

CHAPTER 2 GENDER MAINSTREAMING, ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND THE POLITICS OF INFLUENCING

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This chapter addresses the debates about gender mainstreaming, organisational change and the politics of influencing to which the present book aims to contribute. That gender mainstreaming is political has long been accepted, but for this perception to be useful it needs to be transposed onto a much more strategically-oriented understanding of feminist bureaucrats' activism. Drawing on material from the book's case studies the theoretical arguments are developed about marginality, effectiveness and strategy in the context of the ebb and flow of gender mainstreaming within the international development system.

This chapter starts with an overview of the international development system as the context for a brief historical analysis of gender mainstreaming in development. I then briefly examine some of the inherent contradictions in the development system and its associated pitfalls that feminist bureaucrats need to be alert to in their efforts to facilitate social transformation. Thereafter I shift focus to examine more closely the ambivalence of feminist bureaucrats. I consider what it means to be a politically engaged bureaucrat, including their motivation and the challenges and opportunities of being marginal. I then examine more specifically what it means to be a feminist in a bureaucracy using concepts such as institutional entrepreneur and 'tempered radical', and the implications for feminist bureaucrats' most important political strategy, namely constructive relations with feminist movements and networks.

The Institutional Context of 'Development'

While development with a small 'd' connotes progress and growth, 'Development' with a capital 'D' refers to the fifty-year-old paradigm of planned interventions in 'developing' countries (Hart 2001) that involves a complex and dynamic institutional nexus of discourses, norms and organizations into which the contributors to this book have been incorporated. It is a daunting and rapidly changing institutional environment for feminist bureaucrats. The international development sector is composed of thousands of separate organizations. Money, ideas and people circulate within a web of organizational relationships (Eyben 2006). Official

aid agencies in rich countries finance governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in recipient countries. NGOs in donor countries raise money from voluntary contributions and government budgets to pass on to their counterparts in the South – who are trying to influence their own governments while at the same time seeking to influence donor government policies regarding recipient countries and multilateral organizations that their governments finance. These multilaterals include international finance institutions such as the World Bank and regional banks like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women, and the European Commission. The multilateral organizations transfer resources to recipient country governments and NGOs, while seeking to influence them and everyone else. And all this mutual influencing and jockeying for position is performed by trans-organizational formal and informal networks of policy actors pursuing particular agendas in a multitude of global arenas.

This institutional nexus committed itself in 2000 to the Millennium Declaration and a few years later the Millennium Development Goals, including a goal relating to gender equality. The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Paris Declaration on Effective Aid of 2005 was designed to achieve these Goals through harmonization of effort in support of recipient country poverty reduction strategies (O'Neill, this volume, Chapter 6). Civil society in those countries was framed as the watchdog of the state that can hold it accountable to the country's citizens, and international NGOs were encouraged to build local capacity to that end (Mercer 2002). But soon after the Millennium highpoint some countries in Asia and Latin America began to change their status from recipients to donors, providing bilateral aid to poorer countries and financing multilateral organizations. These changes have led many to the conclusion that 'the West and the international development institutions, founded and controlled by [it] will gradually lose their exclusive competence in development strategies' (Six 2009: 1118).

So far there is little evidence about how this major shift in the development paradigm will play out in relation to global development policies on gender (Eyben forthcoming). However, as the political stance of the 'emerging powers' is non-interference in the domestic policies of their aid recipients (Mawdsley 2011), and as their aid becomes more influential, traditional donors' support to women's rights may fall more out of fashion. Meanwhile other, new institutional actors are already making their mark. On the one hand are philanthro-capitalists like the Gates Foundation, which see development as a technical matter that can be

effectively achieved through employing the approaches of business management expertise (Edwards 2008), and are noted for their absence of interest in gender equality. On the other hand is the corporate sector entering partnerships with donor governments and multilateral agencies on the premise that the private sector is more efficient and effective at achieving development objectives, including those associated with gender. Organizations like the Nike Foundation in partnership with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) are promoting their own instrumental brand of gender equality (Eyben 2011).

Against this backdrop I briefly review the history of gender mainstreaming as the more immediate shaping force of feminist bureaucrats' activism in development organizations and then identify some of the problems and pitfalls they face when working as feminists from inside the development system.

'Gender Mainstreaming in Development'

Between the 1975 first world conference on women in Mexico and the fourth such conference in 1995 in Beijing, women in development (WID) became part of the standard discourse of global development policy. 'A good working definition of WID is simply the taking of women into account, improving their status, and increasing their participation in the economic, social and political development of communities, nations and the world' (Fraser 2004: ix). In the 1970s the WID lobby argued that women as well as men should be beneficiaries of development. Hard-nosed neo-liberal male economists interpreted this argument to regard women as consumers rather than as producers of wealth. Women, when thought about at all, were a category of the population that had specific needs, such as water and firewood (men apparently never being thirsty or hungry). Women, not men, had babies. They were wealth consumers, not producers. Men had to make economic growth happen for consuming women to reap the benefits. Then in the 1980s what seemed at the time a bold and radical shift in discourse, a new argument was introduced: women were not only potential beneficiaries; they were also agents of development. Thus started the era of instrumentalist advocacy to persuade male decision-makers that that they should invest in women to secure faster development. To include women in development projects led to greater efficiency and effectiveness.

