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The United Nations and Gender-mainstreaming; International Conferences on Women and the Development of Gender Mainstreaming Policies in Caribbean States

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Mainstreaming Policies in Caribbean States

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ABSTRACT

International conferences, especially UN-sponsored summits, are popular venues for political coalition around various issues of global concerns, mobilizing large audiences consisting of state representatives, NGO groups and other interested parties. Many small states participate at leading international summits. Some of these states for many obvious reasons are preoccupied with economic survival. Their limited resources are expended on economic priorities and little or none is left for the implementation of social development programs. As a result, these small states are constrained from defining contours of social development, without the cooperation of the international community. They must therefore depend on external actors for the successful implementation of development initiatives. This study will examine the role that the United Nations has played in influencing the gender mainstreaming process in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action. In 1995, the United Nations convened in Beijing for its Fourth World Conference on Women, (hereinafter referred to as the FWCW). At this historic event, international heads voted on numerous resolutions for the establishment of strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women with a view to improving equality between men and women. The Platform for Action would eventually be implemented in the national reform policies pertaining to gender, development and status of women. At the dawn of the new millennium during the Beijing +5 Conference, the world heads again convened to assess compliance with the implementation of the provisions of the Beijing Platform for Action. In another decade the Beijing +10 meeting convened as a follow up mechanism of the groundbreaking

conference held ten years earlier. This study is positioned in the aftermath of these world

conferences. It sets out to examine the contribution of UN-sponsored international

conferences on women, analyzing their outcome by examining the development and

implementation policies of states that attended these conferences. The purpose of this

research is to fully illuminate the extent to which small states are successful in the

implementation of global accords and the role that international conferences play in the

process.

Chapter One
<u>Introduction</u>

During the first year of its existence in 1945, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which, through annual meetings, defined the policy of the UN on women and gender. During subsequent years-including 1976-1985 (a period designated as the UN Decade for Women), the UN continued to play an integral part in defining and advancing women's rights. As such, its work and involvement in the growth of women's rights culminated in the development of the Beijing Platform for Action, a plan that delineated, among other things, objectives and strategies for achieving equality between men and women, including gender-balanced decision making and gender mainstreaming (the implementation of a gender-influenced perspective during all phases of policy development).[1]

How then did this concern for women's empowerment, development and equality take root internally (within the UN itself) and exogenously through diffusion on the international scene? These concerns did not materialize from thin air. Rather, research has indicated that the development of policies to promote women's status, which attempted to secure equal rights for them in the process, as well as the gendered dimension of economic development, became an international regime on gender equality issues.

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[1] Mona Krook and Jacqui True have examined a similar topic in their article, " Rethinking the life cycles of International Norms: The United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality". *European Journal of International Relations.* (2010) .Web. 11 April 2011.

Arguably, the processes of global transformation and economic globalization have contributed to statewide social and economic polarization between sexes, which is manifest in the feminization of poverty and gendered division of labor. Also important, beyond ascendant supranational actors are novel forms of transnational communication, primarily among state, non-state actors such as international organizations, transnational networks, and less potent citizen-action groups.[2]

Transnational actors such as those referenced above, have significantly impacted domestic policies and politics in the gender mainstreaming process in a large number of states. This is evidenced in state participation in UN-sponsored global conferences on women and the rise of a gender mainstreaming perspective, defined by the Economic and Social Council as

> "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."[3]

Beyond defining strategies for developing gender mainstreaming process, it is important to note that the process requires a bifurcated approach: (a) that of data collection and disaggregation based on gender differences with regard to the interplay between production and reproduction and (b) the application of these results into the work program, primarily through deployment of strong advocacy skills and the use of participatory and consultative policy methods.[4]

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[2] *Ibid*. 2.
[3] ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions. Web. July 2010.
[4] History of the development of the Gender Affairs Division. Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs. Web. April 28 2010.

The gender mainstreaming concept gained currency during the 1995 Beijing Conference and represented official UN policy as well as the policy of a large cross section of global actors.

Women's participation in political life has evolved considerably since the issue was first raised in 1945 at the UN. Institutional actors charged with the task of developing policy on women as well as women's political rights, drew inspiration from the *Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women* 1948 calling for a similar UN Convention, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1952.

The passage of the landmark *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, institutionalized (1) the right of women to vote in all elections and public referenda (2) women's eligibility for election to all publicly-elected bodies, and (3) the right of women to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government."[5]

The period following the Nairobi conference, which produced the forward-looking strategies, sought to clarify the meaning of women's full and equal participation, while the Beijing Conference called upon state actors to encourage women's participation in decision-making, through positive action and public debate on the roles of both sexes in society and the family.[6]

A review of the fifty-year history of the policy of the UN with respect to women illustrates its movement from concerns related to voting eligibility, to a more encompassing continuum in recent times that seeks to include women as office holders through a broadened definition of political participation.

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[5] CEDAW, Article 7§a & b.
[6] Beijing Platform for Action paragraph 194§ (e) & (g).

The rise of women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming efforts will be examined in relation to how it has been facilitated by the inner workings of international organizations and their collective diffusion of policy over time to correlate with society's concepts and ideas with respect to women and gender today.

Explanations of global policy innovations use states as the primary unit of analysis, imputing adoption patterns to internal state features such as political environments coupled with social communications that create linkages to a broader community. Similarly, cultural norms and processes also serve as mechanisms through which states adopt similar policies and practices such as gender mainstreaming policies.[7]

<u>Intergovernmental Organizations</u>

Inter-government Organizations ("IGOs") have been widely characterized as: having a minimum of three states as members, being created through formal agreements such as treaties, charters or statutes and having activities in several states.

Regarding the scope of their agendas, some IGOs are limited to single well-defined issues, such as trade in World Trade Organization, while others, by contrast, may deal with a continuum of issue coverage, such as the United Nations.[8]

IGOs have separate identities from their member states and are further imbued with an international personality that allows them to act within the international sphere.

They also perform five distinct and important functions, all of which can be subsumed under the following themes: (1) they collect, analyze and disseminate data

[7] True, Jacqui, and Michael Mintrom. "Transnational Networks and Policy Diffusion: The Case of Gender Mainstreaming." *International Studies Quarterly* 45 (2001): 27-57.

[8] Koremos, Barbara, Lipson, Charles and Snidal, Duncan. "The Rational Design of International Institutions." *International Organizations* 55 (2001): 761-799. Web. 3 Feb 2011. 70.

while monitoring trends (informational), (2) allocate resources, (3) provide technical assistance and relief (operational); and (4) act as vehicles for the centralization of activities through "a …stable organizational structure and…administrative apparatus (forum-providing a place for the exchange of views)." "States join these organizations to negotiate and implement agreements that reflect self and community interests…to take advantage of the centralized organization in the implementation of collective tasks."[9] Several IGOs draft legal treaties (rule creation), monitor compliance with rules, adjudicate disputes and take enforcement measures (rule supervision). Through their participation, states agree to shape international debate and take a position on specific issues.

IGOs also facilitate the establishment of international and national agendas, which define standards of behavior (normative), while subjecting states' behavior to surveillance through information-sharing.

Along with other international structures such as international law, multilateral agreements and international norms, IGOs and select UN resolutions, regimes, global conferences and ad hoc arrangements, are part of world governance or the problem-solving arrangements on which states rely for the resolution of numerous issues and dilemmas. In essence, global governance is best defined as the "sum of ways…[in which] individuals and institutions…manage their common affairs."[10]

Multilateralism refers to the coordination of relations among three or more states, according to certain principles. The United Nations is the epicenter for multilateral diplomacy. Through global conferences, such as the World Conferences on Women, the

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[9] Karns, Margaret P. and Mingst, Karen A. *International Organizations:The politics and processes of global government.* Lynne Rienner, London 2010. Print. 35-60.

UN has raised awareness and bolstered the understanding of equal rights for women. A number of critics, especially the media, have characterized global conferences as nothing more than "talk fests" and ascribed a debating society sort-of air to the process involved in global conferences on women.

I argue that the conferences for the advancement of women's rights have been erroneously characterized as nothing more than moot courts. The UN has made great strides in bringing the issue of women's right to the forefront of the international community and providing the necessary conditions for the requisite changes to occur (political canvassing, agenda setting and quasi-societal pressure) at both national and international levels.

This thesis examines the United Nations' efforts to codify and eliminate both the discrimination and deprivations against women on a global level. These efforts are best illustrated by the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and codified in the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW). The study shall also examine contemporary provisions designed to secure women's equality with men, through an analysis of the four international Women's conferences that culminated with the Beijing Conference and the Beijing follow-up conferences. These shall be examined as the continuum of the United Nations' endeavor to identify and accord validation and international expression to international women's rights.

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[10] *Ibid*. 4-5.

CHAPTER TWO
Research Design

The research in this thesis is a combination of research traditions that are conventionally termed qualitative and quantitative, respectively. These traditions are distinct both stylistically and contextually. As the term implies, the main core concept in quantitative research, (also termed experimental design) is quantity-number based, where numbers are used to express information, based on quantity.[11] The statistical use of measures, as a base of inquiry, allows for abstracting from specific episodes to conduct hypothetical testing or to describe something seeking numerical measurements that can be replicated by other researchers. Statistical analysis follows rigid rules to keep the findings objective - a task that is difficult to replicate in social research.[12]

Qualitative research contrasts sharply with its qualitative counterpart. While it may be empirical, information provided covers a variety of word-based approaches, none of which are numerically measured. This includes transcripts, notes, recordings, documents of material culture, audio-visual material and those drawn from personal experience. Consequently, qualitative researchers have wider access to empirical data, using multiple data sources in their studies.

Research work for this thesis is qualitative, focusing on case studies and analyses of historic material that comprehensively examines events. Written records examined herein, include government documents, life histories, feminist and cultural organizations, press releases, along with presentations and of the most importance, the state responses to questionnaires submitted to the Economic Committee for Latin America and the

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[11] Keith F. Punch. *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publications, 2005. Print.

Caribbean (ECLAC) on gender mainstreaming policy development. Several traditions have been identified in the areas of research designs including biography, phenomenology, grounded theory and case study.

Case study can be further categorized into eight research strategies. Given the multiplicity of research strategies, this research has been organized using case studies and historical analysis. While there is often overlap among the research attributes, each has a different focus and results in variations in posing research questions, in selecting samples and data as well as in related analyses. As such, the case study strategy is more focused and allows for in depth analysis of a particular phenomenon.

Case studies are an approach to research where the basic concept is that one case (or a small number of cases) is studied in depth to develop a comprehensive understanding of the case. It involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative information, but the analysis is primarily interpretive as opposed to statistical.

As a research method it aims to preserve case unity and wholeness. A case can be best described as a phenomenon that occurs in a bonded context. It can range from an individual or group to a nation, decision, policy, or process. Three types of case studies are identifiable: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. The first two typologies concern single case studies while collective case studies extend the instrumental case to cover several cases in an attempt to discover more about a specific phenomenon-within and across contexts.

This work focuses on a small number of cases, uses in-depth analysis of historical material and tends to be concerned with a comprehensive account of the event or unit

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[12] Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research.* New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1994. Print.

under study. The research is sometimes linked with a particular area, case study or both and is analyzed in full detail.

