushing for more women MPs has been a strategy of women's movements throughout the world, yet what has it achieved, given your own inside experience?

Marjan Sax (women's rights activist): Aren't we getting old? This is such an amazing gathering of women. And yet every time I read about this or am in encounters like today, I think patriarchy has been there for ages. And we have been here for fifty years. Only! We should not forget how successful we have been. My issue is language.
Gender, the word. I hate it. I hope is that it will disappear. No one knows what we are talking about outside this gathering/room!

Edith van Walsum, (Director of ILEA): We have gone through the liberalisation of the 1990s, when we had very heated discussion about autonomy versus integration even earlier in the 1980s. Where are we now?
Maybe we are in a worse state than the 1980s. Back then, it seemed still tangible, some integration with autonomy was not so bad.
Today when we speak of this dilemma, we are looking at the integration of women into global value chains. There seems to be no space and choice to focus on the right to food sovereignty. The focus in my view is much too much on the idea that women should be integrated (or absorbed) by global value chains, without questioning the terms under which this integration is supposed to take place.

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RESPONSES FROM THE SPEAKERS

Elaine Unterhalter:
With regard to issues of work and labour: there is a divide between the core (elite), and those in the periphery, insiders and outsiders. Society isn't working for the outsiders. But they are working for society. Beyond that there is another group: a group totally dependent on social welfare. They have never worked and probably never will work. It is struggling to connect to those women.
On the political level, it seems that links have been broken between women in politics and women in social movements. We need to (re)build the connections to people in social, economic and political struggles.

Gertrude Fester:
It is a huge challenge for women parliamentarians to remain relevant to the cause and agenda of women's rights and gender equality and to continue the connections with women on the ground, including women in the rural areas. I remember making that effort, continuously asking questions, to my fellow MPs, have you consulted, drawn in, talked to the very women concerned, especially more marginalised women in the rural areas and their advocates, women's rights organisations. I was told off, you are asking the wrong questions. In the end, it made me decide that this was not the political arena where I wanted to continue to pursue my political feminist agenda given the party politics and other power politics at play at the expense of my/our feminist agenda.

ROUND TABLES TIMELINE GENDER, WOMEN & DEVELOPMENT 1980–2015

‘THE ROUND TABLE (FOR ALL THE SISTERS)’ BY JYOTSNA AGNIHOTRI GUPTA (ISS-ALUMNA)

Sisters of the round table
we were
come together
from different lands
under the self-same sun
moon and stars
that watched over us

lands
that were divided
by labels we had no use for
created only to divide us
'first world'
and
'third world'
the missing 'second world'
placed in between

what united us
not a legendary female King Arthur
but a shared oppression
and more
the spirit burning within
that we would overcome
if we arose as one

Now that we are again
scattered all over the corners of the world
each of us bears
a cross
made from the wood of that round table

we carry it
each hour of the day
every sleeping and waking moment
a reminder
of our bond
of the burden we bear
of the inspiration and the support
we share
each a chip of the old block

we only wait
to consolidate
our strengths
before we rise
each from her corner of the world
to trample beneath
leaving no escape
for all who stand in de the way
as we march ahead
closing in
to make the world
whole
once again

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Facilitator Leontine Bijleveld explains that this poem was published as a preamble in Ireen Dubel's political science thesis *Women and Development To integrate or to disintegrate?* (1983). Reference was made to this thesis in the former minister of development affairs Pronk's policy paper *Een wereld van verschil / A world of difference* (1990).[15] Jan Pronk is now a lecturer at the ISS. He was invited to participate in the first two round tables, but had to regretfully decline because of his assignment to lecture in Indonesia at that very moment. His interest and that of others among the nearly sixty apologies prompted the Dames fan 'e Riege to produce a report of the seminar. This report will be the first phase of a new project Ireen Dubel wants to undertake in the near future: to write about the history of the Women, Gender & Development Agenda 1980-2015. This project would be a combination of first, documenting individual and personal stories of key actors and second, analysing the history and changes over time with some projections for the future.
For this reason, the facilitator asked all panellists – either involved at governmental level e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Social Affairs or as a NGO representative in the field of GW&D - to introduce themselves. How did they become involved in their specific period? And could they share an experience or anecdote about that time? She also asked them to reflect about both a major achievement and about mistakes made or regretted (in hindsight).