In the early 1990s came a further sea change. The United Nations Conference on Human Rights made a breakthrough: it recognized that women's rights are human rights. The

instrumentalist/efficiency agenda moved into the shadows as the preparations for the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference developed a vision of global social transformation. Amartya Sen said that development was freedom and women were claiming it. Beijing marked the apex of twenty years of sustained endeavour, helped in the second half of that period by the international climate becoming more favourable than before to women organizing. The end of the Cold War led to the return of parliamentary democracy in many countries and an increased international emphasis on human rights. The macro-economics of the Washington Consensus and the associated structural adjustment policies of the 1980s did not disappear, but they ceased to be the unique preoccupation and site of contestation among international development organizations. The negative impact of structural adjustment combined with the new enthusiasm for civil society and democracy following the end of the Cold War led to people – and their participation – becoming important. The coalition of grassroots activists, politicians and bureaucrats that met at Beijing was emboldened by this positive climate.

By then, it was no longer just the radical fringe which argued that systemic improvement to the status of women could only be achieved by transforming gender relations and the historically derived structures that sustained these relations (Miller and Razavi 1995). This was an agenda that included transforming bureaucracies, because they were seen to have historically institutionalized the unequal power relations between men and women. Public administration was not delivering gender equitable policies because of how gender structured, the 'power and opportunity within administration' (Goetz 1992: 6). Rao and Kelleher's work with BRAC from the early 1990s onwards demonstrated the challenges for organizations with gender equity goals to change the way they worked so that these goals could be met (Rao and Kelleher 1995). Hence, paragraph 290 of the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA) states that 'Effective implementation of the Platform will also require changes in the internal dynamics of institutions and organizations, including values, behaviour, rules and procedures that are inimical to the advancement of women'. The PfA (Chapter IV) also required organizations to 'promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective'.

Gender mainstreaming as defined at Beijing was thus both a strategy for infusing mainstream policy agendas with a gender perspective and for transforming the institutions associated with these agendas. Its radical promise has dimmed since then as it became increasingly evident that the desired results were not being achieved. The run-up to the 2005 'Beijing Plus Ten' provoked a moment of significant reflection among international development researchers and practitioners. The overall conclusion was that the transformational promise of Beijing had

failed to bring about a policy shift in favour of women's empowerment. By 2006, a spate of negative evaluations had further depressed feminists working inside large development bureaucracies. These evaluations confirmed a failure to sustain the development sector's interest in women's empowerment. Had they been too ambitious, feminists asked, when they were seeking to transform their bureaucracies? Would more modest objectives have achieved more? Some feminist bureaucrats argued that buying into the prevailing discourse of efficiency and effectiveness might, after all be a quicker route than a rights-based approach for getting their organizations to take 'women's empowerment' seriously.

By 2010, the mood had shifted yet again. 'Gender equality and women's empowerment' have re-established themselves in international development agencies as important goals to which senior management appears to be paying serious attention. The vote in the United Nations General Assembly to establish a UN 'gender entity' was an impressive result (Sandler, this volume, chapter 10). Three years earlier, many – including the editors of this volume would not have predicted that so many governments would have lobbied so hard in the UN corridors to secure such a change. Yet while the new avowedly feminist Executive Director of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet, spoke about women's rights, the World Bank continued to promote ever more vigorously its 'gender is smart economics' approach. There were also ominous signs of how right-of-centre donor governments were framing their work on gender equality. DFID influenced by the Nike Foundation returned to the language of the British government in the early 1980s with its commitment in its 2011-2015 business plan to lead international action to 'empower and educate girls, recognize the role of women in development and help to ensure that healthy mothers can raise strong children'.¹

Problems and Pitfalls for Feminist Gender Specialists

Despite the changes to the institutional system of international development described earlier, there are certain historical characteristics of the paradigm that are still recognizable and that continue to shape notions of gender mainstreaming and feminist bureaucrats' strategies. It is a problematic paradigm (see for example Rist 2001, Grillo 1997, Hart 2001, Kothari and Minogue 2002) that creates inter-linked pitfalls that feminists must circumvent to avoid reinforcing the very thing they are trying to change.

Although the effect is diminished when staff are assigned to country offices, there is first of all the pitfall of a spatial, cognitive and social distance between the staff in development

agencies and the people for whom they are designing or advocating policies. The racist legacy of colonial attitudes shaping international development practice is still evident in the structures of authority, relations and hierarchy (Kothari 2006, Crewe and Fernando 2006). Joanne Sandler (Chapter 10) highlights how development agencies expect aid-recipient countries to do things which their own agencies often fail to achieve. Canada's export of gender-based analysis to developing countries has been criticized for 'marketing a model that has yet to be successfully implemented at home' (Hanson 2007).