Rationale for Case Study Research

A case study is useful where cases are few or where a phenomenon occurs infrequently. It provides insight to meanings that people ascribe to their reality. Case studies are appropriate in instances where a researcher seeks to determine the interconnectedness of events or phenomena. This research method is often described as participant or field observation research and usually consists of personal involvement in daily events of a particular social setting. Case studies utilize data from various sources, as is done in qualitative research, such as data archives, published records and surveys. The present research focuses on published records and responses to surveys in case study research.

Measures

Independent variables are the measures that influence, affect or cause some other phenomena; and Dependent Variables are caused by, depend on or are the function of the independent variables.

Hypothesis: I am advancing the hypothesis that the United Nations has advanced women's rights through the organization of international conferences that focus on gender discrimination. These conferences are effective as they mobilize large numbers people and provide a political coalition around various issue areas and provide blueprints that states may use to model policies to reduce gender discrimination.

Independent variable: International gender conferences will be examined from the perspective of their role and effectiveness. These results of these conferences will be used to determine whether not these influence states to develop policies against gender based discrimination.

Dependent variable: Advancement of women's rights will be measured based on state implementation of mandated polices emanating from international conferences.

Method of Analysis: Case studies on the implementation of gender accords in Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, though the gender-mainstreaming process shall be conducted to test the hypothesis. I will conduct a historical analysis on the rise and development of gender concerns within the United Nations through successive gender-based conferences and show how the intergovernmental organization diffused its policy on women and gender to select states in the Caribbean.

This paper is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is introduces the topic under study, discussing the functions of international organizations such as the UN and international gender conferences. Chapter two presents the study's research design.

Chapter three addresses the literature review locating the study in neoliberal institutionalism and constructivist traditions.

Chapter four traces the historical development of gender concerns in the United Nations, from its inception to the First World Conference on Women to the time of Beijing and Beijing Follow-Up Conferences. I will also illustrate how the United Nations' prescriptions against gender- based discrimination have been crystallized through its Charter and most notably, through human rights concerns enshrined in the Bill

of Rights for women- the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

Chapter five consists of case studies in which a detailed analysis is undertaken on four Caribbean states and their strategies for developing and implementing policies that flow from the Beijing Conference Platform for Action.

Chapter six is a critical analysis of the implementation of the gender agreements set forth in the Beijing Platform for Action.

The conclusion summarizes the findings of the research and discusses forward-looking strategies for the successful implementation of gender accords in the aftermath of international conferences.

Chapter Three
<u>**Literature Review**</u>

This literature review as it focuses on the main theories of international relations examines the contending views of each framework in the context of international organizations. To this end, it will explore and expand upon the main assumptions of realism, liberalism as well as the constructivist approach to international relations, discussing how the understanding of international relations is shaped by the relevant framework.

Constructivism maintains a heterogenous approach to research in the sense that it readily combines with different fields of discipline. As a by-product of blended theories of political post modernism, cultural, media and literary studies, among others, constructivism can be paired successfully with collaborative approaches within and beyond political science.[13]

Thus, while the observation has been made that "no theory of culture can substitute for a theory of politics," the main point here is that constructivism is an approach and not a theory is reinforced. Advancing an argument for the framework as a theory, it qualifies as one of the processes and not substantive outcomes. As such, it requires partnering with a substantive political theory.[14]

It is on this basis that this literature review engages with both mid-level theories, as well as dominant political theories to juxtapose and explain constructivism, in relation

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[13] Ted Hopf. "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory". *International Security* 23.1(1998): 171-200.

[14] Ibid. 4. (Citing Friedrich Kratchowil. "Is the Ship of Culture At Sea or Returning?" at 206).

to liberalism. In doing so, the relationship shared among international organizations, norms and regimes in the context of constructivism is under examination.

The section will also juxtapose mid-level theories of international relations such as regimes and norms with a critical analysis of each framework's approach (in the case of constructivism) to understanding the international organizations.

Classical liberal theory holds that human nature is innately good, social progress possible, and human behavior malleable and perfectible through institutions.[15] For classical liberals, injustice, war and aggression are products of corrupt or inadequate social institutions and miscommunication among the ranks of the leadership. While not inevitable, such trials can be eliminated through multilateral action and institutional reform.[16]

Liberalism is rooted in the following traditions: seventeenth century Grotian, eighteenth century enlightenment, nineteenth century political and economic liberalism and twentieth century Wilsonian idealism. Each century improved upon the previous century's contribution to the liberal tradition reflecting the realist notions that states act in an unrestrained manner, while embracing the Kantian tradition of the relationship between democracy and peace; liberal thinkers advanced the ideas that free trade would create interdependent states, whose individual and collective growth should be stimulated through free trade and economic discourse.[17]

Liberals, however, place a premium on international institutions which offer the possibility for collective problem solving. Liberals believe in the continued growth of

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[15] Karns, Margaret P. and Mingst, Karen A. *International Organizations: the politics and processes of global government.* Lynne Rienner, London, 2010. Print.

[16] *Ibid*. 36.

cooperation as the international system consists of dynamic and repeat interactions, where actors gain from their interaction, as opposed to the realist view that accepts a predetermined, static status quo.[18]

In the area of problem solving, international organizations are also viewed as "areas where states interact and cooperate to solve common problems. Such organizations play key roles in contributing to habits of cooperation… and promoting the development of shared norms.[19] As such, international organizations are tasked with completing operational activities that address international problems. Such core ideas, however, have been challenged by a variant of liberal theory, that of neoliberal institutionalism.

Neoliberalism or neoliberal institutionalism underscores that in their state-centric view of international relations, states are rational actors in an anarchic world. Simultaneously, though, state incentive to cooperate is high as they seek to maximize absolute gains resulting in cooperation being the rule, rather than the exception through mechanisms such as international institutions to solve collective action problems.[20]

According to neoliberals, states that continuously interact with each other (even when they prefer to exploit each other), do so in spite of the anarchic international system because of future interactions with the same actors. Such continuous interactions also serve as the impetus for cooperative outcomes such as the creation of international institutions which are multifunctional in nature. Importantly, international institutions moderate state behavior, provide a framework for interactions and bargaining as well as a

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[17] *Ibid*. 37.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid.* 38.
[20] *Ibid*. 39.

framework for punishment by requiring transparency and providing monitoring processes.

International regime theory is another mid-level theoretical offshoot of liberalism that has international law as its genesis. The latter consists not only of formal authority but also informal norms and codes of conduct which, over time, become institutionalized as law. The totality of such norms has been termed "regimes", having roots in liberalism, neoliberal institutionalism, realism and neo realism. Some regime theorists illustrate the importance of common interests aiding to enhance transparency in certain issue areas. Other theorists, by contrast, have utilized the constructivist approach to explain regime creation, maintenance and how interactions within regimes affect state interests.

The focus that regimes have placed on international governmental organizations in the creation and maintenance of regimes is more important and pertinent to the issue under review. Some theorists have distinguished IGOs from regimes, but have highlighted the manner in which states create frameworks to coordinate their actions with those of other states, which over time may lead to partial convergence of interests and values as well as a sense of legitimacy.[21]

Regime theory, in short, has demonstrated that international institutions are not just institutional structures but have contributed to the linkage between institutions and governance by illustrating the existence of governance and order through norms. While regime theory arguably represents a major advance in understanding international cooperation focusing on the institutional organization aspects of international

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[21] *Ibid*. 42.

cooperation, it is not without shortcomings.[22] Some regime academics have moved away

from the study of international organizations in their theoretical analysis, dealing with

organizations in a general manner, adding little to institutional organizing arrangements.

At the same time, however, regime theory has increasingly underscored the importance of

ideas and norms in international policies and as such, has supported the constructivist

framework.

The term constructivism was introduced by Nicholas Onuf in 1989 but Alexander

Wendt is widely credited with advancing its popularity. Kratochwil and Ruggie have not

only played important roles in developing the framework, but continue to influence its

understanding. Under Wendt, constructivism is shaped by identities and interest. These

are constructed and further molded by interaction, which in turn creates social reality.

Wendt elucidates locates his constructivist vision in relation to liberal and realist theories

of international politics, aiming to building a bridge between the liberal, realist and

constructivist analyses.

Kratochwil, another proponent of constructivism, criticizes political theory for the

slight emphasis placed on human conduct and politics, seeking instead to explore the role

of rules and norms in relation to the analysis of politics. For Kratochwil, meaningful

political action must be placed and understood in a context mediated by norms and rules,

which help to shape decisions and provide a medium for communication.

Onuf, similarly, studies constructivism at the intersection of international law and

international relations. According to him, the approach can be best applied to all

fields,(including those that, at a first glance seem disparate). Social relations, deeds and

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[22] Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal. "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations."
The Journal of Conflict Resolution 42. 1(1998): 3-32. JSTOR: Web. 14 July 2010.

speech give effect to the world. For Onuf, rules are statements that inform behavior and provide agents with choices. Agents, thus, act within the context of patterns, rules and practices, which are deemed to be stable patterns and structures. Onuf further imputes rule conceptualization to speech, which evolve into laws and if frequently repeated, become a convention.[23]

Central to constructivism is the widely accepted view that the conduct of individuals, states and non-state actors is molded by shared beliefs, socially constructed rules and norms, and cultural practices. According to constructivists, the manner in which actors interact and the resulting interpretation of such conduct are responsible for the creation and change of norms.

As a corollary, changing interests, values, norms and ideas allow for people to change the world, as these interests are social constructs. This is in stark contrast to realist acceptance of state interest and identity as they are immune from the influence of culture, norms or international interactions. According to constructivists, states are devoid of national interests prior to interaction with others. The interaction within international politics, reproduce either cooperative or social structures with conflicts, which are the influencing agents of identities and interests.[24]

Constructivists further emphasize the role of international institutions seeking to discover the organizational, social makeup and the main norms that define behavior, shape interests, and in turn, influence actors. As such, international organizations may

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[23] Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality*. Port Chester, New York. Cambridge UP, 2000:16-35, 250-264. *Ebrary*. Web. 16 July 2011.
[24] *Ibid*. 251 (Quoting Wendt 1995:81).

function as agents of social construction contributing to understanding, teach or create norms, or push states to accept new values and goals.[25]

International organizations are deemed as powerful actors in the eyes of constructivists as they help construct the social world within which interaction and choice occur. They are considered to be full of purpose, affecting international relations through their ability to create change – both conceptually and in conduct.[26]

The conditions necessary for cooperative outcomes include the following: transparent action, monitoring capability (for the monitoring and punishment of non-cooperative behavior), and an expectation that the relationship will not terminate in the near future.[27]

International institutions such as regimes, laws, treaties or organizations provide the preconditions for cooperation. They do so by increasing state confidence of non-exploitation and the reciprocity of cooperation. Through formal rules and procedures for both surveillance and sanction, states can develop greater confidence in the punishment of violations. Further, state expectation of the continuation of cooperative relationship is greatly enhanced.[28]

Martha Finnemore, writing in the late 1990s, argues that state interests derive in part from systemic norms propagated by international institutions, providing states with direction and goals for action. Thus, state interest and values that are taught by outside actors in the absence of domestic forces or outside coercion (reward or sanction by a

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[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid.* 52.
[27] *Ibid.* 188. Citing Kenneth Oye. "Explaining Cooperation Strategy: Hypotheses and Strategies" in Cooperation Under Anarchy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP 1986. 1-24.
[28] *Ibid.* 189.

powerful state) explains how state interests are defined – a feat that cannot be accounted by liberal and realist designs.[29]

International institutions frequently portrayed by neorealists as empty vessels (especially the United Nations) are not simply responsible for reducing transaction costs. For Finnemore, they are purposeful and have the ability to "trump states and their powers."

