

Discursive translations of gender mainstreaming norms: the case of agricultural and climate change policies in Uganda

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Background

- 1995 Beijing Platform for Action – **Gender mainstreaming** instituted as the new standard to address gender issues globally
- High expectations: turning point in how governments would address gender inequalities at all scales → Consider the implications for women and men of any planned action (legislation, policies or programmes)
- Some concerns



Photo: Human Rights Watch

*"The challenge is to have the Platform for Action **translated** into concrete programmes that will achieve tangible results for all women at all levels. We should continue to 'maternize' globally but act locally"*

Specioza Kazibwe, Vice-President of Uganda,
Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995)



Background

- Emphasized the challenges that nations could face in terms of translating this international norm into local actions and concrete programs
 - Processes of norm translation would ultimately constitute the success or failure of the global ambition
- This study analyzes processes of gender norm translation in Uganda
 - ***How do processes of international norm translation into domestic policies in Uganda affect the transformative ambition of gender mainstreaming?***
 - *National, District, Sub-county level*



Norm translation

- Practices through which norms are negotiated and adapted in different contexts



Methodology

- **Uganda:**
 - Point of reference for their gender mainstreaming efforts in the East Africa region
 - However, high levels of gender inequalities remain
- **Discursive analysis & Critical Policy instrument analysis:**
 - Thirty-month research stay in Uganda
 - 4 Districts : Nwoya (Northwest), Luwero (Central), Rakai (Southwest) and Mbale (East)
 - 3 Sub-counties within each District:
 - Nwoya: Alero, Anaka, Purongo
 - Luwero: Makulubita, Kamira, Ziobwe
 - Rakai: Lwanda, Dwaniro, Kasasa
 - Mbale: Bufumbo, Busoba, Namanyonyi



Methodology

107 Policy Documents

- Agriculture
- Rural Development
- Climate Change

Sources	Docs	Documents
National	13	<p>Uganda Succession Act Amendment Decree (1972)</p> <p>The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995)</p> <p>National Development Plan (NDP) 2010/11–2014/15</p> <p>Uganda Vision 2040 (2013)</p> <p>National Land Policy (2013)</p> <p>National Agriculture Policy (2013)</p> <p>Local Government Development Planning Guidelines (2014)</p> <p>Guidelines Integration of Climate Change in Sector Plans and Budgets (2014)</p> <p>National Climate Change Policy (2015)</p> <p>Second National Development Plan (NDP II) 2015/16–2019/20</p> <p>Uganda Climate-Smart Agriculture Country Program 2015–2025</p> <p>Agriculture Sector Strategy Plan 2015/16–2019/20</p> <p>Agriculture Sector Budget Framework Paper Financial Year 2017/18</p>
District	23	<p>5-year Development Plan 2009/10–2014/15 (n = 4)</p> <p>5-year Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20 (n = 4)</p> <p>Principles and Practices of Customary Tenure in Acholiland</p> <p>District Annual Actual Budget Financial Years 2010–2015 (n = 14)</p>
Sub-county	71	<p>5-year Development Plan 2009/10–2014/15 (n = 8)</p> <p>5-year Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20 (n = 11)</p> <p>3-year Development Plan 2010/11–2012/13 (n = 2)</p> <p>Sub-county Annual Actual Budget Financial Years 2010–2015 (n = 50)</p>



Methodology

Inductive codes-to theory model (Saldaña 2013), with the support of software Atlas.ti

1st round of coding:

- (1) whether documents mentioned gender mainstreaming, gender, gender equality, women and men
- (2) how gender issues were contextualized, problematized and diagnosed
- (3) what gender issues were budgeted and what amounts were allocated to the policy instruments.

2nd round of coding:

Category building: we grouped the initial codes into themes and concepts that related to ideas of policy translation

3rd round of coding:

We examined how the themes and concepts interrelated and allowed us to inductively identify different processes of norm translation through which gender policies were domesticated.