The detachment from diverse and complex local realities can make international development policy struggles self-referential and disconnected from the experience and views of people in developing countries that such policies are meant to help. It contributes to and is reinforced by a process of 'othering' which entails the invention of categories and stereotypes – 'the poor', 'Moslem women', etc. (Moncrieffe and Eyben 2007). This is the second pitfall. Feminists in development organizations risk making essentialist claims about women's lives to demonstrate the correctness of their policy prescriptions (Smyth, chapter 8, this volume). Arguments become de-politicized and turned into myths that are 'essentialisms and generalizations, simplifying frameworks and simplistic slogans' (Cornwall et al 2007: 1). When those making such claims receive or expect privileges and authority based on their whiteness or on their ability to allocate financial resources, we would expect tensions in the relations between them and those on whose behalf they are making such claims (Mohanty 1988). In another Pathways study, five women's rights organizations in Bangladesh highlighted what makes a good donor: mutual respect, solidarity, responsiveness and helpfulness. Donors' negative qualities, on the other hand were: being top-down; not giving the organization a 'decent hearing'; no transparency in decision-making; wanting too much publicity; imposing their decisions; being bureaucratic and inflexible; and thinking too much of themselves (Nazneen and Sultan 2011).

Another legacy from the time of Europe's imperial expansion is the pitfall of expertise in which 'the universal [is asserted] over the particular, the travelled over the placed, the technical over the political, and the formal over the substantive' (Craig and Porter 2006: 120, cited in Mosse 2011). Gender analysis is part of and contributes to a broader body of development expertise characterized by Mosse (2011: 7) as 'travelling orthodoxies' that apply universal policy models to diverse contexts. The distinctive character of development institutions ensures that manuals and policy guidance notes, reporting templates and planning frameworks have more power than in other bureaucracies to standardize judgements and promote particular diagnoses and solutions (Mosse 2011). In promoting the tools and

procedures of 'gender mainstreaming', a feminist bureaucrat may unreflectively reproduce the inequitable power relations that she is seeking to change.

Finally, there is the pitfall of failure of accountability. Unlike national bureaucracies in democratic contexts, international development organizations are unaccountable to those for whom they exist. UN Women, for example, is not accountable to rural women in Bangladesh. It is easier to promote policy interventions inspired in global policy spaces and detached from local realities in a development aid context than in a domestic context, where citizens in a democracy can use public protest, the media and eventually their vote to show policymakers that they are out of touch. Nor is this just a syndrome of government bilateral development agencies and multilateral organizations. International NGOs also risk succumbing to belief in their own simplistic messages designed to raise money from voluntary contributions by making development projects sound easy. Like the donor governments on whom they partly depend, they can fall prone to funding projects that are easy to implement with measurable outcomes but may have no socially transformative effect.

In her overview of gender mainstreaming in the European Union, Sylvia Walby (2005) discusses instances of policy change in EU countries in which expert gender knowledge intertwines with and is balanced by democratic voice and accountability. In development institutions, the absence of democratic accountability to those for whom the institutions exist distorts how academic evidence is used and leaves it open to abuse to satisfy one way demands for accountability back to those funding the system. Extraordinary demands are being made by some bilateral agencies, governments and foundations in terms of reporting against quantifiable achievements – what can be counted that bear little relation to how social transformation happens. These demands are having an effect on UN agencies, on development research institutes and on international NGOs, all of whom pass donor government demands down to the organizations they are partnering in developing countries.

I have briefly sketched some pitfalls of power and knowledge that feminist gender specialists in development organizations must learn to steer clear of to stay faithful to their transformative cause. However, they cannot escape another, deeper trap, namely that they are strategizing for social transformation from a location in a global institution – international development that post-development criticism argues sustains inequitable power relations more than it succeeds in changing them (see for example, Crush 1995, Escobar 1996, Pieterse 2000). If they cannot avoid this trap, they must learn to turn it to their advantage by using the inequitable power their location gives them. Bourdieu (1985: 731) comments, those with the

most power to make change happen are ‘on the whole... least inclined to do so’. However, he adds that there is also a minority among those with power who do want to change things. These are the people who feel marginalized because of an identity which places them in a relative position of subjection despite their powerful position in the bigger scheme of things. This experience of relative oppression motivates them to transform the power structures that oppress others much more seriously than it does them. Thus, changes to power relations occur through the agency of this minority whose relative institutional powerlessness motivates them to help those with very little power and with whom they perceive they have a common identity of oppression, such as, for example being black or female.²

The next section elaborates this argument, namely that feminist gender specialists are motivated by their relative powerlessness to work for social change, taking advantage of their marginal position inside powerful institutions to capitalize on their dual identity as bureaucrats and feminists.

Being a Bureaucrat

Feminist officials’ potential to support social transformative action depends on their having a feminist commitment and motivation combined with a political ability to operate strategically both within and beyond the confines of the bureaucratic system. To do this they have to be good bureaucrats. The feminist agenda appears to sit uneasily with the caricature of pen-pushing bureaucrats, content with the status quo, whose only political manoeuvring concerns personal career advancement. However, while ‘feminist bureaucrat’ sounds like a contradiction in terms concepts such as ‘institutional entrepreneur’ and ‘tempered radical’ employees who are able to make their organizations think and act differently are useful in helping us understand how they operate effectively and take advantage of the contradictions in their identity.

