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**“A Comparison of Gender Mainstreaming
Implementation in the United States and the
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Whitney Kathryn Isaacs B.A.

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1. Introduction

At the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, the mechanism of gender mainstreaming as an approach to gender equality policy was introduced at the global level. The Platform for Action, the resulting document from the conference, was signed by 189 countries present at the conference. Countries with different levels of gender inequality and differing approaches to reducing this inequality, countries as culturally and geographically diverse as Peru, South Korea, Bangladesh, and Switzerland, signed the Platform for Action, and by doing so, supported the mechanism of gender mainstreaming. How and why did this transfer of practice and belief occur? What factors explain the initial implementation¹ and the ensuing promotion² of gender mainstreaming at the national level?

This study will focus on explaining whether the mechanism of gender mainstreaming has been implemented and promoted by the political systems of the United States and the European Union, examining factors which explain the implementation of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming, and questioning whether the political systems themselves helped promote the application of gender mainstreaming.

While the mechanism of gender mainstreaming and its usage or implementation in differing policy areas and political systems has been discussed and studied in-depth (see, for example: Beveridge & Nott, 2002; Daly, 2005; McGuaran, 2009; Moser & Moser, 2005; Staudt, 2003; Walby, 2005), the factors which explain why this mechanism would be implemented in the first place have received little attention. To fill in this research gap, this analysis builds a framework out of two theoretical strands, sociological neo-institutionalism and social movement theory, in order to analyze which factors or circumstances may have led to the implementation and promotion of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming in different political systems. This study aims to contribute to the literature on the mechanism of gender

¹ Within this analysis, implementation will be used to describe the formal implementation of a policy; i.e., the transposition of a policy into a given political system's legal order.

² For the purposes of this study, promotion will be understood as the practical implementation of a policy; i.e., the application of a policy in the administration of a given political system.

mainstreaming and gender equality policy in general as well as institutional behavior and the influence of social movements in particular. By discussing gender mainstreaming and its implementation and ensuing promotion in the context of a comparative study, this paper is significant in filling an important space in the literature not only on gender equality policy and social policy as a whole, but also on the mechanism of gender mainstreaming itself and its implications for governance and society. Within this study, questions concerning the effectiveness of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming will not be addressed; although such questions are also incredibly important, it can be argued that these questions should actually follow the type of study conducted here. To first study the factors behind the implementation and ensuing promotion of a policy, then to consider how the enforcement stage occurred and how effective the policy is reflects upon the order of policy-making.

As the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing took place in 1995, the 20-year anniversary of the conference and the Platform for Action is rapidly approaching. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in cooperation with the Commission on the Status of Women, has begun its Beijing+20 process in order to assess the implementation and promotion of commitments made in the Platform for Action from 1995. This new reconsideration of the goals and values resulting from the conference in Beijing focuses mainly on reviewing the progress made and challenges encountered. Therefore, this study is quite timely and unique – it coincides with the review being conducted by the UN itself while examining something not considered in the UN review: namely, why the signatories of the Platform for Action decided to show their support and implement the mechanism of gender mainstreaming at the national level.³

³ Within this study, the national level of action will be understood as the federal level in regards to the United States and as the supranational (European) level in regards to the European Union.

This study will be set up as a comparative, qualitative analysis between the United States⁴ and the European Union⁵ in regard to their implementation and ensuing promotion of the gender equality mechanism of gender mainstreaming. This allows for a comparative approach to qualitative case studies to be employed in order to ascertain what factors may be used to explain the difference in the outcome of the utilization of gender mainstreaming in the two political systems. It is intended that by focusing on only two cases, dense accounts of each case will be able to be created. By developing these accounts, it will be possible to discern clear deviance between factors regarding the two cases.

This study is organized as follows: first, there will be a discussion on the background of gender equality approaches and gender mainstreaming, which will then be followed by the chapter on the theoretical framework and hypotheses which will structure the study. Next, the methodological chapter will explain the qualitative comparative research design used for this study. Then the empirical discussion will take place, followed by the comparative chapter. Finally, the outcomes of the comparison will be considered and concluded.

⁴ In the framework of this study, the United States will be understood as the federal level of government, including the executive branch (the presidency), the legislative branch consisting of the House of Representatives and Senate, and the judicial branch.

⁵ In this study, the European Union is to be understood as the supranational institutions of government, including the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the Court of Justice of the European Union, etc.

2. Gender Equality Policy

In what follows, I would like to focus briefly on the development of gender equality policy in the United States and the European Union. Before the introduction of gender mainstreaming, both political systems had various policies and programs in place to address inequality between the genders, albeit considerably different approaches to gender equality policy and programs. In order to structure this discussion, this study will employ Teresa Rees' (1998) three categories for organizing gender equality approaches which consider the approaches employed by political systems for achieving gender equality: equal treatment, positive action, and gender mainstreaming. Although Rees developed this categorization for her discussions on gender equality policy in the European Union, it is general enough in nature to be used when considering approaches to gender equality policy in other political systems as well. Following the discussion of Rees' categorization of approaches to gender equality, this section will review the approaches that have been used by the European Union and the United States to address gender inequality, both prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, which advanced gender mainstreaming on a global scale, and after its introduction into both political systems.

According to Rees, the equal treatment approach suggests that individuals have the same rights of the same magnitude and intensity as all other individuals. Rees argues that equal treatment is practically essential in any equal opportunity structure, but it is not without its shortcomings. Often, this approach focuses simply on the formal rights of citizens, e.g. women's rights as workers, and fails to address structural constraints and informal inequality, such as the informal "gender contracts" between women and men in a society (Rees, 1998, p. 32). Rees' second category, the positive action approach, is defined as a shift from equality of access toward creating conditions where equality of outcome is more likely. Like the equal treatment approach, the focus of this approach is also on the distribution of positions within hierarchies (Rees, 1998). Often, positive action involves the adoption of specific actions or programs intended to help women overcome their unequal starting

position in a patriarchal-structured society; however, the positive action approach also includes positive discrimination, which seeks to increase the participation of under-represented groups (in this case, women) through affirmative action programs or quotas. By attempting to reduce existing inequalities and promote the empowerment of women or under-represented groups, the positive action approach may be seen as reactive to these existing inequalities.

Finally, the last classification Rees offers is the gender mainstreaming approach to gender equality policy. The mainstreaming approach aims for the “systematic incorporation of gender issues throughout *all* governmental institutions and policies” (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000, p. 434). This last concept has the capability to promote not only the idea of positive action in that it serves to distribute positions within hierarchies, but it also has the transformative quality needed to address the structural status quo which helps to support these hierarchies. Furthermore, although gender mainstreaming adopts certain strategies within the positive action approach, positive action approaches tend to be reactive to the current situation, while gender mainstreaming is proactive in its pursuit of change in policy-making processes.⁶ Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) argue that although this approach is potentially revolutionary, it is also extremely demanding in that it requires all central actors in the policy process to adopt a gender perspective, whether or not they have experience or interest in gender issues.

⁶ Schmidt (2005, p. 34) argues that differentiation between positive action and gender mainstreaming remains largely on the analytical level, since gender mainstreaming should be seen as a dual strategy, and that Rees focuses on the qualitative differences between the two in order to differentiate the three approaches.

2.1 Equal Treatment and Positive Action in the European Union

Equal Treatment

The application of the equal treatment approach to gender equality policy in the European Union began with the adoption of Article 119 of the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community, most often referred to as the Treaty of Rome (1957). The now-famous article set the requirement that women and men should receive equal pay for equal work. At the time of its introduction, there were wide discrepancies between the wages for women and men so this article was adopted in order to ensure “equal pay without discrimination based on sex”.⁷ Although Article 119 was a policy aimed at gender equality in a sense, the premise for the creation of this policy was truly economic and certainly had little or nothing to do with social justice concerns;⁸ however, it was followed by a number of legally-binding directives and two court cases which ultimately changed the face of gender equality policy in the EU.

Throughout the 1970s, the European Union continued to use the equal treatment approach to gender equality policy. The directives of that time, the *Equal Pay Directive* 75/117/EEC, the *Equal Treatment Directive* 76/207/EEC, and the *Social Security Directive* 79/7/EEC, continued to advance the formal rights of women regarding the labor market. Respectfully, these directives addressed equal pay for work of equal value and eliminated separate wage categories; put anti-discrimination measures into effect regarding “access to employment, vocational training and career advancement, as well as working conditions” (European Commission, 2010); and

⁷ Treaty on European Union, together with the complete text of the Treaty establishing the European Community, OJ C-224, 31 August 1992, pgs. 6-79. Retrieved September 24, 2014, from <http://old.eu-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:1992:224:FULL:EN:PDF>.

⁸ The true debate surrounding the adoption of Article 119 did not actually include the issue of women’s rights; rather, it revolved around what was seen as an unfair position for countries with existing equal pay provisions (namely, France) in market competition with countries lacking such provisions. In fact, the implementation of Article 119 in the member states at the time was virtually nonexistent; the final deadline was mostly ignored by the member states, and although there was some pressure from the Commission to implement Article 119, this pressure was not sufficient in overcoming resistance from employers and member state governments (Kantola, 2010, p. 29).

ensured equal social security benefits to men and women with respect to sickness, disability, occupational disease, retirement, and unemployment.

In addition to these directives, the *Defrenne* cases, *Defrenne 1* and *Defrenne 2*, heard by the European Court of Justice in the late 1960s and the 1970s are also excellent examples of the European Union's equal treatment approach to gender equality policy. *Defrenne 1* is "often regarded as the founding moment in the history of gender and the EU as it rescued Article 119 from oblivion" (Kantola, 2010, pp. 29-30). Both cases revolved around the interpretation and implementation of Article 119, and helped to establish a legal basis on which social policy, especially gender equality policy, could rest. The ruling in *Defrenne 2* facilitated the notion that Article 119 could truly be the driving force behind EU gender equality legislation.⁹

Positive Action

While legally-binding directives place emphasis on the equality of access, the positive action approach "involves the adoption of specific actions on behalf of women, in order to overcome their unequal starting positions in a patriarchal society" (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000, p.433). I will briefly mention two action programmes of the 1980s that embody the use of this approach to gender equality policy by the European Union. The First Action Programme (1982-1985) focused on the consolidation and development of progress already made in equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policy as well as introducing new proposals concerning equal treatment in occupational social security schemes, equal treatment for self-employed women and women in agriculture, and parental leave. The Second Action Programme (1986-1990) truly demonstrated the attitude of the time regarding gender equality policy creation and implementation; the focus of this programme

⁹ The *Defrenne* cases, especially *Defrenne 2*, not only iterated the legality of Article 119, but they also had important ramifications for the EU member states. Prior to these cases, the actual implementation of Article 119 in the member states had been virtually nonexistent; the final deadline was all but ignored by the member states, and although there was pressure from the Commission, this pressure was not sufficient in overcoming resistance from employers and member state governments (Kantola, 2010, p. 29). According to one author, the member states received a wake-up call with *Defrenne 2*, as it "exposed a level of discrimination against women in employment which blew apart the self-serving platitudes of governments" (Hoskyns, 1996, p. 75).

was on training and education for professionals as well as the “sharing of family and occupational responsibilities” (Commission of the European Communities, 1985, p. 5). These action programmes helped to promote pilot projects and as well as effective practices in specialized areas such as child care and women’s political representation.