Results

- All national and sub-national policy documents reviewed incorporated certain references to gender issues
- In sub-national (district, sub-county) development plans gender issues were always listed as one of the development priorities
- Apparent prevalence gender discourse - Five different processes through which the international norm of gender mainstreaming was molded in domestic policy



Results: Neglecting gender discourse

- Disconnect between national and sub-national policymaking in certain discourses

National

Gender and climate change discourse prominent (e.g. NDPII, Agriculture Sector Strategy Plan)

District

Climate change discourse generally present, varying degrees of gender integration:

- Luwero and Rakai: no gender and climate change
- Nwoya: Gender and climate change appears in DDP (2015/16-2019/20) but not in DDP (2009-2015) & Mbale both DDPs include gender and climate change discourse

Sub-county

Total absence of gender and climate change discourse

The translation of gender mainstreaming in CC discourse was neglected as the norm advanced through the different levels of policy-making

Where climate-specific interventions are to be implemented (local level), the discourses largely disappears, leaving gender issues unproblematized and the gender in climate change discourse unpoliticized.

Results: Embracing discursive hybridity

- Even if gender language was adopted, documents acknowledge that policies operate within entrenched patriarchal cultural norms & some discriminatory practices have not substantially changed

“Because it is mostly women are engaged in this business [agriculture] and they are **naturally weak**, they cannot do much. **They end up producing very little** and at times they are limited by the scarcity of land. This ultimately means that very little will be earned from this business and therefore low income for the households. Men should also wake up and start involving themselves in agriculture in their households if poverty is to be kicked out of the sub-county in particular and Uganda in general.”

Kasasa, Lwanda (2015)

“**Women inferiority complex** is another very big problem that has retarded development in the subcounty because women's views are rarely brought forward yet some of their views can contribute much to the development of the Sub-County and the District as a whole”

Dwaniro (2010)

- **Quotes simultaneously constituted exercise of gender mainstreaming and an expression of patriarchy** through which local gender stereotypes (e.g. ‘women as weak’, ‘men as saviors’) were reproduced

Allowed two very different logics to co-exist:
gender mainstreaming as means for gender equality
and reproduction of local unequal gender relations
(embracing discursive hybridity)



Results: Shrinking gender norms

Table 2
Gender problematizations and prescriptions for the agricultural sector in Uganda (Selection Sub-counties, Districts).

Development plan		Gender problematization	Prescription
Sub-county	Namanyonyi 2010/11–2014/15	- Women have <u>no ownership and control over land</u> , cattle, farm produce	- <u>Sensitize</u> the community about gender roles
	Bufumbo 2010/11–2014/15	- Low participation of women in fish farming. The existing five fishponds in the sub-county are owned by men	- <u>Sensitize</u> women about fish farming in order to boost their morale
	Busoba 2015/16–2019/20	- Women have <u>less ownership and control</u> over high value factors of production	- <u>Sensitize</u> women about their potential to raise household incomes
	Lwanda 2015/16–2019/20	- Women's <u>lack of control over resources</u> like land - Denying women chances of engaging in income generating activities since men are the bread winners	- <u>Sensitization</u> of men and women on their responsibilities - <u>Sensitization</u> of community on the roles of women in development
	Kamira 2015/16–2019/20	- Men put little or no labour on farm. - Women are <u>denied access to resources</u> and are refused to participate in decision-making. Gender inequality has led to low agricultural production and persistent poverty	- <u>More sensitization</u> of communities on gender issues - To promote equity in access to opportunities and control of resources
Districts	Nwoya 2010/11–2014/15 & 2015/16–2019/20	<u>Women own no assets (land)</u> but work the land owned by men	- Promotion of equal ownership of assets between genders
	Rakai 2010/11–2014/15 & 2015/16–2019/20	- <u>Women do not own land or any other productive assets</u> - Culturally women are not adequately empowered in income generating activities - Accessibility to credit is more skewed to men than women - Women culturally are inhibited from fishing activities - Limited decision-making over incomes generated from agricultural produce in households - Unequal distribution of productive and reproductive work	- Gender <u>sensitization</u> and advocacy - Recruitment of more female extension workers - Establish women credit schemes - Women group formation - Mobilization and <u>sensitization</u> of women councilors on skills enhancement and income generating activities - Training women in resource mobilization and savings