Evolving bureaucracies

The ideal bureaucratic form of organization is rational. Decisions are based on objective evidence, scrutinized by experts working in a hierarchical system where all obey the established procedures (Courpasson and Reed 2004). The first thing I noticed when I first started working 25 years ago at the British aid ministry (now the Department for International Development, DFID) was its hierarchy, visually established through the organization of

space. The size of one's room, its number of windows, type of furniture and the presence or absence of carpeting were all signals of status. Clerical staff were crowded into large rooms, while those of higher rank sat isolated, each in their own room behind closed doors. Today in DFID nearly all staff sit in an open-plan arrangement; only the most senior ones have kept separate offices. Meetings are held in rooms designed and designated for that purpose, rather than, as it used to be, in the office of the most important person attending. In some large international NGOs like Oxfam and Action Aid, even top management no longer have their own offices.

The disappearance of these outward signs of status is part of an evolution from the traditional bureaucratic model into what has been described as 'post bureaucracy', in which organizations have increasingly fuzzy boundaries with greater mutual inter-dependence (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003). There is a new emphasis on entrepreneurial spirit, transformational leadership and charismatic visioning (Clegg et al 2006). As a result, it is argued, values such as impartiality, due process and the strict separation of the public from the private domain are under attack (Hogget 2007). The old hierarchies have to a large extent dissolved and been replaced by networks of power and information, mirrored by other emerging networks of civil society (Castells 1997). Without fixed status and job purpose, the networked organization – exemplified by organizations like Google – is more dynamic and action-oriented (Mazlish 2000). Policymaking is no longer contained within the bureaucracy; it is a networked process involving advocacy coalitions and epistemic communities that straddle the divides between politicians, bureaucrats and non-state actors (Rhoades 2006). The feminist arguments that classic bureaucracy is an essentially patriarchal form of organization (Alvesson and Thompson 2005) might point towards post-bureaucracy as more sympathetic to feminist interests and the potential for gender mainstreaming to be transformative. In the post-bureaucratic era, policy is no longer the privileged domain of technical experts behind closed doors, but involves a diverse set of actors whose voice is significant in setting agendas rather than just influencing already established policy themes (Walby 2005).

However, many aspects of classic bureaucracy have remained (Alvesson and Thompson 2005). Although e-mailing and open-plan offices may encourage greater collaboration and more democratic ways of working, the underlying structure of authority, including associated salary differentials, may not have shifted. Joanne Sandler observes that the most powerful means used to keep UNIFEM politically weak was the low grade of its Executive Director 'which suppressed all other post levels, so UNIFEM Directors in the field were often one or

two ranks lower than their counterparts' in other institutions (this volume [Chapter 10 p.____](#)). Moreover, organic systems and flexibility as opposed to established procedures can make it harder than in a rule-based bureaucracy to locate where decisions are made and thus more difficult to engage with decision-making processes. Hidden power (Gaventa 2006) grows as formal power – observable spaces of decision-making – shrinks. Conspiracy theorists might even suspect that post-bureaucracy – with the apparently 'feminine' values of relationships and networking– has been a wily patriarchal response to reduce the impact of the increasing numbers of professional women who have entered the management structures of large organizations.

The reconfiguring of the bureaucratic idiom has coincided with an ideological development in which public sector management is judged as less efficient and effective than the private sector. In many countries, just when the state has started employing proportionately more women in senior positions and introducing more gender-responsive policies and services, its overall reach and authority has shrunk. Takyiwaa Manuh and her co-authors (this volume, Chapter 3) make this startlingly clear in their analysis of what has happened to Ghanaian public sector bureaucracy following more than 20 years of structural adjustment in which civil servant capacity has eroded. They point out that this dismantling of the civil service coincided with the Ghanaian government signing up to the Nairobi and Beijing conference commitments for gender justice, so that 'its power and capacity to intervene directly to bring about social justice was being eroded as power shifted to market forces, donors and NGOs' ([Ch.2, p.____](#)). At the same time, at least one characteristic of the bureaucratic ideal – evidence-based policy – has strengthened through the quasi-hegemony of the New Public Management regime (Kantola 2010). The claims of NPM that devolved decision-making leads to the empowerment of those lower down the hierarchical pyramid are questionable. Top-down authority is reinforced through the increased demands of performance or results-based measurement that NPM imposes (Clegg et al 2006). Surveillance is framed as 'accountability' and the increase in planning and reporting requirements accompanied by demands for quantification all represent a return to the original spirit of modern bureaucracy as formulated by its principal founder, Bentham (Hare 1981).