FIRST ROUND TABLE 1980S

José van Hussen was coordinator international women's affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 80s. She shared that job for a few years with the late Geertje Lycklama.[16] It was a first time experience of job sharing at a policy level in the Ministry. Geertje was a fantastic strategist. José remembered how they organised commitment for the first policy paper on women and development of the minister of development, Jan de Koning, during the 2nd UN World Conference on Women in Copenhagen (1980). As the minister was accompanied by his wife, Geertje and his wife thought it was best to tackle him during lunchtime. He could not say no to this action of empowerment.

Dorine Plantenga worked at that time as the head of the gender and development training section at the Women and Autonomy Centre VENA at Leiden University. In 1995, she became the co-director of the Gender and Development Training Centre in Haarlem, where she worked as an international trainer, coach and consultant in gender, identity, conflict and development.

15 The reference focused on the concept of autonomy in Ireen's thesis, as the concept was included in the policy paper *Een wereld van verschil*.

16 Geertje Lycklama à Nijeholt passed away in November 2014. She was responsible for the Women & Development Masters Programme at the ISS, as Professor Women in Development, from 1983 onwards. She was the first female rector of the ISS during 1990 - 1995.

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Referring to the debate about the concept of 'gender', - as being fundamentally different from 'women'- she said: "I am a linguist and thought at first that gender meant: male, female or neutral like the gender of words in languages." Within the context of the development debate it was difficult to explain the concept gender. It was not only about including the men as well in the discourse about women and development. It was also about tackling issues of power and (male) dominance. She recalled that as soon as Women (or Gender) and Development was taken seriously, 'gender trainings' of all involved were initiated. It was crucial to make clear that those trainings should not only aim at making the role and tasks of women visible for development planners. Also stereotyped ideas about masculinity and femininity should be challenged. She gave an example of a training in which she asked all participants to identify themselves as male or female. That was easy enough. But then the participants were asked to identify themselves as masculine or feminine. And that's where the gender debate could start.

José van Hussen considers one of the greatest achievements to be the fact that GW&D did indeed appear on the agenda not only at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also at many UN agencies, institutions, universities, and other official and informal organisations. Geertje for instance was chairperson of the Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Women's Consultative group of Dutch Development Organisations), José was the chair of the OECD/DAC WID (Women in Development) group. Another achievement was, albeit slow, the recognition of the economic role of women in policy papers and supported in programmes and projects. In the 80s, there was no internet, so they used the instrument of strategic funding to get information and strategic planning widespread among women's organisations in developing countries, like for instance via the International Women's Tribune Centre in New York. There were not yet that many reports, but those that were there, were giving a huge push.

Dorine Plantenga confirmed the hard work and the crucial strategic choices that were made. "When it was important, we were there. We got things on paper and we felt a very strong commitment to women overseas." As a result, also deep friendships among women all over the world developed, lasting for decades.

Ireen Dubel: "Those days I was not a funder, I was a recipient, like for the 4th International Women's Health Conference in 1984, for which we knocked on the door of Geertje and José. In 1980 ISS was happy to have Dutch women in the class, to make a link with women active in the Dutch women's movement

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and other social movements, like myself active in the squatters' movement. Also because part of the Women and Development course requirement was that students had to do field work in the Dutch women's movement, a unique requirement for the ISS at that time (and now I guess). "I was studying at the ISS, meanwhile constructing my own house that we had squatted in the harbour area of Amsterdam. Classmates asked when I came back to class with blisters and bandages on my hands "what are you doing when you're not with us those days in Amsterdam?" Later in the 80s, the organising of the 4th international women's health conference in Amsterdam gave a huge impetus to the Women & Development Agenda. (Former) ISS-students participated in that conference too. The term reproductive rights, today accepted normative international rights language, was coined right there.