Peter Katzenstein, another constructivist writes on national security, relaxing both the realist and neoliberal central assumptions of conceptualizing states solely in terms of physical capability (military strength) and that institutions work to constrain the conduct of states with fixed interests. In so doing, Katzenstein creates an avenue for the importance of social structures in world politics thus challenging main theories.

Andie Klotz writes on global norms, international institutions and the death of apartheid in South Africa in the context of constructivism. She focuses on the transfer of a global norm to the domestic level and the reconstitution of state interests. Klotz elaborates that three transmission conduits help in linking norms with policy choice, essentially as diffusion mechanisms, specifically community and identity; reputation and communication; and discourse and institutions.[30]

There is no dearth of literature on the propagation of global norms by international institutions within the context of the constructivist framework. This research draws heavily from neoliberal institutionalism's assumptions of international institutions and regimes, in concert with the constructivist approach to explain how the UN has

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[29] Jeffrey Checkel." The Constructivist Turn in International Relations." *World Politics*. 50.3 (1998): 324-348: 331 *SAGE*. Web. 1 Aug. 2011.
[30] *Ibid*. 337.

advanced the global norm of gender equality and transferred it to states. This will be examined in the next section.

Norms, neoliberalism, constructivism and international conferences.

Norms are defined as widespread institutionalized values, principles and procedures with which states comply to enhance their reputation.[31]

Finnemore advances the hypothesis that states are socialized in prescriptive norms that define their conduct through their participation in multilateralism.

International norms advanced through global conferences play an important part in the development of domestic politics by influencing state policies. Norms may be taught, advocated and internalized by states through the socialization process. Such socialization may occur through the ratification of a treaty such as CEDAW or by committing to a Platform for Action.

International gender equality norms such as gender mainstreaming and gender-based decision-making are two of the norms pertinent to the present study. These are considered norms as all the members of the UN agreed to them in the most clearly defined and comprehensive framework – the 1995 UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.[32] These norms were later diffused with far-reaching effects.

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[31] Krook, Mona Lena and Jacqui True. "Rethinking the life cycles of international norms: The United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality." *European Journal of International Relations* 20:10 (2010): 1-25:4. Web. 3 April 2011.
[32] *Ibid*. 3

Prior to the UN identification and promulgation of these norms in the 1990's, few countries maintained quotas for electing females to positions within the political decision-making sphere. In the aftermath of global conferences on women, however, there was a marked increase in the number of policies and offices worldwide.[33]

In fact it can be argued that the UN provided the impetus for the diffusion of national machineries (agencies dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and improving the status of women).

A Caricom study conducted in the mid 1980s suggested that established Caribbean women's bureaucracies were created by decision-makers as a response to the demand from the international community, drawing a direct correlation between international norms and state conduct.[34]

It can also be argued that during the periods following the international conferences on women, that states experienced what Finnemore described as "norm cascades" or the band-waggoning that occurs when increasing numbers of states adopt or internalize a new norm. In this model, norm life cycles indicate norm emergence, norm acceptance (by a mass of states), and norm diffusion across the international community, resulting in convergence among a set of principles and values. The norm becomes widespread and is internalized, becoming a taken-for-granted feature of international and domestic policies.[35]

UN-sponsored international conferences operate as a process of social mobilization and can effect new norms and policies or serve as sources of international

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[33] *Ibid*.
[34] Study of gender mainstreaming in the Caribbean. 8

[35] Krook and True. 5

law (CEDAW being a prime example). Through international organizations like the UN, several functions are met. Regarding the information function, conferences are the fertile sod where knowledge is created and disseminated. This is self-evident in the above-cited example of national machinery creation in response to gender norms.

Conferences allow for political coalition around a given issue area. Through agenda-setting functions, presumed problems may be transformed into political priority. Also important, conferences are convened in the name of the international community, lending legitimacy to certain issues.

UN-sponsored international conferences mobilize large audiences. In the case at hand, the gender conferences – thousands of women participated and brought to bear novel concerns that demand attention (such as sex trafficking) along with many of the gender-related concerns which, although raised at prior conferences, may have proven ineffective, as well as novel concerns that demand attention (such as sex trafficking).

Opportunities for NGO networking and discourse through workshops and other preparatory meetings at the local, regional and international level allow for the comprehension of salient women's issues (in this case).

By participating in conferences, leaders, decision makers and other interested parties are guided and provided with the blueprints on methodologies and best practices for developing policy. In the present cases, states used the Beijing Platform for Action as a guide for the development of national policies for gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality.

The reporting requirement of conferences and follow-up meetings, work to ensure that states implement meeting outcomes. As a form of comparative data creation,

reporting serves as a basis for dialogue among decision makers on the one hand, NGOs and other concerned citizen groups on evidence of (non) compliance with state commitments.

CHAPTER 4
The Development of a United Nations Gender Regime

The United Nations system has long struggled to advance the cause of women.

Even its precursor, the League of Nations made attempts to address women's concerns.

Since the First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City in 1975, the United

Nations system has held three subsequent major conferences that culminated in the

Fourth World Conference on Women. This conference contemporarily continues to battle

against traditional, cultural and legislative forces that prolong sex-based discrimination

against women.[36]

The discrimination that is of primary concern in this analysis is sex-based, which

results in women being accorded less than equal treatment to that of men. In many

cultures women are generally regarded as "things," "property of their husbands," as "the

weaker sex," or as "inferior to men" and have had their roles and places assigned to them

at birth.[37]

Such deeply entrenched and pervasive discriminatory attitudes have lingered and

been given currency by patriarchal regimes that exist in nearly every culture.

Consequently, women grew to accept the second class positions to which they were

relegated by men. This passive acceptance literally retarded the mental and

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[36] I have utilized the system model as developed by Nigel White in his discussion of whether or not the United Nations comprises of a conference model, a systems model or a system model. Since he draws the conclusion that the UN is the umbrella organization for state cooperation, which in large measure is derived from high degrees of coordination between the United Nation, its subsidiary organs and specialized agencies on identifiable critical areas of concern, he dispels the generally held assumption that the UN is a 'mere umbrella for static-centric actors in the international system.'
I also posit that the UN's precursor, The League of Nations, also made some attempt to address women's concerns, in spite of how protectionist its efforts were, as such I find it useful to discuss the effort.
[37] These are some of the more prevalent negative images associated with women. For a more broad-based discussion on the traditional views of women, see McDougal, Lasswell and Chen article, "Human Rights For Women and World Public Order: The Outlawing of Sex-Based Discrimination." *American Journal of International Law*, 69.3 (1975):497-499.

developmental growth of women who continued to be segregated from enlightenment opportunities (more specifically, education), prevented from fulfilling roles other than culturally prescribed maternal roles and ultimately denied the opportunity to realize their fullest potential outside of their maternal and limited socially-prescribed roles. In a large number of cases, women were schooled in matters of domesticity, in accordance with traditional role concepts (which impacted greatly on their choices or lack thereof), in matters respecting their reproductive processes, and in matters regarding their education and gainful employment and being meaningful participants in civil society.[38]

On the decision-making level, women were conspicuously underrepresented and in many cases disenfranchised. Those who were lucky enough to hold public office were narrowly confined to dealing with matters relating solely to women's issues, family matters or health interests.

In response to these global discriminatory practices, and in recognition of the rights of women as human rights, the United Nations embarked on a campaign to combat sex-based bias. It was during this campaign, however, that ECOSOC, the Commission on the Status of Women and the United Nations, by extension established landmarks in the advancement of women rights.[39]

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[38] See note 40, above.

[39] The Commission on the Status of Women, hereinafter referred to as the CSW, was established in 1946, as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council to prepare recommendations and reports to ECOSOC that would promote and serve the interests of women. A major portion of its activities centered on drafting conventions and authoritative expressions and commitments that would encourage governments to support women's causes and by contrast would protect women . To this end a major convention that it drafted which is very significant in this study was the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

<u>The First World Conference on Women: Mexico City</u>

In 1975, the world community celebrated International Women's Year. It was during this time frame that the United Nations hosted its First World Conference on Women in Mexico City.

Prior to this year however, the UN made little effort to adhere to a hortatory clause in the preamble to the UN charter which was "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."[40]

The UN in this case paid a little more than lip service to what was called the World Constitution in its failure to seriously address the concerns of the female population. Up until that point, international agencies such as the ILO, did not formally include women on the agenda or even distinguish women according to class, race and gender, rather choosing to incorporate them under collective descriptions of mother, worker and citizen.[41]

Women remained a "marginalized portion of broader concerns" who arose only in connection with other more pressing issues, such as the effects of lead poisoning of fetuses, the benefits of breastfeeding children or the role of prostitutes in the spread of venereal diseases."[42]

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[40] Preamble to the UN Charter.
[41] Beijing to Beijing +5: Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Report of the Secretary-General (2000) at page 4.
[42] Judith P. Zinsser. *From Mexico to Copenhagen to Nairobi: The United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985*, (citing chapter 5 of Sandra Whitworth's, *Feminism and International Relations: Towards a Political Economy of Gender in Interstate and Nongovernmental Institutions* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1994). The authors suggest that the chapter contains a comprehensive discussion on the ILO's view of women pre-1970.

Within the UN's civil service, patriarchal attitudes and a discriminatory hierarchy consistently relegated women to the lowest-paying and least prestigious grades. In short, the UN's common practices vividly illustrated that there was no solid commitment by the institution to accord equal status to women in relation to men.[43]

Fortunately, however, a tide of change ushered in by the "UN Decade for Women" (1975-1985) and the resulting gender-related world conferences created the opportunity for the evolution and progress of women's rights including, but not limited to, an improved quality of life. The great strides that the UN made toward achieving gender equality at the First World Conference on Women and during the UN Decade for Women and beyond, together with the related documents should be examined.

The Plan of Action developed at the Mexico City conference should be scrutinized closely for content as it advocated for women's rights. It called for women's access to training, integration into development programs, participation in the political decision-making process, increased literacy and civic education and recognition of the economic value of their work.

It called on NGOs to help governments achieve the goals of the Plan of Action. It also advocated the drafting and the implementation of a convention eliminating discrimination against women and, among other things, the equal sharing of family duties between men and women.[44] There was strong advocacy for the rights of women and

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[43] See note 39. It is important to note the historical perspective of gender and the UN, including within its system. These historical attitudes are in stark contrast to the contemporary progress and commitment that the UN has on women and minorities because it indicates change from within the system that will inevitably spill onto the surface. By way of illustration, the UN has undergone radical transformation of attitudes and perceptions of women. As part of the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN has mandated that its structural organs and specialized agencies implement measures that would allow for gender mainstreaming and a general development and commitment to women's rights.

[44] Marjorie Agosin, *Women, Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2001. Print.

consequently, the ten-year period immediately subsequent to the 1975 International

Women's Year was deemed the Decade for Women (1975-1985).