In this volume Karin has to design a gender equality plan with 'monitorable indicators and tangible results' (Chapter 8). Laura Turquet (Chapter 7) struggles to come up with quantifiable 'asks' for policy advocacy because 'women's rights' is 'too fluffy'. Patti O'Neill (Chapter 6) decides to use the statistical evidence of how much each donor agency spends on

women as a political tool that each agency's gender specialist could use 'to make a real difference to the priority their agency gives to gender'. Evidence-based policy discourse is used ever more frequently to justify investing in women. 'When we are invited ... to produce a clear evidence base for strengthening commitments to women, and the process falls short of producing these commitments, we feel guilty that we could not present the magic piece of evidence to convince them. We fail to realize that no such evidence will do so', warns Joanne Sandler (Chapter 10, p_____).

The motivation of bureaucrats

Anna Marie Holli (2008: 169) remarks that 'issues concerning women's mutual co-operation, coalition-building and joint activities for achieving their goals seem to have become somewhat passé' in feminist political studies, along with such ideas as 'sisterhood' and 'women's interests'. She argues that despite theoretical post-structuralist advances in feminist scholarship, it would be a mistake however to ignore the empirical importance of co-operative efforts. This same point applies to the feminist bureaucrats in this volume. Their sense of solidarity is a fundamental driver in seeking to make their bureaucracies promote the rights of women who are in very different circumstances from themselves. Feminist gender specialists are committed to improving the condition of women. 'We have a moral duty to occupy these spaces', one said recently to me.

Yet such a strong political agenda incurs a risk because in many state bureaucracies civil servants are not expected to have a personal motivation. The bureaucratic ideal of 'impartiality' is a discourse that can frame a concern for women's rights as special pleading and out of place (Chappell 2002). On the other hand, the literature on the discretionary power of individuals in bureaucracies demonstrates that others as well as feminists are partial. In the ideal bureaucracy people lower down the hierarchy obey orders handed down from on high. However, this is not what necessarily happens in real life. Classic studies such as *Street Level Bureaucrats* (Lipsky 1997) look at how front-line workers continuously exercise their discretion in their relationships with citizens and clients of public services. Rational choice theory uses the concept of principal-agent to explain how agents public sector officials pursue their individual interests, subverting policy intentions determined by the legislature or ministers (the principals). Hence to ensure alignment of agents/actors' interests with those of the organization, positive and negative incentives are introduced to encourage individuals to contribute to the principal's desired outcomes. Behavioural control through incentive

structures such as performance-related pay and promotion prospects has become so 'naturalized' that it is almost a hegemonic discourse. One of the 'guiding principles' of the World Bank's action plan, *Gender is Smart Economics* (World Bank 2006: 3), is 'incentives rather than mandates and obligations'. In this volume Claudia (Chapter 8) explains how she helped introduce an incentives scheme as part of her organization's gender equality action plan by offering bonuses to senior staff to encourage them to implement the plan.

Other organizations use different means. Smyth (this volume, Chapter 9) was struck by the contrast between Oxfam and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The latter is more of a traditional bureaucracy that controls staff behaviour through standard operating procedures. Staff are meant to follow detailed instructions for incorporating gender issues in ADB's projects and programmes. Oxfam, a more informal and less hierarchical organization, has largely relied on winning over staff's hearts and minds in favour of gender equality. However, because it is an organization in which systematic application of established procedures is still relatively weak, 'gender requirements can be ignored without much fear of sanction' (p. ____). Smyth notes ruefully that although most ADB staff are largely indifferent to gender issues, the organization does actually systematically apply its gender equality policy something that Oxfam is still struggling to do.

Oxfam started up as a small group of committed volunteers and its continuing dependence on 'hearts and minds' and their culture and ethos remains influenced by its organizational history, despite it having become a large bureaucracy. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that not all organizations subscribe to a view of bureaucrats as self-interested individuals, that have to be controlled either through orders from the top or through incentives. Moreover, some scholars of bureaucracy have viewed bureaucrats as people with a moral commitment to ensuring that the state delivers on its responsibilities (Du Gay 2000). Skocpol (1997) provides historical examples from around the world in which state officials are portrayed as autonomous actors pursuing ideological goals and transformative strategies even in the face of indifference or resistance from their own political masters or the wider society (Skocpol 1997). So are bureaucrats 'knaves' to be managed through incentives, or 'knights' managed through their own self-motivation to work for the public good? (Le Grand 2003). As we have seen, the balance between the two varies from one organizational culture to another, but feminist bureaucrats – 'knights' almost by definition – are surprised when they find they have to work with colleagues who are 'knaves'.

Change Comes From the Margins

Sandler (this volume, Chapter 10) argues that the psychological state of feminist bureaucrats is shaped by the patriarchal institutional cultures in which they work. Many are in a state of denial about institutional sexism and then blame the lack of change on their own personal inadequacies – and feel guilty for these. ‘It’s not that gender mainstreaming has failed, but that we have failed gender mainstreaming’ was the comment at a meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) GenderNet (this volume, Chapter 6). Nevertheless, Sandler suggests that some feminist bureaucrats achieve a third stage, ‘when you’ve left denial and guilt far behind’ and are empowered. Empowerment, writes Sandler, ‘is about more than just power. It is about using power with vision, integrity and inclusiveness’ (p. ____). Feminist bureaucrats are effective when able to analyze their severe operational constraints and combine this analysis with a willingness to use power.