2.2 Equal Treatment and Positive Action in the United States

Equal Treatment

In the United States, the equal treatment approach to gender equality policy officially began in 1963 with the passage of The Equal Pay Act.¹⁰ The first federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, it required that women and men receive equal wages for doing equal work. In the symbolic court case *Weeks v. Southern Bell*, an ideal example of not only the use of Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 (see below for description) against sexual discrimination but also the judicial use of the equal treatment approach, the court concluded “[t]he promise of Title VII is that women are now to be on equal footing”.¹¹ In 1972, the equal treatment approach branched out to include legislation regarding access to education with the passing of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act. The monumental Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender in education by guaranteeing equal access to educational resources, including athletics and vocational or technical education, regardless of gender (Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972, 1972; National Women’s Law Center, 2012).

¹⁰ In 1923, the first attempt at the equal treatment approach to gender equality policy, The Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution, was initially introduced. It was reintroduced in 1972, when it passed through Congress but failed to be ratified by the necessary minimum of states. Subsequently, it has been reintroduced in every session of Congress since 1982 but has been unsuccessful in becoming an official, legally-binding amendment to the US Constitution (Francis, n.d.)

¹¹ *Weeks v. Southern Bell*, 408 F.2d 228 (1969), para. 52.

Positive Action

In the United States, the positive action approach to gender equality as defined by Rees is most often understood and implemented in the form of Executive Orders or affirmative action programs. It can be argued that this approach began with Executive Order 10925, signed in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, which created the notion of affirmative action in the United States.¹² This Order, however, did not address gender discrimination, but rather focused on equality in (federal) employment regardless of “race, creed, color or national origin” (History of Executive Order 11246, n.d.). Shortly thereafter, The Federal Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, which was responsible for outlawing major forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religious and national minorities as well as sex. This Act contains Title VII, which addresses and guarantees equal opportunity in employment and forbids discrimination on the basis of sex in the hiring, promoting, and firing of employees – simultaneously creating the basis for equal opportunity as well as sexual discrimination cases (including sexual harassment cases as a subset of sexual discrimination). This legislation also led to the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC),¹³ whose responsibility it is to enforce Title VII as well as all other laws against workplace discrimination.

Executive Orders 11246 and 11375, both signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, further spurred the affirmative action approach momentum in the United States. Although EO 11246, signed in 1965, required organizations accepting federal funds to take affirmative action to increase employment opportunities for minorities and to eliminate employment discrimination solely based on race, color, religion, or national origin, it was amended in 1967 by Executive Order 11375 to include gender as a category to be protected from discrimination.

¹² According to the U.S. Department of Labor website, EO 10925 was enacted because, by 1961, “it was evident that to advance equal employment opportunity federal involvement needed to be broader and more proactive” (History of Executive Order 11246, n.d.).

¹³ Formerly, the President’s Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity (1961-1965), originally established as part of EO 10925.

2.3 Gender Mainstreaming

What follows will be a discussion of the gender mainstreaming approach to gender equality policy. Although not completely independent of the other two approaches to gender equality policy, positive action and equal treatment, some scholars argue that “[b]y shifting attention from equality of treatment to equality of impact, mainstreaming appears to overcome many of the difficulties associated with rights-based strategies and positive discrimination, and hence to offer a constructive basis for future action” (Beveridge, Nott, & Stephen, 2000, p. 386).

The concept of gender mainstreaming was first effectively introduced into international public policy as an instrument for global gender equality policy at the global level during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, where it was adopted as a key element of the Platform for Action. This meant all UN member states that supported the mechanism were expected to develop a concept for the use of gender mainstreaming in their own national strategies for gender equality. As opposed to the equal treatment or positive action approaches, gender mainstreaming is not only an approach to ensure gender equality through gender equality policy, but also to ensure gender equality in all other policy areas such as health and economic development, agriculture, and security.

It is important to note that the official United Nations definition of gender mainstreaming as being used by the UN institutions today was not included in the original Platform for Action in 1995. In fact, at its introduction and for many years thereafter, the concept itself was criticized as being murky, unclear, and confusing. For example, Daly (2005) refers to the “fuzzy and technocratic nature of gender mainstreaming” (p. 449), while Booth and Bennett (2002) argue that “confusion and misunderstanding” still surround the concept (p. 443). In 2001, the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women noted that an “[i]nitial analysis of the obstacles and constraints to gender mainstreaming in the Secretariat ... identified considerable confusion around concepts” relating to gender mainstreaming (2001a, p.2). However, some scholars perceive this imprecision in the definition as a positive in the institutional environment of policy-making.

Beveridge and Nott (2002) argue that “[b]oth these characteristics, the vagueness and the lack of ownership, have served to make it easy for governments to embrace the mainstreaming concept and to adopt policy initiatives in its name” (p. 299).

In the resulting Platform for Action from the 1995 conference in Beijing, gender mainstreaming is most clearly referred to in the chapter on women in power and decision-making positions, paragraph 189: “In addressing the inequality between men and women ... Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men” (United Nations, 1995). This, however, was never used as a viable definition of gender mainstreaming; it was not until 1997 that an official UN definition describing the mechanism of gender mainstreaming was offered.

The first official definition of gender mainstreaming to be put forth by the United Nations Economic and Social Council came in 1997 and describes the process of gender mainstreaming:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes 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” (United Nations, 1997, p. 24).

This definition, although quite vague, clarifies the UN’s vision of how gender mainstreaming should and could occur. It states clearly that gender mainstreaming is a process and a strategy, implying that gender mainstreaming is not a simple one-time fix but rather a long-term practice that cannot be accomplished overnight. The definition also specifically includes references to both women and men and gender, which is not only important for clarification purposes, but also for feminists and

women's scholars.¹⁴ Furthermore, the final phrase in the definition offered by the UN includes a precise indicator of the true nature of gender mainstreaming, leaving no doubt the mechanism is viable for both genders to use as a means for equality: "The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

Since the introduction of gender mainstreaming, the United Nations has developed many resources for and a great amount of literature dealing with the mechanism in order to better clarify this new mechanism for gender equality policy.¹⁵ However, immediately clear is the notion a gender analysis is necessary before any decisions are taken in order to determine the possible repercussions any planned processes or policies may have on both women and men. "Every policy or piece of legislation should be evaluated from the perspective of whether or not it reduces or increases gender inequalities. It is assumed that unfair and unequal gender outcomes can be redressed, if not eradicated, by this gender-sensitive policy process" (True, 2003, p. 371). This analysis should not simply focus on the possible repercussions of decisions being taken; it also helps "give attention to gender equality from initial stages of processes so that there is potential to influence goals, strategies, and resources allocations and thus bring about real changes ... and make a real difference to gender equality" (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, 2001c, p.1). In other words, a consideration of the life experiences, interests, and perceptions of both women and men should play a central role in

¹⁴ In her book, *Gender Mainstreaming- an Innovation in Europe?*, Verena Schmidt (2005) states that some feminist organizations and scholars are critical of the use of the word "gender" in the concept of gender mainstreaming because "by using the term gender instead of women and men, women are again becoming invisible" (p. 71). However, deconstructivist feminist theorists argue that the more visible gender is, the more important both genders are (as the existence of one category [woman] depends upon the existence of the other category [man]), and this increased importance makes it impossible to ignore gender divisions and inequalities (Annandale & Clark, 1996, p. 21).

¹⁵ Within the UN system, the gender mainstreaming mandate has been reinforced through three documents outlining the overarching principles of gender mainstreaming and guidance for proper implementation and usage. These three documents are the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 which summarized the basic principles, the Secretary General's communication to management in October 1997 which provided concrete directives to UN staff, and the Outcome Document from the General Assembly in June 2000 which confirmed the Beijing Platform for Action, in which gender mainstreaming was introduced, as the reference point for gender equality policy and women's advancement (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 2001b).

policy-making, planning, and implementation. By doing so, gender equality is placed at the center of the decision-making process, which is exactly what the name of gender mainstreaming implies – placing gender equality into the mainstream decision-making process. Jacqui True (2003) argues that gender mainstreaming, “in contrast to anti-discrimination law and policy that seek to remove institutional barriers to women’s *equality* with men, [...] starts from the recognition that gender *differences* shape policy processes and outcomes” (p. 369).

The overarching purpose of gender mainstreaming, according to True (2003), is to “re-invent the process of policy design, implementation and evaluation” (p. 371) in order to ensure that the gender-specific interests and values of women and men are considered in the policy-making process. Put differently, the goal of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming is to move gender equality policy out of specific policy units (most often women’s policy agencies) and into the mainstream of policy-making. One scholar clarifies the concept by suggesting that gender mainstreaming is distinct because “it seeks to institutionalize equality by embedding gender-sensitive practices and norms in the structures, processes, and environment of public policy” (Daly, 2005, p. 435). In doing so, gender mainstreaming requires that all actors involved in decision-making bear the responsibility of promoting gender equality policy. It can also require changes within the decision-making structures and procedures of an organization – changes which lead to decision-making structures and processes that should be “conducive to the promotion of gender equality” (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 2001b, p.2).

Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming is not intended to replace other, more traditional approaches to gender equality, but rather to complement them (Stratigaki, 2005; Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, 2001c). Squires (2007) notes that the adoption of gender mainstreaming is usually acknowledged as an incremental process, developing from previously employed equality policies (p. 43). Some authors offer this mechanism as a dual-track strategy for approaching gender equality policy. These authors argue that gender mainstreaming is comprised of two components: first, the mainstreaming, or the incorporation of women’s and men’s interests and

experiences throughout the decision-making process, and second, the empowerment of women through specialized policies and programs (Moser 2005). The United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (2001c) argues that gender mainstreaming “does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies and programmes, and positive legislation” (p.1); but rather mainstreaming and the empowerment of women should go hand in hand as strategies for the promotion of gender equality. Therefore, gender mainstreaming should be composed of the continuation of specific actions in favor of women which serves as the reactive approach to gender inequality as well as mainstreaming in policy-making which serves as the proactive approach to gender equality. In the elimination of inequalities, there is a reactive approach to the current inequalities that exist, so the continuation of specific action programmes is necessary to address this issue. In order to promote equality, on the other hand, a proactive approach must be used through gender mainstreaming in policy-making.