One can speak of subversive and creative politics to get GW&D on the agenda. Another example of Geertje Lycklama who combined her job at the Ministry with a guest professorship women & development at Wageningen University – a paid position of 1 hour per week. She wanted to organise a conference about women and agriculture, but she knew none of her (male) colleagues, lecturers at Wageningen University, would come, if she would put this in the title. So she announced a conference about 'Small Farmers' – women are the majority of the small farmers after all - and invited only female keynote speakers from the South, announcing them as Professor X and Dr Y (gender neutral). The conference was well attended, at least until the first coffee break.

The audience responded with enthusiasm and was keen to share some of their personal anecdotes during the decade. This prompted Dorine to close the first round table with the outcry: "We need to collect and document all these stories!"

SECOND ROUND TABLE 1990S

Joke Swiebel started her career as a 'femocrat' in 1977, when she became staff member at the emancipation commission, the first women's rights advisory body to the government. A few years later she switched to another part of the national machinery, the Directorate for the Coordination of Emancipation Policy (abbreviation DCE) first at the Ministry of Welfare, since 1982 at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Initially, this name was the wording on her business card. "When I came to Strasbourg for a meeting at the Council of Europe, I shared my business card with a UK baroness, who said, 'Oh, well, I thought slavery was abolished in the former century?'" The next thing Joke did was change the text on her business card to 'Coordinator of International Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment'.

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Hettie Walters was a nurse and worked in the 1980s for SNV in primary health care in Africa. She wondered whether women benefitted from this programme: did their health improve at all? So she started what became one of the first studies into women and health in Mali. Back in the Netherlands, she wanted to pursue a Master in Women and Development at the ISS. Since she had no academic background, she was not let in right away, but was very happy to be able to acquire admission in the end. She also did another diploma course at the ISS.
Hettie wanted to share with the audience one of her most emotional experiences during the period of being the chair of the Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Women's Consultative group of Dutch Development Organizations) in 1993: the conference on women and conflict. Women from Rwanda participated. Of those who went back, quite a lot of them were killed during the genocide in 1994. The women who survived built up the women's movement in Rwanda. The fact that there is now a network of women and women's rights organisations in the country began at the conference organised by the Vrouwenberaad.
After that Hettie jumped to the next decade and recalls: "On 9/11 I was in Sweden at a conference on gender and conflict, organised by Aprodev[17]. We saw the planes flying into the buildings and asked ourselves: What does this mean for masculine retaliation strategies? More retaliation in militarist ways?"

Joke Swiebel reflects about the most important event of the 1990s: the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). In her view, two achievements still stand out: the acknowledgement of sexual rights of women (para 96 in the Beijing Platform for Action - BPfA). The issues about sexual orientation are still contested and controversial as there is an enormous counterforce against the LGBT movement from religious fundamentalisms. The other achievement is the emphasis on the importance of gender mainstreaming, all over the BPfA. Governments should gender mainstream their policies so that before new programmes are agreed upon or implemented, the different effects that policies and programmes have for men and women are clear right from the start. Joke thinks in hindsight that it was a mistake to underestimate the 'critical area of concern' (chapter) on the environment. The 'femocrats' and diplomats of the Dutch government delegation did not put much effort into that critical area of concern and left the issue to the women and development specialists.

Ireen Dubel agrees with Joke that the Beijing conference was a milestone, but warns against the risk of being too nostalgic about Beijing. It is, after all, twenty years ago and it does not

17 At that time the association of the European development and humanitarian aid organisations which work closely together with the World Council of Churches.

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mean that much to the younger generations of feminists. “Like how I looked at those who went to Mexico (1975)”. She recalls that the use of internet and email in the international women’s movement was still in its infancy. “It was the first time I sent an email in the internet café in Huairou and later in Beijing via a mobile modem on my notebook, Wifi did not yet exist.”