Many critics of the conference thought it was unnecessary to focus on a woman's

conference, arguing that the primary emphasis should be on economic development and

the New International Economic Order (NIEO).[45]

Women's rights were secondary to transformative economics, but the plan of

action assigned primary responsibility to governments to identify, target and develop

national strategies that would improve the status of women. Markedly absent were

international enforcement mechanisms and clearly defined, gender-specific policies that

were to be implemented. Beyond that, women were also assigned passive roles in the

home, which were marginal to the world's real issues[46]

Arguably, the Mexico City conference was but an important step in the direction

towards a concerted effort to identify concerns of women. In spite of the traditional

notions that were associated with women and the family, acknowledgement was finally

made of the world's women, as paternalistic as these notion were. During the Decade for

Women, the CSW significantly augmented the process of issue identification and norms

against sex-discrimination that had occurred at the Mexico City Conference. In 1979, the

CSW's working draft of the Convention on the Discrimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly.

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[45]These were demands of developing countries for the improvement of their economic position through control of their resources. "New International Economic Order." A Dictionary of World History. 2000. *Encyclopedia.com.* 11 Aug. 2011.

[46] See Zinsser: 4-6, for a more directed discussion on the focus on the primary objective of the Plan of Action. The author suggests that stimulation of economic development took precedence to the real problem of women's inferior economic status. Many historians have contended that the Plan of Action was a form of discursive oppression because of the passive role assigned to women, who were commonly identified as mothers.

A Convention at Last: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEDAW, commonly known as the international bill of rights for women, established *inter alia*, an agenda for the national action to end discrimination against women.

CEDAW, defined discrimination, in Article 1, as:

[A]ny distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of , irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.[47]

This definition inspired more activities aimed at the protection of women. Never before had a document defined gender discrimination. Further, the text of the convention stipulated that the principle of non-discrimination may be applied by means of:

(a) national constitutions or other appropriate legislation;
(b) through sanctions punishing and prohibiting discrimination against women;
(c) legal protection of women through national tribunals and public institutions;
(d) refraining from engaging in discriminatory acts and practices against women and preventing private and public acts of discrimination;
(e) taking measures to eliminate discrimination against women by private or corporate entities;
(f) modifying existing laws and customs that constitute discrimination against women; and
(g) repeal of all penal laws that discriminated against women.[48]

In this respect, CEDAW was highly directive and prescriptive, advising states on specific activities that would allow compliance with its provisions.

At the same time, however, CEDAW identified critical areas in which women

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[47] *Ibid*. Article 1.
[48] *Ibid.* Article 2 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g).

were more susceptible to discrimination. These included areas such as power and

decision-making, affection, enlightenment, wealth and well-being.[49]

With regard to power, CEDAW placed emphasis on women's right to vote,

office- holding (both electing and appointing powers), and in broad-based participation in

the formulation of governmental policy and in the political life of the state.[50]

Consequently, Article 7 of CEDAW stated that women should be assured on equal terms

with men, the right:

    (a) to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
    (b) to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation hereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; and
    (c) to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.[51]

Article 15, 1 through 4, also accorded legal capacity to women to contract and

receive and alienate property, and the ability to "freely move" and choose a residence.

This was a major component of the power and decision-making value in a civil context.

Similarly, in regards to the enlightenment or education value, CEDAW in Article

10, (a) through (h) stipulated that women should be accorded equal rights with men in the

field of education, and particularly ensured the same "conditions for career guidance";

"access to studies and diplomas" (in rural and urban areas alike); "access to the same

curricula, staff and examinations as men;" "scholarship assistance;" "continuing

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[49] For a similar discussion on the UN's role identifying and prescribing governmental activities for the draft convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, see McDougal et al. note 40, above. Although that discussion compares and contrasts various conventions, the discussions serve as a viable point of reference for the present discussion. By applying a similar rationale, the aims and provisions of CEDAW illustrate that the CSW and the UN had taken a firm view on activities that states should encourage and by contrast, those which should be prohibited.

[50] Article 8 of CEDAW also called upon women's representation of their governments internationally.

[51] *Ibid*. Article 7.

education programs;" and "co-education with men on an equal footing, by eliminating stereotyped concepts of roles".[52]

The Convention further advocated the expeditious reduction of female drop-out rates, women's participation in sports, and the provision of literature relating to family health and planning.

With respect to the value of wealth, CEDAW's Article 11 section 1 (a) through (d), called on states to take appropriate measures to ensure the following: "that women were afforded the same opportunities to work alongside men;" "grant women free choice of profession;" "the right to promotions and training;" "equal remuneration with men;" "social security, disability and retirement benefits," and "protections against occupational safety hazards."[53]

Article 11, Section 2 (a) through (d) also mandated the drafting of pregnancy discrimination and protection laws, as well as the provision of social services in the form of child care networks that ultimately would allow women with family obligations to participate in work and public life.[54]

With respect to the value of wealth, Article 13 of the Convention called upon states to provide the following services to women: loans, mortgages and similar financial credit.[55]

Article 14 of the Convention recognized the distinctions between rural and urban women. To this end, it called for protectionist provisions to be made that would inure to the benefit of rural women. Article 14, Sections 1 & 2 (a) through (h) followed the basic

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[52] *Ibid* Article 10.
[53] *Ibid* Article 11.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] *Ibid* Article 13.

posture of Article 10, on enlightenment and education, Article 11, employment and 13 (a)

through (c), but set it in a precise context that considered the special status of rural

women.[56]

In regard to the affection value, the convention in Article 16, specifically urged

contracting states to ensure that women were provided the same right as men to

(a) enter into marriage and freely choose a spouse;
(b) be accorded the same rights as men during marriage and at its dissolution;
(c) have equal rights in matters relating to their children;
(d) have an equal interest in matters of guardianship as mandated by the state;
(e) have personal rights as husband and wife including the right to choose a profession and family name; and
(f) have the same rights as their spouse in the acquisition, ownership, enjoyment, administration and disposition of property.[57]

Article 16, Section 2 of the Convention, also called on the establishment of

minimum age requirements for marriage, in addition to making marriage registration

compulsory.[58]

The provisions set forth by CEDAW although far-reaching and a positive step in

the right direction towards the eradication of sex-based discrimination still lacked

enforcement mechanisms and concrete examples of gender policy. Governments were

only accorded full responsibility for developing strategies that would ultimately benefit

the fairer sex. In the past however, as evidenced through the Mexico City conference,

identification of the issues that faced women played a secondary, less important role to

economics and development.

In response to the Mexico City requests for a Convention eliminating

discrimination against women, the CSW ably responded to the call. CEDAW was a

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[56] *Ibid.* Article 14.
[57] *Ibid*. Article 16.
[58] *Ibid*.

landmark convention that in great detail set out positive and socially constructive

formulations that would serve to erase gender inequality. What remained deficient at that

point were clear mechanisms for the implementation and application of the CEDAW

provisions that were designed to achieve equality of the sexes. To this end, the United

Nations launched a program that would advance women. This program arguably

commenced with the Mexico City Conference. However, given the fact that CEDAW

was drafted some four years after the conference took place, the actual transparency and

enforcement mechanisms did not take root until the Copenhagen Conference.

The Copenhagen Conference

The Mid-Decade Conference in Copenhagen was in many respects a repeat of the

Mexico City conference.[59] Yet again, contention arose among competing groups of

delegates. Some continued to nevertheless endorse the patriarchal system that dominated

international policies. Consequently, in a manner similar to the Mexico City Conference,

women's concerns were again relegated to a more subordinate role. This conference

however, represented progress for the world's women. As opposed to being perceived

and treated as indirect objects, women were now central to, and not marginalized in, the

development process. This conference identified key factors that would contribute to the

improvement of the women's situations.[60]

In accordance with CEDAW, through the enlightenment value, education was

identified as the vehicle for improving the status of women and, by extension, a country's

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[59] Mid-Decade describes the 1980 Conference held during the fifth year of the International Decade for women that was marked by the First World Conference/ International Year Conference.

[60] The document that was drafted in this meeting was called the Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen 14-30 July 1980, (hereinafter the Copenhagen Report).

development. The program supported the elimination of the inequalities between men and women as a precondition to world development.

The roles assigned to women in the Copenhagen Report were proactive ones that advocated for their inclusion in designing, planning and implementing projects in all sectors, again mirroring the power value accorded to women via Article 2 of CEDAW.

The Copenhagen Report also called for both sexes to jointly participate in the upbringing of children, promoting family access to state sponsored child care facilities, parental leave and flexible work days. Here the domain of women was visibly removed from the confines of the home, indicating progress from the previous conference and echoing Article 2 (a), (b) and (c) of CEDAW.

The Copenhagen Report saw distinct differences between women, as mandated by Article 14 of the convention. As such, it addressed the urban-rural woman dichotomy, identifying rural women as multi-taskers who should be guaranteed participation level in the development process at a grass-root level. The report did not end, here, but instead broadly categorized and identified areas within which women should have the ability to gain benefits. These included, but were not limited to, micro credit loans and transactions, working conditions and wages, employment mobility and educational advancement.[61]

Under the education sub-theme, female literacy was the primary concern. Educational opportunities for girls and women highlighted the notion that conscious thought and efforts were being effectuated to ensure that sexual bias in the choice, availability of schools and course of study was reduced and eventually eliminated.[62]

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[61] *Ibid.* 9.
[62] Zinsser.6-7.

Many other important identifiable advances were made at the Copenhagen Conference. Government delegates identified practices that harmed women such as cultural and patriarchal attitudes that prescribed traditional roles for men and women.[63]

Closely related to the cultural effects of bias towards was the effect of bias on women's earning capacity and employability. Since preference was generally accorded to men when opportunities for employment arose, women remained disadvantaged as they were hardly included in new business sectors. This in turn impacted negatively on their promotion and hiring opportunities, forcing them to remain earning lower wages and subjected to terrible working conditions.[64] The far-reaching effects of the wealth value previously identified by CEDAW were now made more comprehensive. The Copenhagen Conference reportedly illustrated the cycle and inter-relatedness of education, self-empowerment, education and poverty.

The Copenhagen Report reflected a demand for governments to provide disaggregation statistics of employment practices based on gender. [65] Arguably, this information could have been utilized for accurately documenting and evaluating the progress that women made in the development process.[66] In brief, the Copenhagen Conference was one that more lucidly defined areas of concern to women, examining the causative agents for, and the effects of, such inequality on women. Conference participants, however, did not assign blame for the pervasive bias towards women within

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[63] These pervasive attitudes resulted in continuing discrimination against women wholly because of traditional and cultural values that severely lacked physiological truth.

[64] Copenhagen Report: 8. It is interesting to see the cycle of discrimination and its effect on women.

[65] See note 43 above.

[66] Another purpose is served by providing this information. It allows governments to set specific quantitative and qualitative targets, commission reviews and generally identify women's movement towards equality.

any traditional, cultural and national belief systems. This bold jump occurred at the subsequent World Conference.

Although the Copenhagen Conference took giant leaps in advancing the cause of women, it did not obtain concrete commitments from governments to implement measures (both national legislation and otherwise) to protect women. With each successive conference, however, more comprehensive programs were designed to slowly apply the provisions of the Convention. The CSW initiated a more comprehensive program of activities that sought to promote gender equality continued in the Nairobi and Beijing Conferences.

The Nairobi Conference

The end of the Decade for Women was celebrated by a third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985. The draft document emanating from this meeting was a reaffirmation of the basic goals set out in the first Conference held a decade earlier. Consequently the themes of Equality, Development and Peace dominated and permeated the final document called the "Nairobi Forward- Looking Strategies."[67]

Although the Nairobi conference was tripartite in structure, subsumed under the same headings as previous conferences, it went beyond setting objectives to emphasize obstacles and strategies that would result in the implementation of objectives. This represented positive movement on the part of the Conference.