Although the United States and the European Union have used both the positive action and equal treatment approaches in their pursuit of gender equality and policy that can foster such equality, they utilized these approaches differently and with different results. However, with the introduction of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming at the global level by the UN during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, there was the opportunity in place for both political systems to adopt and to use the same approach in a similar manner in order to produce policy in all policy areas that would address gender inequality, not just gender equality policy. However, as will be discussed in the following study, differentiations still occurred between the two political systems regarding their motivations for implementation as well as their ensuing promotion of the mechanism.

3. Theory

Due to its ambition to change policy-making processes, gender mainstreaming has mainly been studied from a policy-making or decision-making perspective. Assuming that gender mainstreaming has simply been implemented, most studies of gender mainstreaming have concentrated on explaining its effects on policy-making procedures, the difficulties that have been faced during its application, or its effectiveness as an approach to gender equality policy. As a result, they have failed to consider which factors explain why such a strategy for gender equality would be implemented and promoted in the first place. In order to fill this research gap, two strains of theory will be incorporated into a framework that goes beyond the current academic focus on structural and implementation issues; they will instead explain not just how it became implemented and promoted, but also why.

Drawing from Schmidt (2005), Verloo (2001), and True and Mintrom (2001), I propose a mixed-theory approach for the analysis of the implementation of gender mainstreaming into different political institutions. Departing from traditional theoretical assumptions, I have chosen to combine elements of sociological neo-institutionalism with elements of social movement theory in order to suggest hypotheses and examine factors for institutional change which will lead to an explanation as to why an institution would choose to implement and promote a strategy such as gender mainstreaming in its equal opportunities agenda when this strategy originated in a different political system. Based upon these factors, I intend to qualitatively argue under which circumstances a political institution might be ready and willing to adopt a new strategy for gender equality policy and then to successfully apply it in policy-making processes. By combining two different types of theoretical strands, I hope to be able to offer a comprehensive picture of the motivations of political systems for adaptation and change which would not be possible through the use of only one theoretical perspective.

For this analysis of gender mainstreaming, one needs to take into account both structural and environmental constraints in order to understand the factors behind institutional change regarding the implementation and promotion of such a strategy.

Many theories and studies considering institutions and institutional change tend to exclude considerations relating to the civil society discourse and action. In order to address the structural questions, I will employ sociological neo-institutionalism with its focus on political structures and the mechanisms which induce change within these structures. In order to address both structural and discursive questions, I will use social movement theory with its focus on the discursive dimension for the success and mobilization of social movements. After all, Squires (2007) argues that women's policy agencies and gender mainstreaming, though controversial at times, have been adopted and implemented due to "women's political mobilization, the strategic interests of political elites, national normative frameworks, and international influence" (p. 48). The framework developed in this section intends to consider these factors which may have contributed to the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming at the national level in the European Union and the United States. However, it is important to note that these factors more often inform and influence one another rather than singularly affect the implementation of a policy, and therefore, they should be considered more in combination with one another rather than lone causes for the implementation and ensuing promotion.

It is also important to note that the factors and hypotheses derived from the theoretical literature address different phases of action on behalf of the two political systems in adherence to the research questions: Has the mechanism of gender mainstreaming been implemented and promoted by the political systems of the United States and the European Union? What factors explain the implementation of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming? Have the US and the EU helped promote the application of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming within their political systems' administrations? Based on these questions, the "national level"¹⁶ of action during two phases of the implementation process is addressed in this study. The two phases address a) adopting gender mainstreaming from the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and formally implementing it into the legal

¹⁶ For the purposes of this study, action at the 'national' level is meant to be understood as action being conducted at the federal level (for the US system) or at the European/supranational level (for the EU system).

order of the political system, and b) the successful promotion and practical implementation of the approach within the administration at the national level.

3. 1 Sociological Neo-Institutionalism

In this strand of neo-institutionalism, the institutions themselves are understood as the “norms, cognitive frames, and meaning systems that guide human action” (Schmidt, 2006, p. 107). These institutions exist within a political environment composed of the state and a social environment constituted by the society. It is important to note that both the political environment and the social environment can impact organizations and should also be taken into account when studying organizations. Therefore, sociological neo-institutionalism is quite ideal for this study as the societal aspect is of high importance whenever studying the issue of women’s equality and this strand of neo-institutionalism attempts to explain connections between organizations and society. Within this theory, the assumption that norms, identities, and culture constitute interests indicates that interests are endogenous since they are embedded in culture; culture, norms, and identity *precede* interests rather than *follow* them. Sociological neo-institutionalism emphasizes “the role that collective processes of interpretation and legitimacy play in the creation and development of institutions” (Schmidt, 2006, p. 108). Therefore, this institutionalism is generally focused on explanation within a culture or collective rather than across differing cultures and collectives. However, sociological neo-institutionalism is still useful for comparisons across cultures due to the fact that it considers the similarities as well as differences in cultural norms and identities; it also considers cultural determination, where it emphasizes cultural routines and rituals, i.e. rule-creating action. As the purpose of this study is to explore why an institution would implement gender mainstreaming as a gender equality strategy in the first place and then develop a process and institutions for the application of gender mainstreaming, the insights of sociological neo-institutionalism dealing with norms, cultural routines, and identities which establish a rule-creating action are useful when considering gender equality.

Three institutional isomorphisms (Powell & DiMaggio, 1983) within sociological neo-institutionalism serve as mechanisms to explain institutional change. The three isomorphisms are (1) coercive isomorphism which highlights political influence and legitimacy as explanatory factors for change, (2) mimetic isomorphism as an institutional response to uncertainty, and (3) normative isomorphism stemming from professionalization. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) state that this typology is intended to serve as an analytic tool rather than an empirical test because the types are not necessarily empirically distinct. However, they also argue that the three types of isomorphisms tend to be derived from different conditions and therefore may lead to different outcomes. Hence, only one of the three isomorphisms, mimetic isomorphism, will be used to analyze and explain differing conditions in the political systems of the US and the EU which are expected to lead to differing outcomes regarding the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming within these two systems.

3.1.1 Mimetic Isomorphism

Mimetic isomorphism is employed in a situation of uncertainty where organizations may model themselves on other organizations they perceive to be legitimate and stable. With this isomorphism, it is precariousness rather than authority (as seen in coercive isomorphism), which encourages imitation. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that the response to this uncertainty may be modeling: the “modeled” organization serves as a convenient, efficient source of practices which a “borrowing” organization uses. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) note that “politicians tend to look for ‘quick-fix’ solutions and thus rely upon copying or emulation” (p. 13). The modeled organization may be unaware of the modeling behavior or may have no intention of serving as a model. Nevertheless, modeling is a frequent behavior of organizations in uncertain situations, and organizations have a tendency to model themselves after corresponding organizations in their field which they perceive to be more legitimate or successful than they are. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) hypothesize that “we

would expect states that are insecure ... to embrace new international norms most eagerly and thoroughly” (p. 906).

Applied to this analysis of gender mainstreaming, the main assumption with mimetic isomorphism is that in a precarious situation, political institutions will mimic or model themselves on other institutions which they perceive as legitimate and efficient when choosing to implement and promote new gender equality policy. The question of whether the US and the EU view the UN as successful and legitimate enough to be worthy of mimicking is quite likely the most important question regarding mimetic isomorphism. In addition, what may have led to the uncertainty, if any, felt by these two different political systems which would have prompted them to consider modeling their approach to gender equality policy on the gender equality strategy of gender mainstreaming as introduced by the UN? Based upon these questions, it may be possible to assume that in the case of the implementation of gender mainstreaming, the United States and the European Union mimicked the United Nations, an organization which they perceive to be legitimate and stable, concerning the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

3.2 Social Movement Theory

In order to study the implementation of gender equality policies in general and gender mainstreaming in particular, a combination of different “schools” or core concepts of social movement theory may be employed. Social movement theory analyzes social movements and the collective action within a society that spurs such movements; it considers the way in which social movements rise and their (potential) impact on policy. This theory looks at how collective action occurs, often through the efforts of people and groups with limited resources and political power. The main argument of social movement theory is that incentives for collective action arise as changes in the political opportunity structure develop. The vigor and endurance of such collective actions is often determined by the use of cultural and ideological frames to mobilize consensus and people in social networks. As Sidney

Tarrow (1994) argues, “Political opportunities are both seized and expanded by social movements, turned into collective action and sustained by mobilizing structures and cultural frames” (p. 7).

Following Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) and Verloo (2001), however, I will use this theory to analyze the implementation and application of the strategy of gender mainstreaming rather than using social movement theory to examine the rise and fall of social movements. Although the strategy of gender mainstreaming is not a social movement, the same factors may nevertheless play a role in the implementation and ensuing promotion of gender mainstreaming. It can be reasonably argued that a strategy such as gender mainstreaming needs political opportunities in order to be adopted and developed, networks need to be mobilized in order for it to gain momentum and support, and it needs cultural and ideological frames to place it within the existing political culture in order to be understood. In this way, the success of policy implementation and promotion is not much different than the organization and evolution of a social movement. Additionally, it should be noted that much of the progress and development that has occurred regarding women’s rights and gender equality has come about due to the hard work and engagement of social movements.¹⁷ These social movements, primarily comprised of women and stemming from civil society, have been of the utmost importance in fighting for women’s literacy, suffrage, and empowerment not only historically, but also currently.¹⁸ Consequently, it is necessary to consider the continuing influence of these movements and portions of civil society on the advancement and development of gender equality policy as well as the mechanisms and tools for doing so.

Therefore, the social movement theory will be used in combination with sociological neo-institutionalism in order to explain as fully as possible why the strategy of gender mainstreaming would be adopted from the UN system and implemented in

¹⁷ For more in-depth discussions on this, see Squires (2007), True (2003), Ackerley (2001), Finnemore & Sikkink (1998), and Stienstra (1994).

¹⁸ For example, the National Organization for Women (NOW) in the U.S., the European Women’s Lobby (EWL), the Women’s Organization of Iran (WOI), and the GABRIELA Women’s Party in the Philippines have been quite influential in their respective regions while the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) has had a much more global reach.

the political systems of the EU and the US. For the purposes of this study, however, two of the three factors of social movement theory will be considered - mobilizing networks and strategic framing – as they are the two factors which speak directly to the civil society aspect, while the third factor of political opportunities speaks more to the structural aspects.