- 'Shopping list' approach to gender

The problem of gender inequalities in ownership of resources is confined to the policy area of education, backgrounding other structural areas (e.g. discriminatory patterns of inheritance), and consequently **shrinking the meaning of the gender mainstreaming norm, as means of equality, to one of education**



Results: Gender inertia

- Analysis of two consecutive 5-Year development plans allowed to compare how gender issues were examined and addressed at two different points in time
- Districts:
 - Luwero, Rakai & Nwoya Districts: strategies to address gender inequalities were exactly the same in the 2010/11–2014/15 and the 2015/16–2019/20 plans.
- Sub-counties:
 - 'situation analysis of gender' & 'gender priorities and objectives' often "copy-pasted", from one development plan to the other, or from the district to the sub-county plans (10/12 sub-counties)
 - Reported gender achievements, which normally reflect progress in addressing gender inequalities identified in the preceding development plan, also often copy-pasted (e.g. Makulubita, Kamira, Luwero)
 - Lwanda (2015/16–2019/20) reported as their own an analysis from another sub-county: *'The main economic activity in Byakabanda sub-county is farming and it is mostly women that are engaged in ...'*

The stale reproduction of text and measures in gender planning and reporting points to

- significant levels of inertia in thinking and practice around gender mainstreaming issues
- a practice of including gender issues merely as part of a bureaucratic requirement in order to comply with international gender norms and donor requirements

Results: Minimizing budgets

- Limited translation of gender mainstreaming into policy instruments.
 - **National:** Operation Wealth Creation & National Agricultural Sector Budget (FY 2017/2018) – gender prominent place in documents, but records just show ‘number of people benefiting’ (OWC), lack of gender sensitive performance indicators
 - **Districts:** between 0 to 0,06% of the total budget specifically allocated to gender issues
 - ‘Workshops and seminars’, ‘Women’s councils’, ‘Gender’
 - Luwero FY2013-2014: USD235 (for a population of 458,158 people)
 - **Sub-counties:** 0 to 1,208%
 - ‘Women’, ‘Gender’, ‘International Women’s Day’, ‘Workshops’, ‘Women’s affairs’
 - Ziobwe FY2011/12, Alero FY 2014/15, ...: USD53

The translation of gender mainstreaming norms largely stopped at the level of the policy discourse and did not translate to the same extent to government policy instruments.

Weakening of potential for transformation of gender mainstreaming norm

- The translation processes - either unintentionally or intentionally - enacted, naturalized or favored certain realities over others and greatly reduced the potential for transformation of the international norm on gender mainstreaming

Neglecting gender discourse	Disconnect between national and sub-national policy - localized systems of governance left climate change and gender issues unproblematized and thus unpoliticized
Discursive hybridity	Policies that seemingly embraced a gender mainstreaming discourse, simultaneously perpetuated gender stereotypes, not challenging pre-existing unequal gender relations
Shrinking gender norms	While gender inequality was discussed as a legitimate object of governance, the language was not sufficiently elaborated. Prescriptions given as bullet points, without any envisioned pathway for change ('Shopping list' approach to gender)
Gender inertia	'Copy-Paste' - hints towards acts of purely symbolic politics in the mainstreaming of gender in sub-national policy as a compliance to bureaucratic requirement
Minimizing budgets	Abstract nature of budget items + restricting budget allocations - the translation of the gender norm largely stopped at the discursive level and did not extend to meaningful policy instruments.



Conclusions

- While the influence of international gender mainstreaming discourse is clear, processes of norm translation showed that **informal and local gender norms affect the performance of success of gender mainstreaming strategies**
 - Gender norms translated in a way that simultaneously resonates with international discourses and permits adjustment to domestic norms and logics (affects the transformational potential of the gender mainstreaming norm)
- The **formulation of a global strategy** might be helpful for gaining legitimacy and public awareness, but **will not suffice in dealing with highly localized and context specific gender dynamics, and in dealing with structurally embedded gender inequalities.** Other strategies need to be in place for its success:
 - Stronger focus on promising practices already shaping gender relations in specific territories
 - Increasing the attention to women's rights movements
 - Establish stronger monitoring and evaluation processes of gender transformative programs

This would require willingness for gender transformative change and strong gender analysis capabilities from policymakers at all levels

Thanks!

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