Ellen Sprenger added on from the audience that she recalled how Joke Swiebel walked around in Beijing with huge bags, with lots of papers that she anxiously guarded given the confidentiality of the language that was negotiated at the official conference. There was a disco party going on and Ellen offered: “Why don’t I hold on to your bags so you can dance?” So Joke did for ten minutes.

Speaking about gender mainstreaming and mistakes, Ireen Dubel said that in hindsight, she and other Dutch donors gave in too easily to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to resolve the Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Women’s Consultative group of Dutch Development Organisations). It was a wrong assumption to think that the NGO’s and government would indeed mainstream gender without a network organisation as a watchdog to keep them on their toes. This is one of the reasons why gender mainstreaming ended up as gender-away streaming. “Some ten years later as a result of the Beijing + 10 initiative we were able to create a new network, the Dutch gender platform WO=MEN.”

Ireen to Joke: “I am known as an impatient person. So I want to hear from you how did you manage to do this work for so long? What can I learn from you? Should we continue to be impatient? And how do we survive?”
Joke: “I survived by playing the double spy. Not taking messages from the Minister nor from the women’s movement. Co-optation? Maybe? But there in the middle, I survived maybe, by co-opting myself.”

Speaking about mistakes or omissions, Hettie Walters thinks that the lack of resources for the transformation of masculinity was a big mistake. It did not receive enough attention, it was both too little too late.

THIRD ROUND TABLE 2000-2010

To Tjoeker was, in those years, working as senior policy advisor and deputy head DSI/VR at the genderunit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was in that capacity chair of the OECD DAC Gender Network.
Referring to the debate about gender mainstreaming and gender-away streaming during the previous round table she confirmed

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that especially during the first part of the decade, the emphasis on gender mainstreaming indeed did not work out as was hoped for. Instead of becoming everybody's responsibility, it became nobody's responsibility. One of the achievements of To and her colleagues in collaboration with women working for Dutch NGO's (like Ireen at Hivos) was the visualisation of how little money of official development aid was spent on women's rights: the *Fundher* research of AWID and Just Associates in 2005-2006 - *Where is the money for women's rights? Assessing the resources and the role of donors in the promotion of women's rights and the support of women's organizations.*
She recalled: "In October you know there are always unallocated funds left at the Ministry and at other donors. So we could commission a research to analyse funding trends of women's rights work." All the resources for women's rights all over the world turned out to be less than what Greenpeace received in a single year.

Jeanette Kloosterman is gender advisor and specialist in gender mainstreaming at Oxfam Novib and Oxfam International (until the end of the year). Her background is cultural anthropology, with a more specific interest in diversity and identity. "That was the angle I started to approach gender from." She finished her PhD research in 1995 about the indigenous right to self-determination. Ethnic identity was the core issue of this research. When can you claim to belong to a certain ethnic identity if identities are never static? In 1996, she became more involved with gender equality, first working with the FAO-UN and afterwards with the European Union on social forestry and rural development in indigenous communities in Latin America. After doing some courses on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, she plunged into this issue with the family and youth councils of two indigenous associations and discovered that the gender approach as they had taught her had to be adapted to the vision and wordings of the indigenous women and youth. Gender jargon was out of place.

"To me this is one of my dearest memories of the work I have done on gender equality so far. It was one of the most interesting jobs I've ever had". The program financed a research project with indigenous women to discover endogenous sources of power for these women. The women indicated they wanted to investigate the different cultural meanings of their weaving, a very important activity, because it's impossible to see women in these communities without doing something that is related to weaving. As a Western woman you tend to think: "Please, could you leave aside this weaving for one minute", as it seems such a role confirming, feminine activity. But it appeared that the

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weaving has a real deep cosmological, symbolical and spiritual meaning, related to the indigenous territory, spirits and gods. To continue and persist as an indigenous people, women have to weave. If they stop doing that, they cannot longer uphold the right to their territory and own ways of governing: their ethnic identity will vanish.
It was in the late 1990s, early 2000s that the intersectionality approach gained ground. The thinking around gender equality and gender justice became related to complexity thinking. “Fascinating and more interesting than thinking about gender differences that perpetuate gender inequality between only men and women”.