3.2.1 Mobilizing Networks

Mobilizing networks and structures refer to “those vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action” (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996, p. 3). These mobilizing “vehicles” determine, in part, the ability of social groups or movements to organize and to influence policy. Tarrow (1994) argues that although individuals must decide for themselves whether or not to participate in collective action, it is in “their social networks and their institutions that collective action is most often activated and sustained” (p. 21). Structures and networks that already exist may either be the starting point for the formation of other groups or place collective pressure on the system. It is important, however, to understand that it is not necessarily the size or enthusiasm which ensures the mobilization of collective action – after all, most “large” networks are simply composed of an interlocking web of small groups, structures, and networks; it is often the connections between such networks and structures that impact the possibility of collective action. As argued above, the role that mobilizing networks have played in ensuring equal rights for women and men as well as the empowerment of women is of utmost importance.

True (2003) makes the case that “women’s organizations, more than national dynamics or institutions and international or intergovernmental pressures, provided the political momentum and societal pressure for the establishment of gender mainstreaming” (p. 372). Therefore, if mobilizing networks allow civil society actors to exert pressure on and influence the governments under which they live and also global governmental institutions when they mobilize transnationally, it leads to the assumption that by pressurizing the systems of the US and the EU, this will increase

the likelihood that a mechanism such as gender mainstreaming will be implemented and promoted within both systems.

3.2.2 Strategic Framing

Lastly, the second concept borrowed from social movement theory, strategic framing, has been focused on heavily by social movement theorists and political scientists. This concept is understood as “the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996, p. 6). First introduced to the social sciences by Erving Goffman (1974), the concept has also been used in social movement theory to explain how social movement organizations often *strategically frame* issues in an attempt to construct a fit or resonance with the existing frames of the society and the actors within it. According to Zald (1996), “frames are the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues” which allow individuals to understand, locate, and identify events and behavior occurring in their world (p. 262). Although strategic framing is often associated with social movements, within this study it will be considered as action on behalf of a political system in order to foster the practical application of a policy within the political system itself.

By achieving resonance with existing cultural frames, it is more likely that a new frame will be adopted than if the new frame were to conflict with existing frames. Strategic framing is not only necessary for the acceptance of a policy or strategy, but it may also foster implementation in certain directions (Verloo, 2001; Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000). To summarize, when gender mainstreaming is strategically framed, the concept can be widely accepted and understood, leading to more enthusiastic implementation and more efficient application. As Friedman (2003) argues, “successful frames can also change the way a particular issue is perceived transnationally” (p. 315), and can therefore lead to the issue being addressed in a different manner transnationally than before the framing occurred. This leads to the question of whether gender mainstreaming was strategically framed by the political

systems of the EU or the US as a form of promotion in order to increase the likelihood of it being applied within the administrations of the political systems after the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Therefore, it may be assumed that through strategically framing the mechanism of gender mainstreaming, there was a greater possibility of application of the mechanism within the administrations of the US and the EU.

4. Design of Inquiry

For the purpose of this study, a comparative analysis has been developed in order to consider the available data, to test the hypotheses, and to draw conclusions from the results. The research design is set up as a comparative analysis between the qualitative cases of the United States and the European Union in regard to their implementation of the gender equality mechanism of gender mainstreaming. It should be mentioned that the decision to conduct a comparative analysis was not one based on availability of existing data or the availability of cases, but rather this decision was based on the desire to go “beyond descriptive statistical measures, toward an in-depth understanding of historical processes and individual motivations” (della Porta, 2008, p. 202) regarding the implementation of gender mainstreaming in differing political systems as well as curiosity as to how the two political systems would compare to one another. Due to personal experience with both the European Union and the United States, there is a particular interest in contrasting these two political systems as well as an ability to work with documentation and experts from within both systems.

4.1 Case-Oriented Research

When considering comparative analysis within political science, there has been a debate over the usefulness of case-oriented research (as conceptualized by Max Weber) as opposed to variable-oriented studies (as conceptualized by Émile Durkheim). This debate will not be rehashed here; however, it is important to acknowledge that these two main strategies of research have different aims, diverse instruments of analysis (statistical correlation for variable-oriented studies vs. narratives for case-oriented studies), varying modes of methods, as well as contrasting approaches to research design, including differences in the number of cases and variables selected, how those cases and variables are selected, the definition of concepts, etc (della Porta, 2008). Ragin and Zaret (1983) briefly

summarize the different goals of the two strategies by saying, “[a] variable-based strategy seeks transhistorical generalizations, not concrete knowledge about specific cases” as is the goal in the case-oriented strategy (p. 740). In what follows, the design of the inquiry will be discussed and the reasons for employing such a design will be explained.

Weber’s comparative strategy of a case-oriented approach has been chosen as the research “logic” behind the design of this study. As a result, the ultimate goal is a more thorough understanding of the reasons for adopting the mechanism of gender mainstreaming or not, reasons which can be discussed and examined within their specific contexts and environments by using a case-oriented approach. This approach relies upon a small number of cases (small-*N*) in order to gain a detailed picture of each case rather than a generalization across cases, as is the objective in variable-oriented research designs. This does not mean, however, that generalizations are only limited to variable-oriented studies and impossible in case-oriented studies; della Porta (2008) argues that the detailed information extracted from a small number of cases in the case-oriented approach offers an opportunity for generalizations to be made, albeit temporary generalizations based only upon the cases studied which should not be considered more widely relevant without proper further research.

In case-oriented research, a detailed picture of similarities and differences between cases is compiled “through dense *narratives*, with a large number of characteristics being taken into account” (della Porta, 2008, p. 204) for each case involved. In the context of this study, these “narratives” are developed based upon primary sources consisting of expert interviews and official government reports and documents as well as secondary sources involving scholarly literature and studies. They will be constructed along the theoretical framework and the resulting factors for consideration as were detailed in Chapter 3, allowing for a typical case-oriented analysis in which a large number of factors regarding a small number of cases are assessed. By developing these narratives, it will be possible to clearly discern deviance between factors regarding the two cases.

John Stuart Mill (1843), in his seminal work *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*, focused on and famously wrote about five different methods, or what he referred to as “logical canons,” of experimental inquiry which continue to inform and structure scientific inquiry today. These five canons are the methods of concomitant variation, of residues, of agreement, and of difference - as well as the joint method of agreement and difference. The method of concomitant variation is the method most closely associated with and used in statistical analyses while the methods of agreement and difference are most often applied in comparative analyses.¹⁹ For this study, the method of difference would be most relevant in order to ascertain which (if any) of the factors under consideration could be shown to influence *both* of the different political systems with diverging histories, governmental structures, civil societies, etc. John Stuart Mill (1843) elaborates on the method of difference as follows:

“If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon” (p. 456).

Nevertheless, Lieberman (1991) admits that “this method has a certain limited generality unless one assumes, a priori, that only one variable causes the phenomenon under study” (p. 313). The ultimate goal of this current analysis, however, is not generalization across cases but rather to build a narrative which offers an in-depth account of each case and to compose a “rich description of a few instances of a certain phenomenon” (della Porta, 2008, p. 198). Furthermore, as it is nearly impossible to know which one variable causes the phenomenon and pursuing monocausality rules out multicausality in a situation in which multiple factors are at play (and quite probably responsible for the variation across cases), building comparative narratives which consider the different political systems and factors

¹⁹ For more information regarding the different methodological canons and the analyses which employ them, please see e.g. Mill (1843), della Porta (2008), Lieberman (1991), and Ragin and Zaret (1983).

chosen as possible explanations for the variation will yield valuable insights and descriptions. Therefore, the method of difference is simply considered and not employed within the confines of this study.

4.2 Case Selection

For the purposes of this study, a comparative analysis based on the case-oriented approach, the selection of qualitative cases to be studied is of paramount importance. As mentioned above, the method of difference will be employed in order to ascertain which factor(s) contributes to the change in outcome in diverse cases. As the purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding and detailed picture of each case, only two cases will be analyzed. The two cases that have been chosen, the European Union and the United States, have been selected loosely based upon what della Porta (2008) refers to as “the most-different systems design” (p. 214). It should be noted that while this study is roughly set up like a study using the most-different systems design, the two cases selected do not exemplify most-different systems, and therefore, this design cannot be strictly adhered to. Nevertheless, it can be argued the two chosen cases are different enough in a sufficient number of ways²⁰ that utilizing this design loosely will still achieve the desired result. The choice to apply a “loose” most-different systems design in this study allows for distinguishing common processes across various systems and “for checking if a correlation holds true no matter in which country” (della Porta, 2008, p. 215). It allows for exploration into which factors affect both systems as well as contrasts to be made concerning certain contexts. Ultimately, as McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) argue, the most-different

²⁰ The political systems of the United States and the European Union differ in numerous ways on various levels, including, but not limited to: the type of government (federal as opposed to political-economic union), sovereignty of member states (shared sovereignty with the federal government as opposed to sovereign states which share competences with supranational institutions), different legislative processes and actors, and differing histories of formation and transformation.

systems design aspires “to discover whether similar mechanisms and processes drive changes in substantially divergent periods, places, and regimes” (p. 82).

Primary and secondary sources have been consulted and expert interviews have been conducted with a view to present a well-rounded, in-depth study in which it is possible to truly compare the implementation and promotion of the gender mainstreaming mechanism in two very different political systems, the European Union and the United States. It is important to clarify that this study is purely a comparison of the factors which may explain motivations for change within a political system, the motivations for adopting certain norms, mechanisms, and legislation from another institutional setting. The goal of this study is *not* to compare the political systems of the United States and the European Union, a very demanding but also worthy pursuit. It is acknowledged these two political systems are extremely different – they have different political processes and procedures, different histories, different demographics within their populations, different geographies, and so on, all of which cannot be considered within the constraints of this study. What will be closely examined, however, are the factors which may explain the political systems’ ability for implementing and promoting a mechanism introduced at the global level by the United Nations, which does not require an in-depth comparison of the political systems as such, but rather requires a consideration of the reasons for doing so. In summary, this study uses a comparative approach to qualitative case studies with an analysis of primary and secondary sources.

In order to better compare the implementation and promotion of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming in the two political systems, I have chosen to extract three factors from the two theories discussed in the previous section, sociological neo-institutionalism and social movement theory, and have developed a framework for comparison from them. These three factors are: (1) mimetic isomorphism, (2) mobilizing networks, and (3) strategic framing. Individually, the factors do not explain much regarding the institutional incentive to implement a mechanism such as gender mainstreaming, the conditions which make such an application possible in the first place, or the reasons as to why the utilization of such a strategy could be considered a success or a failure. Used in combination with one another, however, it

is believed that these factors will provide a comprehensive framework of not only the ratification, but also the promotion of gender mainstreaming in two very unique political systems.