Several contributors to this volume emphasize that when feminists find themselves in potentially oppressive, patriarchal institutions, the necessity of regular and careful political analysis is essential. Aruna Rao and her colleagues encouraged UN gender specialists to make organizational maps of power. By observing where decisions were made, ‘they learnt that power was not located in just one place’, but ‘circulates and is exercised rather than held, and that power exercised to dominate or exclude needs to be effectively countered, and structures and practices built to allow transgressions’ (this volume, Chapter 11 p. ____). Equipped with their regularly updated power analyses, how do feminist bureaucrats engage with the bureaucracy? A pair of actor-oriented concepts is useful in answering this question. These are ‘institutional entrepreneur’ and ‘tempered radical’.

‘Institutional entrepreneur, a concept borrowed from organizational studies, throws light on the interplay between structure and agency through paying attention to the institutional values, norms, discourses and practices that shape bureaucratic action (Garud et al 2007). Institutional entrepreneurs are working for change from a location within the institution. They develop and transform what is available to them. ‘I looked at the core areas of the DAC work – peer reviews, statistics, aid effectiveness’, says Patti O’Neill, ‘and thought really long and hard about what we could do with these’ (this volume, Chapter 6, p. ____). Feminist bureaucrats take advantage of existing rules, procedures and discourses to make new wine in old bottles, in the hope of eventually throwing the old bottles away. This does not always work. Sometimes the new wine loses its originality and begins to taste much like the old. ‘Old ways of doing things stick and settle down, deeply sedimented, in both consciousness and

organization, irretrievably there' (Clegg et al 2006: 323). Thus Joanne Sandler, in describing the creation of the new UN agency, worries whether it might be irretrievably handicapped because although 'we have changed the form [of the gender entities] we have not changed the institution of which it is part' (this volume **Chapter 10, p. ____**).

The notion of institutional entrepreneur is useful because it broadens our perspective from the organization to the wider institutional context in which the organization is situated. Feminist bureaucrats recognize they cannot change their own organization without tackling this wider context and thus reach out beyond their employer to engage more widely in the development sector. Hence, a strong theme in this volume is the building of inter-organizational alliances between different development bureaucracies. For example, Holzner describes how she organized agreement within the EU on a controversial policy text concerning women in armed conflict (this volume, Chapter 5), one in which she sought to change the discourse from 'women as mothers' to 'women as actors'. A phone call to a colleague in Sweden started a snowballing process, by which Holzner was able to get in touch with a succession of other like-minded bureaucrats scattered across the EU member countries, eventually influencing the EU itself.

Arguably, a gender specialists' capacity to change things depends on two factors (Grindle and Thomas 1991: 187). The first is the institutional environment (as well as the actor's quality of analysis of that environment), including the person's own character and resources; the second is the character of the policy issue itself. Grindle and Thomas propose that 'systematic thinking about the inter-relationships and consequences of context, circumstance and policy characteristics therefore provides both an analytic tool ... and a first cut at developing strategies ... for change'. This is a helpful framework for feminist bureaucrats, enabling them to identify what is realistically possible and encouraging them to become self-aware in practice (Clay and Schaffer 1984). Here the notion of 'tempered radical' (Meyerson 2001) proves useful. Whereas, institutional entrepreneurs are expected to 'institutionalize the alternative rules, practices or logics they are championing' (Garud et al 2007: 962), tempered radicals appear more modest in their ambitions. Tempered radicals, explains Meyerson, learn to rock the boat without ever falling out of it. They achieve change through a succession of small wins. Small rather than big wins may be all that is possible in relation to a feminist bureaucrat's agenda, bearing in mind that their agenda of societal transformation is profoundly radical. However, accumulatively, small wins may make a big difference:

A small win is a concrete, complete, implemented outcome of moderate importance. By itself, one small win may seem unimportant. A series of wins at small but significant tasks, however, reveals a pattern that may attract allies, deter opponents, and lower resistance to subsequent proposals. Small wins are controllable opportunities that produce visible results.

Weick 1984: 43

In their classic essay on being effective in a bureaucracy, Clay and Schaffer (1984: 192) stress, 'All is to be questioned. Nothing is to be taken for granted. Nothing is innocuous'. Both 'tempered radicals' and 'institutional entrepreneurs' must be successful in avoiding being so institutionalized that they stop questioning how the world works, thus making it impossible to imagine alternatives. Undoubtedly, as has been the case with this book's contributors, moving around from one location to another helps Seeking out and being comfortable with marginality is important. It can also be cultivated, not just through a deliberate change in one's institutional location as was the case of Ines Smyth (this volume, Chapter 9), but also through reflective practice, as with the action research project on which this book is based.. Not succumbing to the taken-for-granted is a key element of reflective practice. Based on theories of transformative learning, it requires the individual to enquire into her assumptions concerning why and how she understands the world in a certain way. Conscious and sustained reflective practice helps feminist bureaucrats to tolerate their marginal position and not to worry whether they fit. I have focused so far on how they respond to the challenges and opportunities from their role as insiders that is as bureaucrats. But when we think of feminist bureaucrats as 'institutional entrepreneurs' we must be careful to avoid thinking of them as lone champions (Clegg 2010) to the neglect of looking at the social movement from which they have sprung, which provides their motivation and shapes their agency. In that light, I now look at how they manage their role as feminists engaging with the bureaucracy, crafting their most important political strategy of building relations with feminist movements and networks.