More important, however, was the realization that women were central and not marginal to the development of social progress. Thus overt statements according their "acceptance" indicate the positive transformations that had occurred during the UN

Decade for Women. Finally women had become a valid part of the focus. It had taken the CSW and the UN system close to six years to actively move women from the periphery to the center of concerns and to identify obstacles and solutions to the implementation problems that states faced.

This transformation to which reference is made was highlighted in the new, more clearly drawn images of women. Ten years earlier, women were seen only as mothers within stereotypically cultural and traditional roles. Later the image was one of urban or rural women or young girls who eventually succumbed to being young mothers. Thus, women were associated with more non-traditional concepts such as healers, service workers and intellectuals to name a few, all of whom had various differences which fell within special areas of concern.[68]

The Nairobi Strategies indicated the effect of cultural attitudes on the continuation of women's inequality. It highlighted that in many cultures, women's productive roles were predefined and limiting – the household was her exclusive domain and no acknowledgement for domestic work was ever made. Simultaneously, there was a constant devaluation of women's work within the domestic realm along with growing acceptance of male superiority.

The Nairobi Strategies initiated a well-deserved shift from economic concerns to women's concerns and their participation in development and the political decision-

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[67] UN Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women EDP., Nairobi. Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. The document will be referred to as the "Nairobi Strategies."

[68] The Nairobi Strategies indicates that many essential differences exist between women that cause them to fall into certain areas of concern. These concern areas result in a variety of strategies that would be pertinent to resolving the problems of women in a specific category. See Nairobi Strategies pp 66-79. The Beijing conference also develops and organizes data around the critical areas of concern wherein twelve areas that concern women and the UN are highlighted with the ultimate objective to alleviating

making process. As a consequence, the conference participants underscored the urgency

for policy programs to be shaped by women as both the contributors and beneficiaries.

The most basic vehicle that would empower women and contribute to their role in

development process, was [and continues to be] education.

The Nairobi Strategies promulgated the notion that domestic and international

institutions be accessible to women to ensure that their cognitive abilities be honed, so as

to further economic and social development.

Intimately connected to women's education was their professional advancement.

To this end, the Nairobi Strategies called on governments to affirmatively and

consciously recruit and train females as civil servants, diplomats and other official

positions for government service.[69]

The Nairobi Strategies went beyond its predecessors in many respects. In addition

to consciously identifying the states as causative agents of gender discrimination, this

conference sharply criticized discriminatory ideologies and institutions. Participants

called attention to the sad reality that women function[ed] in an environment permeated

by paternalism, on both the national and international levels and that this negatively

contributed to women's suppression.[70]

The Nairobi Strategies conference addressed a plethora of related gender concerns

which point toward overt gender exploitation on a traditional level. Easily identifiable,

customary laws highlighted existing double standards that had a disparate impact on

women. In states where legislation has been modified to reflect gender mainstreaming,

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attendant problems these women face. Thus the special areas of concern as outlined in the Nairobi
Strategies is but a useful foundation for development and expansion in the Beijing Platform for Action.
[69] See Zinsser. 9.
[70] *Ibid.*

the stark contrast of non-implementation of such policies undermines national commitment to gender concerns.

On an economic developmental level, the Nairobi Strategies accurately illustrated the effect of structural readjustment policies mandated by leading international monetary institutions on women.[71] Consequently, the Structural Readjustment Policies lacked gender awareness and their implementation birthed ill results.

While some governments were implementing shock therapy through stringent financial measures, as mandated by SAPs, many of the world's women, especially those from developing and least developed countries continued recoiling from the effects of the backlash of measures—serving as the human paradox of international development and economic exploitation.

In general and on more commendable terms, the Nairobi Strategies built upon the framework developed at both Mexico City and Copenhagen. Women moved from being passive mothers who remained peripheral to the activities and concerns of states and as silent dejected observers. They actively moved along a positive continuum to occupy a more desirable position on the agenda, contributing to pertinent discussions or issues affecting them and helping to shape policy.

In an effort to confront a patriarchal international environment, the delegates at this conference insisted on a woman's right to be heard and to equally participate in a male-dominated world. The words of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies echoed the

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[71] During the 1980's the leading world banks made loans to states that were faced with negative balance of payment concerns, in an attempt to stabilize their economies. These came at a high cost to some states, because instead of undoing economic disequilibrium, the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) had the effect of removing the burden for the SAP from the state to women in the household who have been forced to deal with economic cutbacks because of shock therapy. Shock therapy involves sharp budget deficits, devaluation of currency, liberalization of prices and imports and tight control of money supply. (See Nairobi Strategies:14).

United Nations' changing perception of women and active endeavors to implement

gender mainstreaming within its system. A mere decade later the UN led the world by

example in the gender mainstreaming process. A review of the Beijing Conference and its

follow-up meeting, Beijing +15, illustrate the systemic progress that the UN and some of

its members have made in implementing successful gender balancing strategies.

 The Beijing and Beijing Follow-Up Conferences

The Beijing Conference was convened in part to appraise the implementation of

the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the year

2000, which was implemented in 1985. Thus the UN had placed a 15-year time span

within which it, and the international community, would implement measures designed to

enhance and advance the status of women, measures which were expected to be visible

by 2015.

A cursory glance at successful implementation strategies rejected and informed

the UN system of the following dichotomy: while there was some measure of movement

in certain areas, the chilling reality unveiled that other major objectives more specifically

in the areas of women's equality; prevention of violence against women; women's equal

participation in economic and political decision-making; and women and peace are

severely retarded. Besides stimulating dialogue, research, advocacy and policy

specifically-oriented towards the promotion of gender equality, each successive global

Conference garnered mass support from both men and women alike, in addition to raising

the consciousness of gender perspectives in areas of peace, development and equality.[72]

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[72] Beijing to Beijing +5: Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Report of the Secretary-General (2000):4.Web. 23 Feb. 2011.

The Platform for Action that developed within the Fourth World Conference on Women, was an augmentation of a work of twenty years in progress that drew from commitments made at the Nairobi Conference for Women, the UN Decade for Women 1975-1985 and the First Women's Conference.

The Beijing Conference, however, was cutting edge and highly significant in that it brought controversial issues that the conservative UN system previously refused to address. As opposed to maintaining women's equality at the periphery of states' concern and by extension, to an area of low to no consideration, the Beijing Conference made exponential advancements in several areas.[73]

The Platform for Action augmented and supported the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, which had as its main agenda, women's empowerment and human rights.

To this end, the Beijing Platform sought to "remove obstacles to women's participation in all spheres of life both public and private by ensuring equal access to and share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making."[74]

Another primary objective of the Beijing Conference was the accelerated implementation of the Nairobi Strategies. The Nairobi Strategies set forth that its resolutions and recommendations be achieved by the year 2000, the target date. The Beijing Conference monitored the process of implementation, further receiving

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[73] The Beijing Platform of Action identified twelve critical areas of concern that must be addressed strategically in order to effectively deal with gender inequality. These areas included poverty, education, health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; and the girl-child. For further details on the other critical areas of concern identified by the Beijing Conference, see Beijing to Beijing+5, Review and Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action:106-228.

[74] *Ibid.*5.

commitments from member states to create legislation and take giant steps towards engendering equality.

The Platform of Action from this conference illustrated strategic approaches that should be used in the achievement of women's equality. One such strategy, gender-mainstreaming, encompassed social and economic realms and encouraged that gender sensitivity and equality be included in all phases of economic and social planning.[75]

The other strategic approaches mandated by the conference included a life cycle approach, partnership between men and women, the promotion and protection of human rights and intertwining of gender issues in all sustainable development programs. [76]

The approaches underlined by the Beijing Conference are thematic in nature, describing many of the familiar problems that women face. The life cycle approach considers life as a continuum. As such women are seen as facing different types of discrimination during different stages of their life.[77]

Attempts to reduce gender stereotyping through the public re-identification of roles for both men and women are encouraged in the Platform of Action. At the same time, men are also encouraged to change traditional attitudes and behavior that result in gender inequality. These suggestions include the elimination of social and cultural values

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[75] According to UN Women, gender mainstreaming is a strategy for promoting gender equality, that ensures that a gender perspective is central to policies, research and implementation programs .

[76] See Beijing to Beijing +5:7-11.

[77] An example of this would be problems the girl child encounters such as female infanticide and educational discrimination, (where girls do not have equal access to primary, secondary or professional education, but instead are perhaps encouraged to chose particular fields of study that are domestic in nature). Those dealing with this form of bias suffer further cultural discrimination during the maternity process when relegated to the home, are unemployed or partially employed. These types of employment help to develop the feminization of poverty during the maternity phase and after. Since women are stereotypically confined to taking care of the family, the opportunity for advancement after the birth of children is compromised when they face sole responsibility for child-rearing. Consequently, it is important that one of the approaches highlighted by the platform was that of the relationship between men and women.

such as domestic violence, honor killings or genital mutilation. Men are specifically targeted with the ultimate view that their behavior and conception of women will change and that this will translate into a greater effort and commitment on their part to contribute to gender equality.

The human rights approach recognized the social movement of gender equality as a vehicle for social justice and development. More important, however, was the critical thought that women's rights were human rights (as enshrined in the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*) was an over-arching goal that incorporated all areas of concern of the Platform for Action.

The developmental approach calls for holistic, people-centered sustainable development.[78] This approach resulted in a renaissance, of sorts. States a development and progression of activities, measures, studies and surveys, and most important the description of national programs and strategies and world conferences that implemented or sought to implement the 1979 CEDAW instrument. A useful frame of reference would be an examination of the specific application of CEDAW, as evidenced through the implementation of platforms of action that arose from this Convention.

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[78] People centered sustainable development takes a position that corresponds to the U.N.D.P (United Nation Development Program) Human Rights Report. These reports define development as a process that improves and enables people's access to opportunity, available resources and general humanistic empowerment. It invites autonomy and self determination in peoples lives.

CHAPTER 5
Case Studies on the implementation of the gender mainstreaming in select Caribbean States.

The mandate for gender mainstreaming flowing from the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) is an extension of the concerns contained in the Nairobi Forward-Looking strategies, which are primarily centered on the creation of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Many governments have attempted to define and establish the contours of gender equality as well as inject a mainstreaming process into its activities through substantive policy development and institutional change.

These attempts have been met with a range of results on the one hand, "success" in the development or iteration of definite policies and on the other, conceptual and operational difficulties in bringing prescriptions into fruition. The Caribbean region is no stranger to this phenomenon. It too, has witnessed a concentration of government initiatives on behalf of women in the aftermath of the Beijing and its related follow-up conferences. This area was chosen primarily because their countries are defined as developing; their economies and political affiliations are stable and democratic and their experience can translate to that of the majority of the English speaking Caribbean countries. The countries within the case study differ in size but are considered small states. They have all ratified CEDAW and share similar colonial histories. This chapter analyses the attempts of four states: Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, to implement prescriptions found in the BPfA into state policy and programs.[79]

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[79] As a signatory, and by accepting the convention, States commit to undertake measure to end sex-based discrimination, publicly, privately as well as on the governmental level. Countries that have ratified the convention are legally bound to implement its provisions and supply national reports on implementation measures undertaken.