5. Discussion

In the following section, the factors put forth in the theoretical framework will be discussed in further detail and then will be considered regarding the two cases for comparison - the United States and the European Union. Afterward, the two cases will be compared to one another concerning the differentiations in the two political systems regarding the factors and their effects on the systems in order to gain a complete picture of the differences between the two cases as well as to determine on which factors, if any, they indeed differ. However, it is important to note that these factors more often inform and influence one another rather than singularly affect the implementation of a policy; therefore, they should be considered in combination with one another rather than as lone causes for the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming.

What leads a political system to adopt norms, mechanisms, and legislation from another political system or an international organization? This question has been assessed multiple times by many different scholars in various fields of research, which has led to numerous hypotheses as to why this may occur. Policy import and export literature has been on the rise,²¹ along with studies on the concept of “lesson-drawing” as developed by Richard Rose²² or what Paul Sabatier²³ referred to as “policy-oriented learning,” and studies on what others refer to as policy convergence, transfer, or diffusion.²⁴ However, these studies, although using different terminology and viewing the process through different lenses, are all essentially examining the same, or a very similar, phenomenon: what motivations explain the transfer of certain practices and beliefs from one system to another? What causes have led to more frequent occurrences of the transfer of ideas, practices, and beliefs? As Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) argue, this question is of utmost importance for all those either interested or engaged in the policy-making process. This question narrowed down to the specific concept of gender mainstreaming is also of paramount significance for those interested in the policy-making process, for those interested in

²¹ See, for instance, Falkner and Müller (2013); Costa and Jørgenson (2012).

²² See Rose (1991).

²³ See Sabatier (1988).

²⁴ See Dolowitz and Marsh (2000); True and Mintrom (2001).

gender equality, and for this study in particular: how and why do countries with different levels of gender inequality and different approaches to reducing this inequality, that are as culturally and geographically diverse as Peru, South Korea, Bangladesh, and Switzerland, come to implement the same mechanism of gender mainstreaming?

For the purpose of this study, none of the above terms will be used; rather, the institutional exchange of norms, mechanisms, and legislation will be discussed within the framework of social movement theory and sociological neo-institutionalism's institutional isomorphisms as explained by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). This framework is intended to consider not only structural constraints and motivations for change through sociological neo-institutionalism, but also environmental, i.e. civil society, constraints and motivations through social movement theory. As already elaborated in the theoretical chapter, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) discuss three isomorphisms within sociological neo-institutionalism which may be used to explain institutional change and the transfer of norms, mechanisms, and legislation from one system to another. These three are (1) coercive isomorphism which highlights political influence and legitimacy as explanatory factors for change, (2) mimetic isomorphism which serves as an institutional response to uncertainty, and (3) normative isomorphism stemming from professionalization. For the purposes of this study, however, only mimetic isomorphism will be used in the analysis of the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the EU and the US in order to ascertain and analyze the differing conditions in these political systems which are expected to lead to differing outcomes regarding the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming. In addition to the institutional isomorphism as an explanatory factor for change, elements of social movement theory will also be employed in order to consider the impact of the civil society on institutional change. Although social movement theory developed as a way to explain the rise and fall of social movements, it is useful for this particular framework because the same factors which determine the success of a social movement may also be useful in explaining the success of a strategy such as gender

mainstreaming. The two elements of social movement theory which will be used for the theoretical framework are mobilizing networks and strategic framing.

5.1 Mimetic Isomorphism

Mimetic isomorphism occurs as the result of uncertainty in or around an organization. When a precarious situation arises, regardless of its origin or composition, organizations and institutions may choose to model themselves after other organizations they perceive to be legitimate and stable. As pointed out earlier in the theoretical chapter, it is this uncertainty rather than any authoritative pressure (as seen in coercive isomorphism) that is the underlying reason for the emulation. This may occur as the result of either domestic or international pressures or changes such as domestic civil society unrest, economic frustrations, disruption in the assumed balance of power in the international political order, shifts in global norms, etc. In comparison to coercive isomorphism, an organization may be completely unaware that it is serving as a model for another organization, and there is certainly no pressure being exerted on other organizations to emulate it. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that this modeling, or mimicking, is a convenient, efficient way to overcome uncertainty; organizations have a tendency to model themselves after similar organizations in their field which they believe to be reliable and legitimate.

Relating to gender mainstreaming, mimetic isomorphism may be able to be seen as an institutional reaction to the seemingly precarious situation created by the civil society in demanding a better approach to gender equality policy, or as a reaction to the uncertainty created by the shifting international prioritization of women's rights and empowerment. Within this context, mimetic isomorphism would have occurred if there was enough uncertainty created within a political system and that political system held another organization in high enough esteem to be willing to model itself after the other organization. In the case of gender mainstreaming, it can be argued that the organization which has served as a model for other organizations is the

United Nations. While the UN has limited resources on hand to produce legally-binding legislation and resolutions, this does not mean the United Nations has limited power and influence in the international arena; its prominence and status as an international organization has led to a more or less general consensus among states that it may be considered the steward of global norms and interests, and therefore, as the custodian of international approval or disapproval.

Claude (1966) argues that “the issue of what the United Nations actually represents is less important than the fact that statesmen have conferred the function of collective legitimization primarily upon that Organization” (p. 372). Not only can the UN as an international organization be regarded “as an agency capable of bestowing politically weighty approval and disapproval” (Claude, 1966, p. 373), but within the organization, the statesmen and representatives from different nations “are keenly conscious of the need for approval by as large and impressive a body of other states as may be possible, for multilateral endorsement of their positions ... for collective legitimization” (Claude, 1966, p. 370). Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) argue that while “legitimation is important for states” it is also immensely important to recognize the importance of “the role of international sources of legitimation in shaping state behavior” (p. 903). In other words, and of utmost importance for this study, although the UN has limited formal power in the international policy-making sphere, it is seen not only as a forum in which collective, international legitimacy can be determined but also as having this legitimacy bestowed upon it by international actors. Having this kind of legitimacy increases the likelihood that it may serve as a model for emulation in the international political order.

Additionally, it can be argued that the UN is an organization to which political systems may look in order to discern the current international norms of behavior. As Claude (1966) states, there is quite a consensus among nations that the UN is the “most impressive and authoritative instrument for the expression of a global version of the general will” (p. 372). Therefore, it follows that states should intensely consider adopting the norms being promoted at the UN level (although they may not be promoted by the UN itself but rather by a member state of the organization) since it may be assumed these norms are seen as collectively legitimate within the

organization. When these norms start to shift to include new norms, it may cause uncertainty in states still adhering to old norms of behavior; however, if a new norm has been embraced at the UN level by many UN member states, the collective legitimization within the organization of this new norm may lead more states to adhere to the norm for stability and legitimacy.

For the purpose of this study, mimetic isomorphism will be considered in the relationships between the United States and the United Nations, and the European Union and the United Nations. Does the US view the UN as successful and legitimate enough to be worthy of mimicking? Does the EU? And what may have led to the uncertainty, if any, felt by these two different political systems which would have prompted them to consider modeling their national approach to gender equality policy on the gender equality strategy of gender mainstreaming as promoted by the UN?

5.2 Mobilizing Networks

Mobilizing networks and structures are what allow civil society to organize itself in a meaningful way in order to influence a governmental organization or policy. Through mobilizing networks, citizens are able to organize and mobilize themselves in order to engage in collective action. Mobilizing networks may originate in social networks or structures, but most importantly, they should emerge through the initiatives of private citizens and not as a result of any political action or program. However, it is essential to understand that it is not the size or amount of enthusiasm that determines the successful mobilization of collective action, but it is often rather about the connections between such networks and structures that impact their potential for success. How do mobilizing networks achieve a state of influence over large political systems such as the US and the EU? And what kind of influence or pressure can they, as civil society actors without any real political clout, truly exert?

To begin with, it is important to understand that mobilizing networks, especially today, do not simply stay active in their own civil society; the concept of transnational advocacy networks, or networks of activists, scientists, and experts that mobilize across state or national borders, has been defined and discussed heavily in academic literature.²⁵ With regards to women's rights and gender equality, mobilizing networks that are able to act transnationally often bring women together from many different levels – from the grassroots to the global level – in order to share resources and exchange knowledge on the “best practice” strategies they can employ to mobilize societies and pressurize governments in order to promote change in gender equality policy and women's rights (True, 2003, p. 378). With this increased knowledge flow and the many new resources available, women's mobilizing networks are able to assert themselves across borders and at the global level of international cooperation and policy-making, allowing their sphere of influence to be that much larger and more prominent.

However, the influence and strength of transnational mobilizing networks is not a new phenomenon. Historically, women have had to organize and mobilize for the recognition of their rights and for equality with men for quite some time; from activism during the movements for the abolition of slavery and continuing through the present day, women have constantly and consistently been actively organizing and mobilizing internationally (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Stienstra, 1994; Friedman, 2003). When one considers the global efforts made by women for the right to vote during the suffrage movement, the amount of cross-border cooperation and communication at that time is truly impressive and made the sharing of ideas and support possible (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 56). Furthermore, it was international women's groups that were responsible for the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN in 1946, after having persuaded the president of the newly-formed Economic and Social Council of the UN that such an

²⁵ For discussions on transnational advocacy networks with a view to women's rights and gender equality, see for example: Keck & Sikkink (1998), Stienstra (1994), Friedman (2003), and True & Mintrom (2001).

international body was relevant and meaningful for the empowerment of women (Stienstra, 1994; Friedman, 2003).²⁶

In the case of gender mainstreaming, can it be argued the women's mobilizing networks were able to organize and gain political momentum in order to be able to exert pressure upon the two political systems of the US and the EU to implement and promote the mechanism of gender mainstreaming?

True and Mintrom (2001) make a powerful argument in their study on the influence of transnational networks and gender mainstreaming when they contend that the cross-border mobilization of networks and organizations focused on women's rights have succeeded in making "gender inequity a salient issue and [have been able to] place remedial strategies on the policy agendas of international organizations and national governments" (pp. 37-38). They argue further that these mobilizing networks have afforded the political momentum and societal pressure necessary in order to instigate change at the national level. Most importantly, however, their results indicate the significance of mobilizing networks: states with a relative absence of women's NGOs engaged in transnational activism were the states with the lowest level of performance concerning the implementation of gender mainstreaming entities (True & Mintrom, 2001, p. 38). This is incredibly meaningful for the current study as the purpose here is to determine if the inverse is true for the US and the EU: does a high frequency of women's networks involved in transnational mobilization have an impact on the implementation and ensuing promotion of gender mainstreaming?