Feminist engagement with bureaucracy

There are multiple and contested understandings of feminism. Rather than discuss these in any detail, I shall follow Mazur (2002) in understanding feminism as being firstly, solidarity with other women while recognizing and responding to the enormous diversity among women along lines of class, ethnicity, religious beliefs etc; secondly, a commitment to advancing women's rights; and thirdly, changing the patriarchal institutions that keep women subordinated. To these I would add two more elements: that feminism is about social transformation that liberates men as well as women from gendered norms, and that it involves collective action informed by values of horizontal and democratic modes of organizing.

Because bureaucratic disinterestedness does not privilege certain individuals or points of view, it can be seen as admirable (Courpasson and Reed 2004, du Gay 2000). However, for many feminists the hierarchical power of a bureaucracy has 'a tremendous capacity to hurt people, to manipulate, twist and damage human possibility' (Ferguson 1984: xii). Ferguson contrasts bureaucracy, which sees people as objects to be manipulated, with egalitarian structures, which permit individual autonomy and self-development. But, argues Riger (1994: 288), 'implying that bureaucracy is masculine and dominating, while collectivity is feminine and humanizing, stereotypes not only gender but also organizational structures ... Indeed, the accountability permitted by bureaucracy can provide a check on abuses of power that may not be possible in a non bureaucratic organization'.

In terms of its functions, a bureaucracy can be seen as sustaining the values and power relations of the wider society of which the bureaucracy is a part and thus an accessory to institutionalized racism or gender discrimination, albeit in a non-emotional and objective fashion (Bauman 1989). State bureaucracies, it is argued, reflect and reproduce wider societal patterns of the systemic subordination of women. As the institutional arm of male dominance, the bureaucratic form of organization is by its very nature oppressive to women (Calas and Smircich 1999, Ashcraft 2006). Thus, it is pointless to seek to influence laws and policies within existing state structures, because 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house' (Lorde 1997: 112). There is however a contrary view, specifically in relation to development institutions: that 'engagement in the master's house is one among many valid political strategies in contemporary development enterprises' (Staudt 2002: 57, cited in

Bedford 2007a: 104). This view is shared by Patti O'Neill in this volume (Chapter 6), who does not worry if the master's house cannot be dismantled, provided it can be sufficiently altered through renovation, with rooms added on and the view improved.

O'Neill is reflecting a more optimistic view of bureaucracies as sites of contest in which change occurs through the construction of new meanings and ways of seeing the world. From this 'tempered radical' perspective, policy advocacy for women from within the bureaucratic machinery becomes a possibility (Outshoorn and Kantola 2007, Stetson and Mazur 1995). In certain circumstances and conditions, strategic alliances between feminist politicians, bureaucrats and activists can get state bureaucracies to effectively implement pro-feminist policies. This view gave birth to the notion of 'femocrat' (Sawer 1990). This introduces a more actor-orientated approach to the institutionalization of feminism within the bureaucracy, analyzing the feminist staff responsible for taking forward this agenda, their strategies and the challenges facing them. Yet, in the present volume only Francesca Pobee-Hayford, previously a senior official in the Ghanaian Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs, is 'a self-described femocrat' (Chapter 3, p. ____). The other contributors dislike the term, possibly because it is used pejoratively by feminists outside the bureaucratic machinery who see those on the inside as 'selling out the women's movement and profiting from women's disadvantage' (Chappell 2002: 86). This challenge of insider-outsider relationships and communication about what feminist bureaucrats can achieve crops up in almost every chapter in this book, indicating its importance for feminist bureaucrats in the strategic exploitation of their marginal location.

Insider-Outsider Relationships

From her experience of influencing government policy from outside the state machinery, Laura Turquet (Chapter 7) argues strongly for a networked approach in which bureaucrats on the inside and campaigners on the outside mutually recognize and respect each other's positionality. Francesca Pobee-Hayford (Chapter 3) comments on the failure of her ministry to engage with women's organizations and to create alliances with them to influence other parts of the state bureaucracy. For Patti O'Neill, alliances beyond the bureaucracy are 'one of the most powerful things we can do' (Chapter 6, p. ____), although it requires mutual trust and the relationship may not be an easy one. Very practically, if such inside-outside strategies are to be pursued all those involved need to recognize that large organizations are not monolithic and within them champions, even soul-mates may be found. Advantage can be taken of cracks or contradictions in organizational identity. The World Bank, for example, is on the

one hand a bank and on the other an international development agency, leaving space, for pockets of resistance in which alternative policy models can be developed to challenge the dominant neo-liberal paradigm (Goetz 2003). Unfortunately, such internal contradictions may also work against a feminist bureaucrat's agenda. She may secure the support of top management and get women's rights into speeches and policy documents, but still encounter passive resistance from colleagues (this volume, Chapter 11).