Before undertaking this task, however, the socio-economic backdrop within which this gender-based equity development has been unfolding should be established. The Caribbean states under study were former British colonies. The post-independence decade of the 1960s was demarcated by state policies and ambitions to amplify social welfare programs and policies that sought to create growth and development by assuring universal access to education, healthcare and related social welfare programs.

The next decade was marked by a pronounced need for the establishment of economic equilibrium between state spending and SAPs which required, among other things, not only a freeze in public spending, but also privatization of state enterprise. As a corollary, many governments were forced to curtail previous attempts aimed at individual and community development. This translated into economic belt-tightening and a series of austerity-inducing measures that arguably resulted in high levels of gender- based violence, poverty, unemployment and other types of social degradation.[80]

Under these economic policies, with a reduction in the expenditure of social spending, there was a decline in the standard of living that placed women at or below the poverty level. Specifically, many of these women experienced higher unemployment rates, wage discrimination and worked within the lowest remunerated economic sectors.[81]

As such, governments, in line with the BPfA recommendation that poverty be addressed through a combination of anti-poverty programs and in concert with economic structural changes (with the net effect that women would have access to resources, opportunities and public services), adapted the Women in Development (WID)

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[80] Unless otherwise cited, this section has been heavily influenced by the ECLAC study. Study of Gender Mainstreaming in the Caribbean. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2000. Web. 17 March 2011.This does not suggest that these social ills didn't exist before that decade, but rather illustrates the effects of the macroeconomic policies and trade liberalization on women.

framework for advancing gender equity.[82] The WID framework emphasized that

women's subordination was a direct result of their lack of access to resources.

Consequently, government responsibility lay in developing resources that would

ameliorate their conditions by seeking to

> involve and integrate women in all phases of planning ….of multi-sectoral
> programs that eliminate discrimination against women, … and emphasize income
> generation.[83]

A review of the WID program reflects a focus on vocational skills training and small-

scale income generation. At the heart of both was the intent that women would participate

in the labor force in a meaningful manner. Such programs were commissioned and

overseen by national women's machineries that were built on traditional skills. An

anecdotal point of departure is the observation that many of the skills emphasized

needlepoint, macramé, embroidery and the development of arts and crafts-related

specialties. Additionally, many women also participated economically as sidewalk

vendors hawking local homemade snacks and other delicacies.

It is no surprise that reviews of these programs indicated that they did little or

nothing to alleviate poverty and women's economic marginalization. The WID was also

bitterly condemned for a litany of failures, ranging from its inattention to the role of

gender relations and the restriction of women's access to resources; conflict and gender-

related bias in understanding women's subordination; its failure to draw a correlation

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[81] *Ibid*.

[82] *Ibid*. 3. Hereinafter WID. This framework assumed that women were excluded from the development process or were marginalized, when included.

[83] *Ibid*. (Citing the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of women). Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. New York: United Nations.

between economic inequality structures and gender inequality; and its failure to recognize the non-linkage between women's productive and reproductive roles.[84]

The limitations of the WID approach necessitated another paradigm which placed gender at the center of the discourse. Gender relations and gender were the root cause of the subordination of women that created differences in the positioning between both sexes. As a cultural and ideological construct it has lost its biological linkages and analysts have illustrated that gender is both reproduced and sustained through practices, influences, and outcomes. It also affects the distribution of, participation in, and enjoyment of, resources and rights in both public and private realms. Gender analysis, therefore, allowed for gender to be considered and understood as a social stratifier, similar to others such as race, class and age.[85]

As mandated by the Beijing Platform for Action, the Regional Program of Action for Women of Latin America and the Caribbean (RPAWLAC) underscored the importance of gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming creates gender equity by incorporating a related gender perspective at high levels within government institutions, in the areas of planning and policy development. In so doing, the inequality between men and women consequent to persistent discriminatory cultural contents in conjunction with economic and social norms, can be addressed.

The shift from the WID approach to a Gender and Development (GAD) perspective has been "a work in progress" for all national machineries. As a fundamental shift in the understanding of women's issues the GAD approach creates a direct focus on

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[84] *Ibid*. 4. (Quoting Razani & Miller, From WIBID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse, Occasional Paper No.1 UNRISD February 1995).
[85] *Ibid*. (Citing UN: 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development : Globalization, Gender & Work. Report of the Secretary General).

women's needs through targeted projects aimed specifically at the improvement of their conditions.

According to the Simms, the Beijing Platform for Action's "significant contribution to the institutions in the Caribbean was that, " it moved the agenda for empowerment beyond a set of prescriptions to an ideological base which underscores the notion that women's rights are human rights...it also put an emphasis on the eradication of poverty as a major plank for women's development and change".[86]

Barbados

The most current information on Barbados' effort to promote gender equality was presented at the 55th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in February 2011. In a statement presented by Senator Irene Sandiford-Garner, in her role as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Barbados Ministry of Health, she indicated that Barbados had selected five of the twelve critical concerns contained in the Beijing Platform for Action. The country's priority list reflected that the following areas: gender mainstreaming, women and health, violence against women, women and poverty and women in decision making, remained at sub-par levels of acceptability.

With regard to mainstreaming gender, while no gender bias with respect to education and training existed in the state, the Bureau of Gender Affairs works in concert with other government bodies and NGOs to implement the aims of the Platform of Action. To that end, gender sensitivity training that challenges stereotypes regarding gender-assigned roles, has begun at the public sector level with a view to establishing a culture of gender mainstreaming. More important are the efforts to develop a National

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[86] Glenda Simms. 9th Session of the Regional Conference on women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Mexico City 10-12 June 2004.

Plan on Gender, which would create the foundation for developing gender based policies and programs.[87]

As a 1980 signatory to the CEDAW Convention, Barbados' agenda for achieving women's rights is occurring at a snail's pace, thirty years later. This is due to marked absence of institutional mechanisms for achieving the gender mainstreaming process, ranging from confusion regarding the process itself on the one hand, to a lack of political will on the other. In spite of this, however, the country has implemented legislation in regard to gender equality, all of which have taken place under the rubric of CEDAW. With regard to the five priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action as selected by this state, thorough analysis of each follows.[88]

Poverty levels are deemed to be higher among single and elderly women, who continue to feel the impact of the economic climate. As such, the State Poverty Alleviation Bureau (Welfare Department) established in 1998, is developing a number of anti-poverty strategies to aid in the alleviation and eradication of poverty, by individual or group empowerment through financial opportunities in tandem with educational and vocational training.

Central to this process is the development of key working relationships between individuals, community and state agencies to increase efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts and resource wastage.

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[87] Statement by Senator Irene Sandiford-Garner. 55th Session of the CSW Feb. 2011, New York. Hereinafter referred to as the Parliamentary Secretary, within this section.
[88] Status report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000). Web. 12 June 2011.

The state has also indicated its desire to encourage young adult participation in small or micro business enterprises, as well as its intent to pioneer a new entrepreneurial class.

A myriad of social service programs, some specifically aimed at urban and rural dwellers, seek to provide jobs, transfer title to land for qualified low income households, and develop a micro-business sector.

Similar social assistance programs, with core strategies of reintroducing recipients into the workforce, focus on providing training projects for skill and self-development. The emphasis has been on providing access to information and education as methods of breaking the cycle of poverty.

The state has also implemented other initiatives such as increasing the minimum wage of certain classes of employees, providing tax breaks for low-income earners, as well as providing in-home care or assistance to the elderly. These targeted programs, at their core, focus on providing aid, training and skill development to women from poorer circumstances to bring about transformation of their socio-economic context. This can be perceived as a holistic approach to poverty alleviation.

A report by the Barbados Bureau of Gender Affairs, Ministry of Social Transformation in 2004, recognized the prevalence of violence against women. In 2011 the Permanent Secretary remarked that it remained 'a significant concern' as a 2009 survey indicated that 33 percent of women were domestic violence victims, in spite of the legislation enacted in 1992.

In addition to legislation, the state has constructed shelters for battered women and their children in an effort to fulfill its commitment to improving the lives of abused

women. Similar Victim Support Groups have been established in an attempt to provide emotional support to victims of various crimes. Interesting to note is the fact that this support group was established by the Royal Police Force. The latter however, underwent repeated training for the enforcement of domestic violence crimes. Thus, while the protective forces are on the one hand lending support to domestic crime victims, they are conversely failing to exhibit the conduct necessary or expected from them on the enforcement end. All new recruits undergo domestic violence intervention training as a form of reforming internal attitudes toward domestic crimes.

In a similar vein, a National Forum Against Domestic Violence, established in 2002, seeks to engage the populace on the effects of domestic violence on individuals, groups and within the family unit and in so doing reduce its occurrence.

The government of Barbados values health access as fundamental and strives to provide free universal healthcare at clinics. Health Education counseling is provided at these clinics and is aimed at increasing awareness of disease and risk factors. More recently, however, family clinics have been integrated into the Maternal and Child Health Program. Central to this integration has been the education of both women and their partners to engage in responsible family planning and the protection of sexual health.

An area in which women remain especially vulnerable is the negotiation of sexual relations. This has been recently addressed by a National Commission on HIV/ AIDS in an attempt to control the spread of the epidemic among the general population and treat infected people and at-risk groups without stigmatizing them.

The National Commission has garnered island-wide support to address the HIV pandemic at a bottoms-up level. In embarking on strategies to inform and educate the

populace on altering sexual behavior, the commission has adopted measures involving the media as well as visual arts, such as drama, to formulate and deliver well-received messages.

More important however, is the recognition that gender inequality is a critical factor in addressing the transmission of AIDS. To this end, outreach programs such as workshops on gender dynamics and gender relations have been presented with a view to identifying and reducing vulnerability. These workshops have taken social and economic issues of dependency, cultural mores and socialization into account in heightening awareness of unequal power relationships with a view to reducing transmission rates.

While Barbados has made some progress with relation to women's participation in politics, women remain severely under-represented in political decision-making and at the highest levels of political office. Out of a total of eighteen Cabinet Ministers, two are women, six of twenty-one are senators and four out of thirty are Parliamentary members. Nine out of sixty seven candidates in the 2008 election were women, while the majority of voters in that same election were women. See appendix for a graphed representation of women's participation in political decision making.

A Census done in 2000 reported that 51.9 percent of the population was female, a statistic which is not reflected in their political representation. The absence of women at political decision-making levels highlights the pervasive cultural view of politics as a man's domain. Women continue to be underrepresented even within the public service. While there are no legal barriers to female participation in government, the record reflects that many are committed to administrative or canvassing assignments. At the end of 2001, 17 percent of Permanent Secretaries were women, while 33 percent served as

Deputy Permanent Secretaries and Department Directors. There is one female representative in the High Court, while six women are magistrates. There are no female Appellate Judges. The Office of the Attorney General, Solicitor General, Chief Parliamentary and Chief Crown Counsel and their deputies comprise women, with women also serving in the posts of Registrar of High Court and Registrar of Corporate Affairs.

Within the Diplomatic Corps, however, women fill three of eleven positions. The numbers however, are much higher for junior, middle and senior management positions ranging from 53 percent to 73 percent.

Since 1998, a number of initiatives including, but not limited to, training sessions and workshops were developed to facilitate women's participation in political life. The sessions have thematically examined women's ability to transform and the nature and views of politics, views on women, gender and politics as well as their role in promoting and broadening accountability within the political process.