For general discussion purposes, mobilizing networks and their contributions to the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 will be considered in the following section. It is important to consider these movements' impact on the international process as a whole in order to understand the impact these movements had at the global level since it is quite likely the

²⁶ It is important to note that, before receiving the status of a full commission, the CSW was a subcommission under the Commission of Human Rights (CHR) (Stienstra, 1994, p. 82). However, due to intense engagement by women activists such as Alice Paul, the subcommission was granted full commission status in 1946.

situation would have been significantly different in the absence of such mobilizing networks. However, the real object under study, these mobilizing networks' impact on their corresponding political systems, will be discussed later in this chapter.

Beginning with the 1975 UN conference in Mexico City, which marked the International Women's Year and the start of the UN Decade for Women, the UN developed into an important and influential forum for highlighting and discussing critical economic, social, and political issues at the international level. According to Baden and Goetz (1997), the UN conferences, which took place beginning with the conference in Mexico City, allowed for the development and utilization of mechanisms for collaboration between women's rights advocates and multilateral forums. Although this increased international collaboration reflects the relative weakness of such advocate groups at the national level, "international fora have become arenas where they can 'leap frog' past the boundaries of state sovereignty" to promote aspects of women's rights which may otherwise be simply ignored by national governments (Baden & Goetz, 1997, p. 12). Recognizing this, women's rights advocates have taken advantage of the opportunity to globally promote their ideas and solutions to the problems of gender equality and women's rights. In fact, one could argue they were quite successful in their endeavor: 20 years after the conference in Mexico City, 30 000 activists participated in the NGO forum of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and over 3000 participated in the official conference (Friedman, 2003, p. 313). Not only did the sheer numbers of activists focused on women's rights present at UN conferences increase dramatically,²⁷ but their influence also rose and their strategies for having their interests recognized grew more sophisticated and effective. However, it is important to note, and True and Mintrom (2001) highlight, that the "momentum and organizational buildup to these conferences were the result of efforts by women's advocates worldwide rather than solely the agenda setting of the UN" (p. 39), illustrating the global effect that mobilizing women's rights networks can achieve.

²⁷ According to Friedman (2003), there were only 6000 activists present at the NGO forum at the 1975 UN Conference in Mexico City, with a mere 114 being able to participate in the official conference.

Although tracking the influence and strategies of the women's rights networks associated with the 1990s UN conferences (including the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development at Rio, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, and the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing) is a fascinating study, this historical analysis is not the purpose of this section.²⁸ The purpose of this section is to direct attention to the mobilizing women's rights networks that participated in and influenced the UN Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995. However, the advances made during earlier conferences were somewhat at stake in Beijing due to a new, rising countermovement led by the Vatican and supported by a coalition of countries (mostly countries with strong Catholic or Islamic religious leadership) and conservative NGOs. Although this countermovement also allegedly supported gender equality, it was primarily concerned with protecting the "traditional" concept of gender relations; for instance, it strongly objected to any measure it considered to challenge the structure of family or any measure which would promote women's full control over their reproductive systems or sexuality (Friedman, 2003, p. 323). So although many great advancements had been made during the three previous UN conferences in the 1990s, these gains were somewhat under threat at the 1995 conference in Beijing.

In order to continue with an agenda of advancement and to ward off the emerging countermovement in Beijing, women's rights advocates had to use all the lessons they had learned during previous conferences²⁹ and mobilize all of their resources. Numerous NGOs, mobilizing networks, and women's rights advocates organized and attended preparatory meetings, which included NGO meetings that directly overlapped with governmental preparatory conferences. On the initiative of WEDO (Women's Environment and Development Organization), a "Women's Linkage Caucus" was developed in cooperation with roughly 1320 NGOs from 73 countries in

²⁸ For more in-depth inquiries on the development of women's activism at the UN conferences of the 1990s, please see Friedman (2003) and True & Mintrom (2001).

²⁹ For a detailed discussion on the development of the strategies employed by women's mobilizing networks during the UN conferences which took place in the 1990s, see Friedman (2003).

order to advance the gains made at previous conferences and to ensure these advances would not be lost at the Beijing Conference.³⁰ Another key aspect of the strategic repertoire of the 1990s was the “insider/outsider” approach developed by WEDO, which simultaneously mobilized women’s rights networks in order to bring pressure from outside traditional governmental delegations as well as to organize lobbying inside these governmental arenas (International Women’s Tribune Centre, 1994). This insider/outsider approach allowed NGOs to straddle the divide between grass-roots style activism and lobbying tactics targeting policy-makers. In addition, although the NGO forum was located considerably far away from the official conference, NGOs made the most of the situation by holding daily NGO briefing sessions concerning the official conference’s proceedings and negotiations, and heavily utilizing the insider/outsider approach in Beijing: NGO representatives participated in official delegations where possible, lobbied governmental delegates informally, and played key roles in promoting the inclusion of certain paragraphs in the final Platform for Action document (Friedman, 2003).

Despite the preparations and lobbying efforts of women’s rights NGOs, the final Platform for Action document agreed upon at the Conference in Beijing was nevertheless the most highly contested of all the international statements agreed upon in the international conferences occurring during that time (Baden & Goetz 1997, p. 11). However, the work of the women’s rights advocates was not in vain; through their collaborative and collective efforts, NGOs and particular governments were able to defend most advances made in previous conferences and were also actually able to make advances in the areas of sexual and reproductive health,³¹ the categorization of rape as a war crime, the promotion of the rights of girls, and the protection of human rights activists (Friedman, 2003, p. 325).

³⁰ To see the Linkage Caucus and all the recommendations contained within it, please see: <http://www.iisd.ca/4wcw/table.html>.

³¹ The Platform for Action included, for the first time in UN conferences on women’s rights, “very open language on sexual and reproductive rights” (Baden & Goetz, 1997, p. 12).

5.3 Strategic Framing

Finally, the last factor to be considered in this study will be strategic framing. This factor has been used frequently not only in social movement theory, but also in political science (to examine the acceptance of certain issues or policies through the use of frames) as well as in sociology, linguistics, psychology, etc. As discussed in the theoretical framework chapter, strategic framing is understood as “the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996, p. 6). In doing so, people are able to identify and interpret events which occur in their world, which in turn allows them to mobilize collectively. However, it is important to remember that frames which spur collective action are not the outcome of individual, personal attitudes or perceptions, but these collective action frames are also the outcome of shared meanings and attitudes between people (Benford & Snow, 2000).

For the purposes of this study, strategic framing will be considered in the ways in which governments and social movement organizations *strategically frame* issues in an attempt to construct a fit or resonance with the existing frames of the society and the actors within it. By achieving resonance with existing cultural frames, it is more likely that a new frame will be adopted than if the new frame were to conflict with existing frames. As Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) argue, “[a]ctivists work hard to frame their issues in ways that make persuasive connections between existing norms and emergent norms” (p. 908). An impressive example of this is the way in which the US women’s suffrage movement utilized historical precedent to frame its demands for women’s voting rights when modeling its declaration for women’s rights on language used in the Declaration of Independence (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 56). By using language similar to that of the Declaration of Independence, there was an automatic connection between that iconic proclamation of rights and the assertion of women’s rights. Moreover, strategic framing is not only necessary for the acceptance of a policy or strategy, but may also foster implementation in certain directions (Verloo, 2001; Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000). Therefore, the reasons for why frames are chosen and how they are shared and transmitted as well as linked to

previously existing frames is of utmost importance for the acceptance of a concept such as gender mainstreaming.

However, as discussed in the theoretical framework chapter, the factors for consideration should not be considered singularly, but rather as factors that inform and influence one another. Strategic framing is perhaps the best example of this; without mobilizing networks, frames cannot be shared and distributed transnationally, and could therefore not contribute nearly as much to the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming. The inverse is also true: without strategically chosen and developed frames, mobilizing networks could not achieve the same level of influence over the debate of the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming. As Friedman (2003) argues in her study on the influence of transnational women's rights movements and the UN conferences in the 1990s, not only did the increased networking potentials and growth of mobilizing structures contribute to the success of the advocates throughout the decade, but it was also the "development of strategic repertoires within UN conference processes to promote shared frames" (p. 318) that contributed to this success.

It could be argued that the development of shared frames for each of the UN conferences in the 1990s was one of the greatest lessons learned by the mobilizing women's rights movements. Although not a strategy from the beginning, the deliberate effort to create shared frames around the UN conferences during the 1990s helped ensure that advocates were using "languages that cannot be rejected" (Susan Chiarotti, as cited in Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 166). For instance, during the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development at Rio, women's rights advocates promoted a message emphasizing "women's role as stewards of the environment and expertise in sustainable development" (Friedman, 2003, p. 320), leading to the development of the frame that "women's rights = sustainable development." In doing so, women's rights activists were able to influence the final conference document to include aspects of women's issues not originally intended to be included. Similar success was experienced at the Vienna conference for human rights; NGO participants and women's rights advocates there strongly asserted that violations of women's rights were just as grave as violations of human rights,

particularly in the area of violence against women. This assertion led to the creation of the frame (and ensuing slogan) that “women’s rights are human rights.” This frame even “took on a life of its own, appearing in venues such as Hillary Rodham Clinton’s plenary speech ... in Beijing” (Friedman, 2003, p. 322).

At Beijing, the framing strategies did not focus on attempting to bring in the topic of women right’s into conferences not already targeted towards women’s rights, as was the case in Rio and Vienna, since the conference in Beijing specifically focused on the topic of women’s rights. This, however, did not mean the strategic framing at Beijing was not as important as at other conferences: with the emergence and rise of the conservative, religious countermovement which was discussed in the previous section on mobilizing networks, the framing strategies used at Beijing were quite possibly more important than ever in ensuring that advances made in women’s rights at previous conferences would not be lost. Not altogether surprising, one of the biggest debates at the Beijing conference occurred between the advocates and governments focused on promoting women’s rights and the rising countermovement led by the Vatican and supported by a coalition of countries (mostly countries with strong Catholic or Islamic religious leadership) and conservative NGOs.³² This debate centered on the use of the word “gender” in the final Platform for Action document and became a contentious framing contest during the preparatory sessions - unique in the fact that it essentially challenged the conceptual foundation and subject matter of the conference itself. Ultimately, this was resolved when a working group settled on an “acceptably broad definition of the term” during the conference processes (Baden & Goetz, 1997, p. 11).