The majority of this book's contributors have shifted over time from one marginal location to another in the development world. For example, Laura Turquet and Ines Smyth moved from international NGOs to very different kinds of multilateral agencies; Patti O'Neill from national machinery to a bilateral aid agency to a global policy organization, Joanne Sandler from a women's rights organization to the UN machinery and Brigitte Holzner from academia to a bilateral aid agency. In her 'velvet triangle' analysis of gender policy processes in EU institutions, Woodward (2003) discovers a similar pattern of femocrats, academics/consultants and those from organized women's movements changing places. She argues that it is the personal informal networks resulting from this process – combined with strong linkages within the institutional machinery – that has made gender mainstreaming successful within the EU which the experience of the feminist bureaucrats in the present book confirms. The more marginalized they find themselves in terms of power and resources, Woodward argues, the more they must rely on informal networking. Social movements, suggests Clegg (1989) are successful when they mobilize their resources through networks and alliances and manage to communicate with each other effectively. On the other hand, such alliance-building is not easy to achieve. Chapter 11 looks at how feminist bureaucrats can learn to balance investing in relationships on the inside with those on the outside and discuss how their commitment to collaborative ways of working with those outside the organization can be frustrated by their organizational identity and the need to be loyal to that identity – on which their internal credibility depends.

Contacts with former colleagues are not lost but fluid relations are not always easy. Some of the distrust between those on the inside and those on the outside may be due to misperceptions. Like chameleons, feminists who become bureaucrats have to change how they look and behave. Even what you wear – 'a jacket with big shoulder pads and a pair of high heels' helps one get into role (O'Neill, Chapter 6 p____). In analyzing the success of Swedish state feminism, Kabeer (2007) observes that the feminist activists working inside the state machinery operated with apparent pragmatism and careful lack of passion, like any

typical bureaucrat. Insiders are possibly even being quiet about their feminism (Chappell 2002). Yet although they have become ‘mandarins’, in their heart they remain ‘missionaries’ (Miller and Razavi 1998). Nevertheless, even if those on the outside realize that feminist bureaucrats are wearing camouflage, they still might not want to engage if they view them as liberal feminists who have failed ‘to contest neo-colonialism and capitalism’ (Bedford 2007b: 293).

Thus if ‘development’ is seen as the handmaid of neo-colonialism and capitalism, a feminist bureaucrat’s self-identification as an activist may be contentious for those whose activism is at the grassroots, or in Southern civil society, and who are deeply suspicious of the development paradigm. Laura Turquet (this volume, Chapter 7) was surprised to discover that because she worked for a big international NGO she was not viewed as part of the global women’s movement but as a ‘donor’. Ines Smyth (Chapter 9) notes how feminist organizations have been reluctant to engage with the ADB, whose ideology and practices they judge to be damaging to women. By claiming an activist identity, feminists in development bureaucracies may be claiming an unwelcome solidarity between North and South, between privileged and marginalized – a supposed sisterhood that is problematic and possibly even oppressive when, with the best of intentions, their resources and access to policy spaces squeeze out other perspectives and voices (Kantola and Squires 2008).

The controversy about whether feminists are irretrievably compromised by working for the development machine mirrors the debate between those who see bureaucrats as located across an unbridgeable divide between state and society, and those who appreciate the political strength of over-lapping networks cutting across formal organizational state-society boundaries. Banaszak (2005) takes the latter stance, arguing that the number and location of activists within the state significantly shapes feminist movements’ strategies and achievements. According to Beckwith (2007: 2005), such an effect is only likely to occur when liberal feminist movements rather than more radical feminist movements strategically collaborate with insiders. At the same time however, while a liberal feminist movement

...might employ a state-involved/insider strategy to pressure the State for improved access to women’s healthcare, a radical or socialist component of the larger movement might employ an outsider/state-involved strategy, targeting members of parliament to produce new legislation, employing mass demonstrations and other disruptive tactics. Furthermore, different components of a women’s movement may

coordinate their different strategies in the same movement campaign, engaging the same target but employing different strategies and tactics for achieving the same end.

Beckwith 2007: 2005

Feminist gender specialists can take advantage of the radicalism of other parts of the movement, without necessarily having to take the risk to their insider status of entering in direct contact with them. The overall challenge is to seek support from feminists outside the bureaucracy and to engineer this in a manner that ‘works with the grain’ of the organization employing them (this volume, Chapter 8). This means understanding its politics, cultures and ethos, as the contributors to this book do.

Notes

¹ www.dfid.gov.uk/About-DFID/Finance-and-performance/DFID-Business-plan-2011---2015/

² Although, those with whom they are sympathizing may very well reject any notion of shared oppression based on a perception of common identity, a point well made in Mohanty’s classic piece (1988). See also the discussion in Chapter 3 (this volume).

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