Ireen Dubel recalled how critical evaluations of ODA country programmes with respect to gender mainstreaming and away streaming helped to get gender inequalities back on the agenda. The Beijing+ 10 Time for Action Initiative helped to create a new momentum. “Against the odds, we mobilised more money: the MDG3 Fund and later FLOW”. A change of government was helpful to get new gender equality policies in place, including policies on the rights of LGBT. There have been major gains but also a lot of unfinished business. This decade provided us with a lot of food for thought and rethought.

To Tjoelker remembered the pushing and pulling to get the right wording in: “We had to make a text about reproductive health for the EU in 2003. Then Fineke (van der Veen) and others pushed us to put in sexual rights, it was removed, and then added, removed, and added. In the end it got in there: sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).”
Ireen added that Women on Waves (WOW, funded by Hivos) had put the issue of unsafe abortion back on the agenda in a very creative and provocative manner. WOW started promoting the viable alternative of the abortion pill that made safe, self-administered abortion possible for women throughout countries and regions where abortion is still illegal or available only under very strict conditions. Women on Waves contributed to the WHO acceptance and promotion of medical abortion as a safe, preferred abortion method.

Whilst acknowledging the achievement during the decade of securing more funding for women’s rights To observed that there remains unfinished business. As the head of development cooperation at the Dutch embassy in Mali, she encountered the Dutch mission of soldiers in that country: “They don’t know anything about gender, don’t know the language, issues of culture, so there is really a lot still to be done”.

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FOURTH ROUND TABLE: 2010 – 2015

Mirjam Krijnen is at present coordinator of the Task Force Women's rights and Gender equality (TFWG) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She explained that she is a diplomat and has worked on political issues for the Ministry, amongst others in Washington. In those positions she did engage with gender issues, but not exclusively. She thinks that it is very important to consider how one organises oneself when striving for change towards more gender sensitive policies. The idea behind the Task Force is not to work in different silos. Gender equality and women's rights have become more visible again. Much of the terminology has found a place.

As an anecdote, she shared that she has dealt with the issue of co-opting, what it implies to be working inside a bureaucracy. She and her team worked with Hivos on organising Syrian women around the Syria peace initiative in 2014. In her view, there really was a movement towards integrating women into the negotiations. However, some NGO colleagues expressed only disappointment: "There was not a single woman at the negotiation table. Was it really disappointing? I actually thought we made important steps forward. Success is making many small steps."

Isabelle Geuskens is at present director of Women Peacemakers Program. She got her inspiration for this work by talking to a former loyalist paramilitary when flying home from Belfast, after having spent half a year studying in Northern Ireland. He had been in prison from a young age for his involvement in paramilitary activities; and after he came out, had changed his life by starting to work for community reconciliation between young Catholics and Protestants. He wanted to prevent these young people from getting dragged into the conflict, as he once did. "It was so powerful. Then I thought, I have to go back. I wanted to document the hidden stories, not of violence, but of peace-building, of people working for alternatives." She went back to write her thesis about the Troubles and the Good Friday Agreement, focusing on how people in the Shankill community experienced these from an identity perspective. Later, she worked in Srebrenica in Bosnia Herzegovina, for a civil foreign presence project. During this time, she also saw a lot of identity related issues playing out, however, at the time did not yet analyse these through a gender les – though looking back this is so apparent: "Now I see it, but also see others who don't see it, and my own experience helped me to understand them better."
According to Isabelle we should ask ourselves: have we not worked too much inside the system? Young people may say, "oh don't start about Beijing again", but this is a major piece of work.

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Only focusing on inside *or* outside strategies is not the question – after all, thinking in boxes is not a feminist thing to do. "We need several options, we have to put our eggs in many baskets."