In the area of institutional development, and in response to the BPfA, the Bureau of Women's Affairs was re-designated the Bureau of Gender Affairs. This office was charged with the high level responsibilities of facilitating gender mainstreaming of national development policies; advising government agencies and NGOs on policy matters affecting women; participating in educational initiation and legislative reform; and human resource development for continued gender equity achievement.

To fulfill its objectives, the Bureau has a staff of seven, three of whom are administrative assistants, one research officer, two program officers and one director. Unilaterally, the Bureau is charged with development efforts in promoting, analyzing and

redressing the impact of policies on men and women and mainstreaming gender across the government programs.

In the past, the Bureau has conducted training series exposing participants to gender and development along with tools for gender analysis and planning, projecting that 30 percent of the public sector would have undergone training by the 2005 target.

In the aftermath of convening a National Symposium on Gender and inviting public participation in the development of a National Planning Instrument on Gender (the initial steps of a National Policy formulation, required by the Beijing Platform), Barbados has fallen short of that main goal.

While the Government continues to acknowledge the importance of women to development, the Bureau itself faces numerous setbacks and challenges to its mandate. It is institutionally weak and understaffed. The work of an entire government mainstreaming process cannot lie on the backs of four key staff members. As such, the government has sought and received support from the Inter-American Bank, aimed at strengthening institutional capacity in the following ways: (1) Expanding the research and data disaggregation capacity; (2) strengthening the monitoring capacity along with policy coordination; and (3) engaging the participation of NGOs and other social partners in the gender mainstreaming effort.

The record however is mixed. It reflects, first, that while there has been some legislative action to deal with matters of domestic violence, the enforcement mechanisms do not live up to the legislative ideals. Second, pervasive cultural norms negatively impact the protective forces reaction to domestic violence.

Similarly, while women constitute more than half of the population, they remain politically underrepresented due, in part, to their reticence in participating in the political arena.

With respect to health and the HIV pandemic, the community has reflected higher levels of success in commanding attention and educating the public on unequal power relationships in the transmission of HIV.

In spite of the advances made in the five areas of concern identified as pertinent to the Barbadian society, all of which were done within the CEDAW framework, the greatest obstacle is the strengthening of the Bureau of Gender Affairs and greatly augmenting its operational capabilities. This in turn, will enable it to work on the National Policy Statement on gender. The perception of the Bureau must change. It must be perceived as playing an important role and possessing more influential capabilities. Only then would it be able to effectively influence gender related policies, once the operational capabilities are put into place.

St. Lucia

In 1991, the St. Lucian government approved a national policy on women and a five-year Plan of Action for the implementation of policies aimed at advancing the cause of women.

Up until 1998 however, there was no Platform for Action as required by the Beijing Conference. Instead this government has reported a serious deficiency in efforts to support, strengthen and coordinate the national machinery appointed to effectuate the national policies.[89]

The government reported that four main areas of priority out of the twelve identified at the Beijing Conference, were selected for action. These four areas were more specifically: women and poverty; women and health with respect to reproductive health; domestic violence; and women's participation in power and decision-making structures.

There has been heightened awareness in each area of concern, since gender issues have been placed in a public forum. The national machinery made this break-through as a result of mass sensitization workshops and public media discourse.

The machinery's advocacy measures have centered primarily on establishing community focal points, health and sexuality workshops, distributing educational material on STI's, activities aimed at eradicating violence against women and working on legislative reform.[90]

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[89] The Ministry of Women's Affairs is the appointed national machinery to oversee gender policy development and implementation and the national plan of action.
[90] These mechanisms for redress include the Domestic Violence Act (1995) and the establishment of a Family Court (1997).

With respect to women and violence, legislative reforms that identify and criminalize the crime of domestic violence have recently surfaced.[91]

Campaigns designed to increase public awareness of the different forms of domestic violence and its effects on the family and society at large, have been undertaken while mass media has also been used to disseminate anti-domestic violence information. Funding has also been secured for the establishment of domestic violence shelters for abused women and children.

In the area of poverty, national consultations have been undertaken with communities to identify and address the needs of women in poverty stricken areas. Female target groups have been provided with training in marketable skills that could be used for the generation income.

These skills sessions, however, have proven to be exercises in futility since women find it difficult to access start-up capital as a result of the many conditions attached to micro credit loans.

In the area of women's health, efforts similar to those undertaken to educate the public on domestic violence have been undertaken. These efforts included, but were not limited to, the wide dissemination of pamphlets and similar material that address issues such as STI's.

The last area of concern – women in decision- making remains stagnant. Historically women have been discouraged from participating in political endeavors as a result of cultural norms and practices. As underscored in the Nairobi and Beijing

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[91] Attempts are also being made to develop domestic violence units in police departments and to train other personnel to adequately and professionally respond to the needs of victims.

Conferences, paternalistic, traditional attitudes must be erased if women are to be deemed equal to men.

Pervasive stereotyping and gender-typing would undercut any advances that are made toward the gender equality process.

In general terms, the accomplishment of the St. Lucian government is a little more than lofty talk and inaction. Attempts have been made on a grass roots level to raise public awareness on issues that concern women. However, the lack of a comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy, coupled with deeply entrenched cultural attitudes about women's roles discount any advances made thus far.

<u>Grenada</u>

The country's Women's Affairs Division (the national machinery for the implementation of and monitoring of gender conference resolutions) re-established the Inter-Ministerial Committee as joint-partners in developing and implementing gender equality initiatives. This Committee comprises members from selected government ministries and some NGOs where its objectives are to develop a national policy on women; plan, monitor and evaluate programs; and select a core group of gender conscious individuals to be utilized in the mainstreaming process.[92]

Reports indicate that attempts are being made in several critical areas of concern of the Beijing Conference. With regard to education and teenagers, the country has implemented a limited system that allows young mothers to reenter their regular schools after giving birth. This system, however, has created high levels of controversy to the point where it may result in counter productivity and rescission.

In the area of violence towards women, domestic violence training and counseling facilities have been commissioned to cater to victims of abuse. The machinery has undertaken plans to establish a national crisis hotline that will provide telephone support to victims in terms of crisis, sadly, however, there are no laws addressing domestic violence and sexual abuse. Grenada presently, has constitutional guarantees for the equality of sexes. [93]

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[92] Women's environment and development organization. Mapping Progress. A WEDO Report Assessing Implementation of the Beijing Platform. Grenada Action Plan. Web. 12 June 2010.
[93] Grenada Constitution. Preamble 11, sect. D.

Grenada has also reported that the process of incorporating disaggregation data into reports and policies has not been effectual.[94] The Grenadian national machinery has conceded that women have been unequally affected by poverty because of their relegation to the domestic realm.[95]

In more recent times, however, women's access to education has been amplified and they have been incorporated into the work force where their wage earning ability has increased. In fact, women constitute 42-46 percent of the employed labor force, but a disappointing sixty three percent of the unemployed labor force.[96]

A large majority of women are entrepreneurs who received micro credit loans from the Micro Enterprise Unit. The National Development Foundation also offers low interest rate loans and skills training to interested individuals.

In the context of participation in politics and decision making, Grenadian women have been significantly constrained. Although there are no restrictions on women's suffrage, women's participation in front line politics is severely limited. This is evidence in their one-fifth or twenty percent representation in the Upper House of Parliament. In the Lower House, women account for a mere one percent.

The theme of women and wealth, the well-being value, is one that has pervaded the Beijing Plan of Action and is of urgent concern to individual states.[97]

In Grenada (where women comprise of almost fifty percent of the population) the Ministry of Health and Health Education Division have partnered with the media to

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[94] Gender disaggregation is a process that quantifies data according to sex of participants. This information is very useful as it seems to identify areas and develop policies that can specifically benefit women. This approach has been widely promulgated by the UN in the gender mainstreaming process.

[95] Here women traditionally were forced to remain at home to care for younger siblings; learn craft making and sewing in addition to domestic duties, while men received primary, secondary and in many cases professional qualifications.

[96] The Grenadian National Plan of Action.

create public discussions and special programs aimed at women. These include information on family planning services, prenatal and post-natal care, and HIV awareness and prevention.[98]

Notwithstanding those accomplishments, the country has yet to implement a gender mainstreaming process. The Division of Women's Affairs, regrettably, is the only political office with a gender focus. The country's machinery is aware of the basic weaknesses as it relates to women's affairs, a virtually complete lack of governmental consciousness of the gender mainstreaming process; lack of trained personnel; and undefined national objectives and policies with respect to gender mainstreaming.

Grenada is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and has undertaken a responsibility to protect the human rights of women. As a participant in the Beijing and Beijing Follow-Up Conferences, the country has further pledged to develop and implement strategies that will positively benefit women and eliminate a number of factors that contribute to gender inequality. The process of accomplishing these objectives is slow and painfully difficult. Having examined Grenada's response to the Beijing Conference, it is useful to compare the strategies implemented by Trinidad and Tobago.

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[97] *Ibid.* 9.

Trinidad and Tobago's response to the UN Secretary General's questionnaire on the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action is by far one of the most comprehensive and may serve as a model for that region and now boasts a draft National policy.[99]

Three short years after the Nairobi Conference, Trinidad and Tobago, (in 1988) developed a National Policy Statement on women.[100]

This National Policy Statement is almost an exact replica in that it corresponds directly with the Beijing Conference on Women. To this end, attempts were made in various forums to address equal opportunities for men and women and to focus on practical and sustainable changes in the area of women's concerns.[101]

These documented attempts that the twin-island has made thus far to achieve gender equality, include a technical cooperation agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) that would strengthen the national machinery on women.

The IADB agreement focuses primarily on program design planning, management and training in gender sensitization and development within national machinery.[102]

The government next agreed on implementing the Platform for Action through a proactive and visible gender mainstreaming process.

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[98] This has been achieved through call-in radio discussions, television interviews, public address messages, distribution of contraceptives, pamphlets and other educational material.

[99] Division for the Advancement of Women. CEDAW Country Reports: Trinidad and Tobago. n.d. Web. July 2010(Hereinafter Trinidad Country Report).

[100] The National Policy Statement was the result of a clear recognition of the need for the mainstreaming process to begin from the government level. In this manner, a more focused and concerted effort would be made to incorporate gender equity across the governmental agenda and in inter-ministerial level. With coordinated effort, the model for gender mainstreaming is both theoretically and practically possible.

[101] See note104 above.
[102] *Ibid*.

Closely connected to this effort was the strengthening of outreach and collaboration with key constituencies – inter-ministerial departments, inter-sectoral areas and cooperation with NGOs.[103]

More important however, was the assignment of the national machinery with a clear mandate, authority and capacity to serve as the central body for two bifurcated tasks the first being gender policy and development and the second, monitoring the implementation of gender perspective in government programs.[104]

Next, the development of medium and long term gender implementation perspectives allowed for easy monitoring of policies at different stages.