Additionally, advocates at the Beijing conference also promoted the notion of the conference as a “Conference of Commitments,” proposing the idea that governments should explicitly state which parts or principles of the final Platform for Action document they intended to implement in their domestic politics by the year 2000. While the notion of being held accountable for promises made at the conference in

³² For an in-depth discussion on the arguments for and against the use of the word “gender” in the Platform for Action document in Beijing, as well as the theoretical and social reasons underlying these arguments, see Baden & Goetz (1997).

the official Platform for Action was ultimately rejected by the governments, the NGOs in Beijing delivered on the idea of the “Conference of Commitments” by publicizing all the promises and commitments made by the official delegates (Friedman, 2003; Clark, Friedman, & Hochstetler, 1998).

On the level of governmental framing regarding gender mainstreaming, it is important to consider the ways in which both the EU and the US framed this concept in order to increase the likelihood of domestic civil and political support for it. However, this aspect of the factor of strategic framing will be discussed in the following section, which focuses on the individual political systems and how the factors under consideration played out in each system. Also, as the hypothesis regarding strategic framing deals specifically with framing done on behalf of the political systems, it is much more beneficial to look at these cases singularly in order to ensure clarity and a true comparison.

5.4 The United States

The discussion will now focus on the United States’ behavior at the national (federal) level concerning the implementation of gender mainstreaming regarding the two factors which address this phase of action, mimetic isomorphism and mobilizing networks, as well as on the United States’ behavior concerning the promotion of gender mainstreaming regarding the factor which addresses this phase of action, strategic framing.

5.4.1 Mimetic Isomorphism relating to the US

Since aiding in the very establishment of the United Nations organization in 1945, the United States has, at least historically, contributed heavily to the United Nations and its endeavors. However, the relationships between the US and other UN member states, as well as between the US and the UN itself, have not always been so smooth.

Conflicts, such as the one concerning the issue of possible WMDs (weapons of mass destruction) and the ensuing discussion on the use of force in Iraq in 2002 and 2003, have resulted in rocky relationships at the United Nations for the United States. As Claude (1966) argued, the UN is nevertheless still considered to be the holder of the seals of international approval and disapproval. However, as an official familiar with the United States' behavior at the UN argues, "international legitimacy, in the American perspective, does not necessarily mean aspiring to the UN standard" (Interview, 2013). Concerning the implementation of gender mainstreaming for the purpose of this study, then, the question of whether the US considers the UN worthy of mimicking in an insecure situation is of high importance. As previously discussed, uncertainty which arises within a political system may occur as the result of domestic or external factors. Regarding gender mainstreaming in the US, this insecurity will be considered through civil society pressure resulting from women's mobilizing networks.

Uncertainty

According to True and Mintrom (2001), as well as its official government website, the President's Interagency Council on Women was created on the eve of the UN conference in Beijing at President Bill Clinton's behest. According to the official website, the purpose of creating such a council on short notice (the Council was established in August of 1995, the UN conference in Beijing took place in September of 1995) was to "make sure that all the effort and good ideas actually get implemented when we get back home."³³ As idyllic as that statement is, True and Mintrom (2001) suggest a slightly different version as to why this council was formed in their study on transnational NGOs and the diffusion of gender mainstreaming. They argue that the dichotomy between action on the part of the US government concerning gender equality and women's rights and action on the part of American non-governmental groups had become stronger and more visible during the run-up to the UN conference in Beijing. Recognizing this dichotomy and

³³ This quotation, attributed to President Clinton, can be found on the website of the President's Interagency Council on Women as part of the explanation for the creation of the Council (<http://1997-2001.state.gov/www/picw/index.html>).

concerned that the disjuncture between governmental actions and “the global momentum for creating state mainstreaming institutions” was growing too great, is a deeper explanation as to why President Clinton established the Interagency Council on Women only one month before the conference in Beijing (True & Mintrom, 2001, p. 35). This stark dichotomy between civil society action and governmental action concerning the promotion of women’s rights is also a likely source for any uncertainty which may have led to mimicking behavior on the part of the United States. After all, as one official familiar with the process argued, “governments don’t like to be called out by civil society groups” (Interview, 2013).

Mimicking

Now that the potential for uncertainty has been discussed, it must be determined whether the United States considers the United Nations as worthy of mimicking in the precarious situation which arose from civil society pressures as discussed above.

As already mentioned, the US has had conflicts in its relationships at the UN level and with the UN itself. While some authors describe the engagement of the US with the UN as ambivalent (Johnstone, 2004; Luck, 1999), they also argue that the UN, along with many other international institutions, is the result of “a distinctly American vision of world order, which cannot be abandoned without impinging on the US’ sense of self” (Johnstone, 2004, p. 815). This seems like it would be a reasonable argument in favor of the US holding the UN in high enough esteem in order to mimic it. If the UN was established with so much input and inspiration from the US vision for it, then surely the end result should be worthy of mimicking from the American perspective.

However, regardless of the role it played in the establishment of the United Nations, the US does not always subscribe to the idea of the UN as the forum for ultimate international legitimacy. As a matter of fact, due to its institutional set-up and founding documents, it can be argued (and is sometimes argued by US politicians) that the ultimate legitimacy of the US government is derived from its citizens, not from international organizations whatsoever (Luck, 1999). Additionally, in public opinion polls conducted among the American civil society, the UN is viewed only

somewhat positively. A recent Gallup poll (Gallup, 2011) found that 42 per cent of the American public approved of the UN leadership³⁴ (rather on the low end of the supportive spectrum and quite far behind its contemporaries such as Great Britain or Canada) while 48 per cent disapproved. These numbers place the US public in a small group of harsher UN critics with high levels of disapproval along with Tunisia, Lebanon, Israel, and Turkey. Luck (1999), however, argues that it is the American public that has often been *more* receptive to the UN than their elected representatives have been throughout the 21st century (p. 39), which does not indicate a strong vote of confidence in the UN on the part of American representatives.

When considering the US possibly mimicking an international organization, the concept of “American exceptionalism” should also be taken into consideration. Discussed by Seymour Martin Lipset (1996) in his well-known book, this concept basically contends that the US is qualitatively different, i.e. “exceptional,” than most of the rest of the world regarding socialism, religion, class, etc. While some authors argue that American exceptionalism is on the decline or never really existed to begin with (Hodgson, 2009), others suggest that “it has defined the country’s relationship to the rest of the world, situating the US as the ‘city on the hill’ for others to imitate” (Johnstone, 2004, p. 817). If Johnstone’s argument is considered valuable for international negotiations by even one US diplomat, the chances of mimicking an external organization are quite low. If the United States considers itself worthy of being mimicked, then why would or should it mimic another organization? Indeed, according to those familiar with the United States’ behavior at and with the UN, it seems that this viewpoint is sometimes quite prevalent since “there is almost nothing that could be done at the UN to make something happen inside the United States” (Interview, 2013).

³⁴ According to Gallup (2011), worldwide perception of UN leadership is closely related to the perception of the five nations that are permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China), given the major roles these five nations play and the central position of the Security Council within the UN. At the national level, perception of the UN leadership is also closely related to the amount of interaction a nation has with the UN, i.e. either by gaining through this relationship (UN development grants or contributions to peacekeeping) or by giving to the UN system (Gallup 2011).

To summarize, uncertainty in the case of the United States can be demonstrated through the dichotomy between action on the part of the US government concerning gender equality and action on the part of American civil society groups mobilizing for better quality legislation and more attention for women's rights. In the run-up to the Conference in Beijing, it became more evident that the US was lagging in the area of gender equality policy. However, this uncertainty did not necessarily result in the US mimicking the UN regarding gender mainstreaming at the national level. This could be due to complicated relationships at the UN level, the low public perception of the UN leadership, a lack of esteem for the UN, or to the notion of American exceptionalism.

5.4.2 Mobilizing Networks and the US

Although there has been a perceived lack of state activism on the part of the US government for the promotion of gender equality, scholars and civil society activists have demonstrated the major role played by US-based NGOs in the advocacy for gender equality and justice (True & Mintrom, 2001, p. 35). As discussed in the previous section on mimetic isomorphism, action on the part of American women's rights movements has been visible and impactful concerning the promotion of women's rights and empowerment. Additionally, an American political representative stated that, "academic and civil society standards come into play ... responsible democracies look to that because they know they need domestic support" (Interview 2013).

Of the many American women's rights activists who attended the UN conference in Beijing, two of the most visible and active were Bella Abzug and Charlotte Bunch. Abzug, who co-founded the National Women's Political Caucus and WEDO, was a veteran feminist activist long before the conference in Beijing and helped develop the "insider/outsider" approach to lobbying that was a major feature of the strategic repertoire of NGOs and activists during the UN conferences of the 1990s. Charlotte Bunch, founder of the Center for Global Leadership at Rutgers University, was also an established women's rights activist and author before the Beijing conference.

These two American activists, along with many more activists like them and the organizations they represented, were essential for the creation of the “Linkage Caucus” which ensured advances made at previous UN conferences were not lost and were highly visible in lobbying governments. In turn, the official US delegation at the conference responded by holding “daily meetings open to any NGOs that were interested in an update on the progress of governmental negotiations” (Friedman, 2003, p.324).

Following the conference in Beijing, US-based women’s rights advocates and movements did not rest on the success of the conference; rather, they mobilized and organized themselves in order to monitor the government’s progress on the commitments it made in Beijing, as well as to develop their own agendas or platforms based on the Platform for Action from Beijing (The Stanley Foundation, 1995). In cooperation with the Stanley Foundation, thousands of women’s rights activists coming from dozens of different US-based NGOs developed a “Women’s National Action Agenda” in the year following the conference in Beijing. This agenda focused on establishing recommendations for the implementation of the Platform for Action resulting from the conference, recommendations which not only focused on implementing the Platform for Action in local communities, but also on implementing the Platform at the federal level and suggestions as to how to do so effectively.

To conclude, United States-based NGOs played a major role in the preparation of the UN women’s conference in Beijing and in ensuring that advances gained at previous conferences were not lost. After the conclusion of the conference, they continued to advocate for the implementation and promotion of the principles of the Platform for Action at the national level. Therefore, it can be argued that their approach to and promotion of gender mainstreaming at the national level in the US was both proactive and reactive.

5.4.3 Strategic Framing by the US government

In order to have a new approach to gender equality really take hold at the national level and be accepted and promoted by American citizens, gender mainstreaming should have been strategically framed by the US government so that it resonated with current gender equality policy and American institutions and citizens. Unfortunately, there are very few examples of gender mainstreaming as a mechanism or approach being framed for public or legislative purposes by the US government.