IREEN: "POLITICALLY I AM CONVINCED WE CANNOT AFFORD TO GIVE UP ON THE STRATEGY OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING. WE HAVE TO DO STRATEGIC FRAMING. GENDER EQUALITY IS SMART ECONOMICS. SMART EVERYTHING. WE MAINSTREAM EVERYTHING. YOUTH, HIV, GENDER... BUT THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO GET OUT OF THE BANDAGE AND REPAIR MODE OF AFTERMATH CORRECTIONS THAT SO MANY OF US AS GENDER EXPERTS, ADVISORS OR WHATEVER WE ARE RELEGATED TO. WE NEED TO BE AT THE TABLE AND BE PART OF THE PROCESSES OF DEFINING AND UNDERTAKING THE ACTUAL PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND THE SUBSEQUENT DESIGN STAGES OF PROGRAMME DESIGN, BUDGETING AND PLANNING. WE NEED TO ASK THE DEEP QUESTIONS OF WHAT DEVELOPMENT MODELS WE ARE PROMOTING, NOT JUST REPAIRING THEM TO MAKE DEVELOPMENT WORK OR LESS HARMFUL FOR WOMEN. I CONTINUE TO BE A FIRM BELIEVER OF THE DUAL APPROACH TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING: MAINTAINING A CORE OF DISTINCTIVE EXPERTISE AND SPECIALIST FEMINIST POLITICS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY DISPERSING SUCH FEMINIST EXPERTISE INTO ALL POLICY AREAS AND INTO THE WORK OF ALL (MAINSTREAM) POLITICAL ACTORS."

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WINDING UP

BY PROFESSOR ELAINE UNTERHALTER

She tried to group the threads of what was said into three areas:

1. Strategies of the different periods/decades, which span across periods.
2. Pressures recurring in the different periods.
3. Redefinitions that emerged in the different periods and point to the future.

STRATEGIES

a) To be pioneers; to pick up optimism, bravery; and the potential of new spaces for organising and engaging
b) Assembling knowledge, information. Using conventional and unconventional ways of building insight (includes 'spying'); going beyond the frames of understanding or expectation of how things should be
c) Working in and beyond available spaces, which include systems and kitchen tables; sitting on the insider/outsider divide. Building and crossing bridges. Appreciating openings and closures (doors and windows). Carrying the physical and emotional scars, wounds of this process, and carrying on.
d) Combining – e.g. gender & women; gender & intersectionality; 'straight' insider politics and social mobilisation

PRESSURES

a) Institutional politics and power inequalities; includes engagements with hierarchies and perspectives/analysis e.g. are you pressured to see the glass (say of gender equality or women's rights) as half full or half empty?
b) Misrecognitions – issues that were dropped/less appreciated (e.g. the environment). Struggling to put LGBT issues on the table. Turning Beijing into nostalgia.
c) Sufficient resources – money, time, political allies.
d) The violent impact of the 'outside' world – wars; genocidal conflicts; ideological and physical assaults.

REDEFINITIONS

a) Of power – relocating and redefining this as friendships, dancing, care, weaving, mixing, reaching out across assumed identities;
b) Appreciating decades and their achievements/dynamics as mixed; avoiding simple characterisations
c) Paying attention to changing the frame; remembering Beijing as a political process of engagement
d) Understanding/hoping/acting against the odds; taking small steps that carry big messages.
e) (and from Loes' closing) – appreciating the texture of 'together'. Unchartered paths. You can walk very fast when you walk alone, but only if you walk together you can get somewhere.

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CLOSING

At the closing of the formal setting of the seminar, Ireen shared her three ambitions for the near future.

She was elected as a board member of AWID. As funder of AWID, she could never join the board. Now it will help to keep in contact with her international network of feminists and activists.

She has decided to pursue a dream that she has had for a few years: to collect the stories of 35 years of Gender, Women & Development. The wish to do so became more urgent when Geertje Lycklama passed away last year in November. She has two books in mind: one with the stories and interviews with pioneers and the current actors. And the other, more analytical, about the international role of the Netherlands in promoting the agenda of women's rights and gender equality.