Trinidad and Tobago, more recently, has enjoyed a buoyant economy which in turn has resulted in a decline in unemployment. There is, however, an ongoing need for development programs that target single female heads of households. To this end, the government has focused on the design and execution of socio-economic programs that are exclusively designed for women's empowerment, focusing in part on skill training for women in non-traditional areas, such as agriculture and landscaping, that more recently contain on-site child care units.[105]

It is noteworthy that private organizations offer technical and skill training to women and girls. This has probably occurred as a result of a mass gender sensitization

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[103] Trinidad Country Reports. Web. 17 January 2011
[104] *Ibid*. 5
[105] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Caribbean synthesis review and appraisal report in the context of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action." May 2010. Web. 11 May 2011.
To this end, the Gender Affairs Division has conducted training programs on Women in Business, women in construction and most significantly the creation of a widely endorsed Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute. Here, various programs on leadership and managerial training are offered to community leaders. The Institute also helps women in their transition from poverty to more productive and sustainable lifestyles. It also offers them training in personal development.

and training program which targeted the private sector, the Judiciary and senior government personnel.

In the area of health, Trinidad revised health policies provide for remedial and more accessible reproductive health services.

Trinidad's strategy is to be compared with Grenada's which were not given recognition through practice. In many cases for example, there is a wide divergence between policy and compliance. In this case, although there was an attempt to raise public awareness of gender violence, pervasive cultural attitudes prevented the protective forces from taking action in domestic violence cases, considering it a "private matter". At the same time the Judiciary maintained an apathetic attitude towards cases involving domestic violence.

In the area of violence and women, this country has attempted to develop a standardized system of data disaggregation according to gender and domestic violence.

A Domestic Violence Hotline and Unit were created in 1996 and 1997 respectively, to deal with the increasing rates of domestic violence after amending previous legislation that criminalized domestic violence. More recently, however, the country has benefitted from pilot Domestic Violence Registry, shelters and legal aid services.

Reports indicate an increase in the number of women involved in the political decision-making process and even boasts a female Prime Minister. Data indicates that women are participating in all three levels of the political spheres of influence, namely, the Lower House, Upper House and in the Cabinet. See appendix for graphs relating to women's participation in the decision-making process.

Chapter 6
Critical Assessment of Implementation Strategies

Governments that attended the Beijing Conference committed to creating national plans to advance gender equity in their respective countries.[106] As such, these national plans were and remain time-bound commitments that form the heart of the Beijing Conference. They are also important vehicles in translating objectives into a workable reality.

The case studies illustrate the failures and successful attempts at compliance with the Beijing Conference.

The United Nations at one point urged governments to "think globally but act locally." This practical advice has gone unheeded for the most part. While states within the case study developed some written national policies on gender equality, their successful implementation has been hampered.

These obstacles to implementation outweigh the positive benefits of purposeful planning and strategy.

While Trinidad and Tobago has a draft national plan of action, Grenada, for example, has admitted to a lack of coordination and support for its gender equity endeavors. Although the state's efforts have concededly increased public awareness in its main priority areas – health, decision-making, violence and poverty, an increase in public awareness is insufficient to implement the specific objectives which are to reduce and altogether eliminate gender inequality.

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[106] Women's environment and development organization. Mapping Progress. A WEDO Report Assessing Implementation of the Beijing Platform. Web. 12 June 2010.

The state has further alluded to the unavailability of resources and the lack of legislation as definite indicators of the state's inability to translate its intent into more serious actions.

Grenada's obstacles to implementation are not atypical. In fact, Trinidad and Tobago, the state with the most clearly defined national action plan, has admitted that a dearth of resources and adequately trained gender-sensitized personnel are the key obstacles to implementing its national policies.

At the same time, however, some states face a resurgence of cultural attitudes that result in patterns of patriarchal behavior. The result is that stereotyping abounds and in many cases women, especially of the poorer class, are negatively impacted. With the international decrease of development, as a result of the present world economy, structural readjustment policies, inflation and unemployment, women are affected desperately and remain unequal to men.

The most important question in the face of this reality remains what serious and practical efforts can be made to correct the problems commonly faced by many states?

The most obvious response to the rhetoric is to increase the source of funding for projects aimed at implementing gender equity procedures. Countries are faced with the dilemma of finding applicable sources of funding. The case studies generally indicate a trend towards decreased national budgetary allocations for gender programs. Trinidad is the only state indicating an increase in national spending on gender-related programs.

A possible reason for its perceived success is perhaps its buoyant economy and level of development of national policies, support of grassroots and international organizations.

Arguably, these sources can be used to fund the national effort of other states. Trinidad received funding for its projects from the United Nations Development Program and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), one of subsidiary UN fund for its various programs and the other, a regional commission that because of its strategic location, helps support regional countries through monitoring of follow-up mechanisms. It is highly dubious that international organizations and other countries would be able to provide financial sustenance to the gender programs of the world's smaller states, in light of the present world economy and shrinking national budgets.

The Platform, however, accords governments with the primary responsibility for implementing the strategic objectives.[107] Since the states studied indicate a unilateral lack of financial resources, they must look internationally for any such support. Before this source of funding is explored, local governments should look internally although this is often controversial to private enterprises and regionally, to appropriate bodies. In this case, the States can perhaps look towards CARICOM for assistance and guidance on gender-based initiatives.

While the Platform for Action calls upon developed countries to allocate 0.7 percent of the GNP to the official development assistance initiative (ODA), a greater portion of that allocation must be set aside for implementing the Platform of Action.

A macro-level assessment of possible resolutions invites scrutiny of international financial institutions lending policies and would require allocation of grants and loans initiatives established to further the Beijing Platform of Action. This, however, involves

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[107] Beijing Platform for Action (Paragraph 346).

the reframing of structural adjustment policies which have had the net effect of increasing poverty among women.

Simultaneously, these measures raise the dilemma of how best methods of obtaining governmental transparency can be developed, to ensure that the beneficiaries of such loans and grants, here women, actually benefit. The debate into the main objectives of lending institutions such as the World Bank and international and subsidiary roles, in a non-financial context, remains a heated one.[108] The World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy is one process that could efficiently address this debate.[109]

The International Monetary Fund has also been encouraged to provide policy advice to member countries in order to implement the Platform for Actions. In this respect, it emphasizes women's participation in the economic process and ensures their gain by protecting budgetary allocations in education, health care and basic social services.

On a micro-level however, governments should grant more autonomy to NGOs, local groups and other grass roots organizations whose job would echo the U.N's prescription to 'think globally but act locally.' In so doing a framework demanding accountability from the government, for the development and implementation of gender sensitive programs can be initiated. On a more practical level, governments such as that of Grenada, should, at a minimum, introduce legislation that would benefit women.

The most obvious example is illustrated in Grenada's lack of legislation protecting women against violence, while Trinidad, by contrast has pronounced

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[108] Here we see a shifting mandate of economic institutions from an economic development one to one based in part with human rights that has the potential for colliding with state sovereignty.

provisions. Drafting legislation and its related implementation is arguably less expensive than structural adjustment policies and infrastructural developments. States must show transparency and a willingness to effectuate changes that would benefit women. Like a game of chess, to achieve and maintain inertia there must be some movement. Absent movement, the game is stagnant. This is what is taking place in many states. Limited to no movement in areas concerning women.

The working model from which states have commonly drawn and to which they adhere, involves a prototype in which gender consciousness is initiated at the governmental level and trickles downwards (slowly, if at all) to social and developmental programs. How can the mainstreaming process exist if there is neither overt recognition nor acceptance of the core concepts associated with it? Furthermore how can the process be given effect, if there are governmental polices or national legislation calling for and implementing necessary changes?

The more pragmatic model that is being suggested involves the cooperation and partnerships of non-governmental organizations, women's groups, academia and civil society with the national machineries. I say this because the skills, knowledge, resources and drive of relevant non-state actors mentioned above, are a basic prerequisite for the advancement of women. I am suggesting a complementary and integrated top level [governmental] approach, with a functional grass roots approach that will monitor the protection of women's human rights, and work with the top government levels with sustained efforts. Arguably, this combination would result in an integration of both movements at a mid level intersection.

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[109] The CAS guides Country lending programs and can be used to address gender issues. The Platform encourages support on international institutions to fund and support other financial bodies that serve low-

On the grassroots level, NGOs and other groups, can lobby or use their resources to educate the masses and provide services in areas such as reproductive rights, violence against women, education and skills training. In this way the governments' efforts would be supplemented by lower level efforts and directed to respond to the push and pull forces of the underlying social strata.

With financial backing from both internal sources and externally from international and regional sources, and transparency and accountability, the process towards gender equity can be gradually realized in a manner that corresponds with Vision 2020.

income, small-scale and micro scale women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Global conferences on women--the central theme of this study have proven to be positive catalysts in advancing gender equality in these four Caribbean states, to the extent that that they inform states on international norms. The translation of international gender norms to national levels, with country ownership of accountability and transparency is inconsistent, and in some cases elusive.

While states may be symbolically committed to legal instruments pertaining to gender, the stark reality is that there is little development and implementation of policies directed at gender mainstreaming and the advancement of gender equality.

A telling example of this is the continued scourge of domestic violence that plagues all the states within the case studies. While domestic violence legislation has been enacted, judiciary, members of the protective forces and the legal system operate within the confines of culturally patriarchal norms to stymie already enacted gender sensitive legislation.

On many levels, however, the states in the region have triumphed in the area of education of women. While this is a small victory in that the enrollment of females at all levels of education exceeds that of boys, this does not translate to employment parity with their male counterparts and may seem meaningless.

In terms of women's participation at high levels of decision-making, the record is underwhelming at best. Continued low-levels of female representation in Parliament, in all but one state, leaves much to be desired.

Lack of institutional will within the agencies responsible for gender mainstreaming and gender equality development, along with absent deep pockets, work to the disadvantage of women in the region.

The single, most successful area of concern in which clear measures for empowering women have been implemented is health-related. Efforts to educate at community levels, bringing gender-based concerns to the forefront on matters such as STIs and HIV have resulted in safer sexual health practices.

Unfortunately, the results of this research set a very bleak tone for the social prognosis of the thesis. Has the UN advanced the rights of women through international conferences, as reflected in the case studies? The most obvious answer is probably no. However, I say that the UN's effectiveness should not only be judged according to the success of its programs, but rather on the objectives.

International conferences as illustrated throughout this research serve many important functions in the advancement of international norms. In this case, while the evidence suggests that states are suffering from a malaise of low levels implementation of agreed commitments, the UN should not be faulted. In evaluating its success as an intergovernmental organization, I agree that its programs related to gender mainstreaming are working – perhaps not in this region.

The United Nations system has established a mandate for the achievement of women's rights. Through its international conferences, an air of legitimacy is given to political causes. Knowledge is disseminated to large mobilized audiences. Political canvassing and networking is given effect by the interaction among NGO groups and other concerned parties. There is discourse and the development of methodologies for

policy blueprint. These objectives are quite impressive and useful as states continue to attend international conferences. If the UN's effectiveness is to be gauged according to the accomplishment of its objectives, I argue that UN summits do indeed meet their objectives and serve an important function.

Perhaps the UN's effectiveness may be enhanced by institutional reform. As such, current UN reforms such as the establishment of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, (UN Women), will streamline gender concerns, while continuing to support the work of the CSW, performing operational roles in providing technical and economic support to member states. In my opinion, however, more studies need to be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of state-based gender policies, the reasons behind the lack of implementation measures (beyond the most obvious claim of scarce financial resources). In short, the disconnect between the successful implementation of gender related policies at the state level and the "bandwaggoning" that occurs in the aftermath of international conferences, when there is a realization and commitment to issues, needs to be addressed and enlarged to include forward inertia so that definite state activism is undertaken.

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