The third project is that from mid-October onwards, she will be part of the gender team at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam in a part-time temporary position.

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MAKING CONNECTIONS

"I THINK UNDERSTANDING OUR HISTORIES OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IS ABOUT MAKING CONNECTIONS. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT AND WHO IS LINKED TOGETHER, AND WHY. WHICH FACETS OF GENDER ARE WE LINKING TOGETHER AND WHICH FACETS ARE WE IGNORING. BUT THIS LINKING TOGETHER IS NOT JUST A MECHANICAL EXERCISE. IT IS ALSO ABOUT SPEAKING UP AND I HOPE WE WILL NEVER STOP TALKING ABOUT THE INJUSTICES THAT WE CONFRONT!"

ELAINE UNTERHALTER

COLOFON

ISBN: 97890824796-0-7
NUR 745
December 2015
Text & editing: Leontine Bijleveld, Ireen Dubel, Kristen Gehrman and Suzanne Hoeksema
With the help of the keynote speakers the editors have added references and clarifications when they thought that this would contribute to a better understanding.
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It is permitted to quote from this publication with reference to the source.
Photo’s: Tamara Harte
Design: Frissewind in communicatie en design, Amsterdam
Published by: Dames fan ‘e Riege
Riegeweg 2
8749 TD Pingjum
Netherlands
www.damesvanderiege.nl
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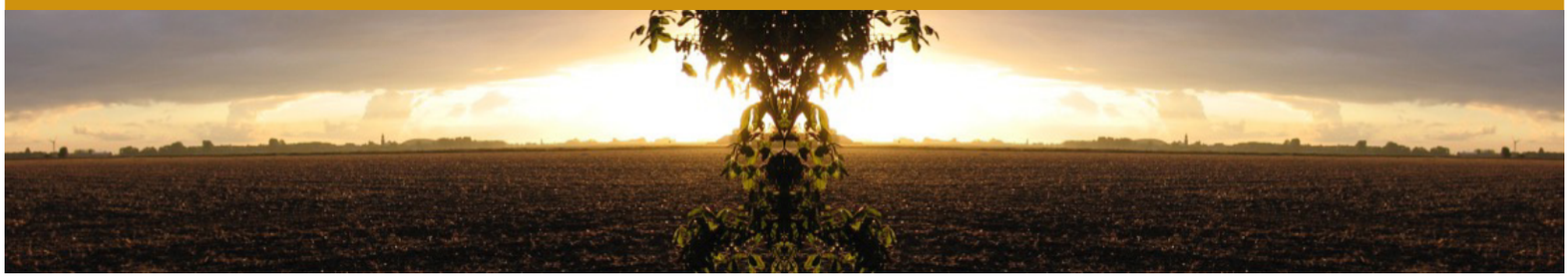
DIVIDED IN CULTURE, UNITED IN STRUGGLE

"WHAT WAS THE STRUGGLE, WHICH UNITED US THEN, ALL ABOUT? THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL, WE SHARED OUR INDIVIDUAL EMBODIED EXPERIENCES AS WOMEN, WE LAUGHED AND CRIED TOGETHER, WE ANALYSED THE SYSTEMIC UNEQUAL GENDER POWER RELATIONS AND WE FELT UNITED IN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE. WHILE THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXTS AND THEREFORE THE CONCRETE ISSUES OF STRUGGLE HAVE CHANGED, THE GRAND THEME AND IDEAL HAS NOT. THEREFORE, THE IN SISTERHOOD SLOGAN IS STILL RELEVANT TODAY. FINDING AGAIN AND AGAIN A COMMON AGENDA AND WORKING IN SOLIDARITY, REMAINS SO IMPORTANT. IT BROUGHT AND STILL BRINGS US TOGETHER FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT IS PERSONAL. IT IS POLITICAL. IT IS BOTH... AND IT IS ONGOING."

LOES KEYSERS

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