Nevertheless, regarding the framing of the usage of the Platform for Action, and particularly the usage of gender mainstreaming, a good example may be found in the United States' response to the UN questionnaire on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This questionnaire was completed in 2000, five years after the conference in Beijing and five years after the establishment of the President's Interagency Council on Women, whose mandate it is to coordinate the implementation of the Platform for Action. The answers provided by the United States in the questionnaire, it can be argued, serve the purpose of not only framing the Platform for Action domestically, but also for framing the United States' domestic implementation of the Platform for international actors. Although the answers to the questionnaire discuss the implementation of all 12 areas of critical concern highlighted in the Platform for Action, for the purposes of this study, only the section regarding gender mainstreaming will be discussed.

The section on gender mainstreaming in the questionnaire states explicitly that one of the "most significant advancements in the status of women and girls is the mainstreaming of issues affecting them into strategic plans and policies within several agencies at the federal level" (United States Department of State, n.d.). It then lists examples of areas in which the mainstreaming of issues of women and girls is being actively pursued, including (1) studies conducted by social scientists within the Department of Agriculture regarding women's roles and participation in American agriculture, resulting in "increased outreach to women in the agricultural sector"; (2) Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's notable attention and actions in

mainstreaming gender into foreign policy; and (3) efforts within the Department of Education to evaluate its gender equality programs and to train teachers more gender-sensitive methodologies and instructional strategies (United States Department of State, n.d.).

However, apart from one questionnaire that can only be found on the archived State Department website for the President's Interagency Council on Women, further examples of strategic framing done by the US government on the subject of gender mainstreaming are few and far between. On the current Department of State website, there are numerous official documents dealing with internal reports, conferences, and workshops on gender mainstreaming, but none of these documents are aimed at informing or involving the American public, nor are they focused on educating public officials on how to utilize gender mainstreaming or encouraging them to do so. For the most part, these documents are focused on discussing the mechanism as it is used in the UN system or in other countries. Therefore, they cannot be considered framing attempts as such.

In summary, there is very little evidence to support the notion that the US government attempted to frame gender mainstreaming in a way that it resonated not only with existing gender equality policy frames, but also with the greater American public or governmental institutions. Therefore, it cannot be reasonably argued that the US promoted gender mainstreaming in this understanding of promotion.

5.5 The European Union

The discussion will now focus on the European Union's behavior at the national (European) level concerning the implementation of gender mainstreaming regarding the two factors which address this phase of action, mimetic isomorphism and mobilizing networks, as well as on the European Union's behavior concerning the promotion of gender mainstreaming regarding the factor which addresses this phase of action, strategic framing.

5.5.1 Mimetic Isomorphism relating to the EU

According to official documents, the European Union strives to maintain a close cooperation with the United Nations in order to “protect the organisation’s role in seeking multilateral solutions to global problems” (European Union, 2004, p. 7). Multilateralism is the EU’s main approach to its external action, and this has been the subject of many official documents and reports as well as many academic discussions and analyses (see, for example: European Union, 2004; Commission of the European Communities, 2003; Brantner & Gowan, 2009; Laatikainen & Smith, 2006). The classic definition of multilateralism comes from John Ruggie’s (1992) examination of the concept; Ruggie states that multilateralism is the coordination of behavior “among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct” (p. 574). The UN’s governance structure is multilateral in nature, designed to foster international cooperation and dialogue, making the EU’s commitment to multilateralism a large part of its public commitment to the UN, which is sometimes seen as “the pivot of the multilateral system” (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p. 3).

Concerning the implementation of gender mainstreaming for the purpose of this study, then, the question of whether the EU considers the UN worthy of mimicking in an insecure situation is of high importance. As previously discussed, uncertainty which arises within a political system may occur as the result of domestic or external factors. Regarding gender mainstreaming in the EU, this insecurity will be considered through civil society pressure resulting from women’s mobilizing networks.

Uncertainty

Schmidt (2005) clearly argues that European women’s movements, European institutions, and the UN all created uncertainty in the European Union regarding its gender equality policy by publishing comparative reports and resolutions on the progress of gender equality policy in the European Union during the run-up to the UN conference in Beijing (p. 167). The most influential and visible of the European women’s movements is perhaps the European Women’s Lobby (EWL). Founded in

1990 by the national organizations of 12 member states, it is partially funded by the Commission,³⁵ which leads to it having a powerful voice and privileged access to the EU policy-making processes (Kantola, 2010, pgs. 94-95). In addition to EWL, another powerful women's organization from Europe is the Women in Development Europe (WIDE), which was developed as a result of the forward-looking strategies developed at the Third UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. Both of these women's movements were active before the preparatory stages of the conference in Beijing, criticizing the gender equality policy of the EU and causing uncertainty before the conference (Schmidt, 2005, p. 167).

Mimicking

The EU's relationship with the UN is a unique relationship: the EU as a whole is not represented with one voice at the UN, but rather through its member states. Nevertheless, the EU has developed and continues to maintain a strong public, discursive commitment to the UN and its work (Brantner & Gowan, 2009, p. 37). The European Union is represented at the United Nations through its 28 member states and by the European Commission, which has held observer status in the organization since 1974 and recently received enhanced participation rights in 2011. Although not all of the current 28 member states of the EU were members of the EU at the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, all of the current EU member states were members of the United Nations at that time and the Commission already enjoyed observer status within the UN system. Therefore, it can be argued that not only did the EU in 1995 display support the Platform for Action in 1995, but also that the EU as a whole today supports the Platform for Action goals and guidelines. In fact, one report published by the European Union regarding its coordination with the UN notes that since the 1990s, the "EU has also spoken with

³⁵ The European Commission has influenced much of the creation of many European NGOs, as well as "facilitating, regularizing and institutionalizing a European 'NGO structure'" (Kantola, 2010, p. 92). Nevertheless, there has also been criticism regarding the top-down nature of the Commission's approach to civil society with some scholars arguing that this results in the emphasis of institutional and European needs rather than the needs of civil society (Armstrong, 2001), and other scholars arguing that the ability of civil society groups to be the bridges to citizens in the member states is markedly hampered by the institutionalized nature of the civil society groups (Greenwood, 2004).

one voice in the follow-up of all the major conferences and summits” (European Union, 2004, p. 11).

Concerning EU involvement at the United Nations, the current legal basis therefore is outlined in Article 34 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),³⁶ which states, “Member States shall coordinate their action in international organisations and at international conferences. They shall uphold the Union’s positions in such forums”. However, Brantner and Gowan (2009) remind us that “a high degree of European unity does not necessarily equate to a desire to prioritize UN action” (p. 39); after all, paying lip service to a non-legally-binding resolution is much more easily done than actually implementing a legally-binding directive. Nevertheless, Fassbender (2004) argues that “[i]ntellectually and conceptually, the European Union and the United Nations are built on the same foundations” (p. 884), making the mimetic process a plausible one for the EU as it has a strong commitment to multilateralism, and therefore the UN system, and focuses heavily on fostering such cooperation.

Through these official EU documents, one can easily see that the EU is committed, at least on paper, to the idea of the UN as a source of legitimate international approval and disapproval. The EU documents illustrate how willing the EU is to work with the UN and the importance that the EU subscribes to in receiving approval from the United Nations system. Additionally, Schmidt (2005) clearly argues that “[t]he European Commission implements gender mainstreaming to increase its legitimacy with regard to its environment. The implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Commission can be seen as an example of mimetic isomorphism” (p. 167). This argument is incredibly relevant here since the Commission is the only EU institution that has participation rights at the United Nations and it is the institution that, according to Schmidt, mimicked the UN in the end.

To summarize, uncertainty in the case of the European Union could be demonstrated through the pressure put upon it by the European women’s movements that

³⁶ Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, OJ C-326, 26 Oct. 2012, pgs. 13-46. Retrieved September 16, 2014, from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012M/TXT&from=EN>.

criticized the EU approach to gender equality policy. This uncertainty, combined with the EU's strong public commitment to the UN and the importance of approval for the EU from within the UN system, led to the EU mimicking the UN through the implementation and promotion of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming at the national (European) level.

5.5.2 Mobilizing Networks and the EU

Civil society groups were also quite instrumental in the implementation and ensuing promotion of gender mainstreaming in the European Union. Although skeptical at first that gender mainstreaming would actually bring a new approach to gender equality policy and would not weaken or replace other specific structures and policies for women and after the European Commission endorsed the idea of a dual strategy for gender mainstreaming which also incorporated positive action, the EWL and other European women's groups began to shift their focus and direct their attention toward the proper implementation of gender mainstreaming. In fact, many scholars maintain that the implementation of gender mainstreaming was fostered by pressure from women's organizations within Europe, which were "effectively coordinated by the European Women's Lobby" (van der Vleuten, 2007, p. 168). In particular, it was the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and NGOs who strategically lobbied for the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the Treaty of Amsterdam (signed in 1997). As discussed in the previous section, the EWL is a particularly prominent civil society organization within the EU political structure due to its establishment being attributable, in part, to the Commission. However, the EWL was skeptical of and resistant to the concept of gender mainstreaming in the past; it wasn't until the Commission adopted its dual strategy approach to gender mainstreaming (see framing section below) that the EWL decided to lobby strategically for the efficient implementation and promotion of the concept rather than lobby against it (Schmidt, 2005, p. 153).

It is important to note here that some scholars argue that rather than civil society groups pressuring for the implementation of gender mainstreaming as had been the

case for previous European strategies for the promotion of gender equality, it was actually more the European Commission providing the pressure to do so. In their study on gender mainstreaming in the European Union, Booth and Bennett (2002) highlight that it was the Commission that made influential contributions during the preparations of the UN women's conference in Beijing which guaranteed that gender mainstreaming would be included in the final Platform for Action (p. 438). Additionally (as will be discussed in the following section), it was the European Commission that developed strategic frames in order for the mechanism of gender mainstreaming to be more easily understood and accepted by European society.

To conclude, European women's movements were active during the preparations for the UN women's conference in Beijing. However, these groups were even more active following the conference; they were quite influential concerning the proper implementation and promotion of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming at the national (European) level and its inclusion in the Treaty of Amsterdam.

5.5.3 Strategic Framing by the EU

As discussed in the historical background of gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming in the European Union, gender mainstreaming had already been introduced in the Union in 1991 in the Third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities. However, as Squires (2007) as well as Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) argue, it was not until the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 that gender mainstreaming was endorsed by the Commission on behalf of the EU, which led to the diffusion of the concept throughout Europe. However, in order to disseminate the concept of gender mainstreaming throughout the Union, it had to be framed in a way that would resonate with current gender equality policy, European institutions, and European citizens.

The EU has made attempts to strategically frame gender mainstreaming in many of its official documents³⁷ regarding gender equality policy and its work at the UN level regarding social policy and the promotion of women's rights. The EU maintains a strong commitment to the UN and its work; therefore, it is important that UN strategies be adopted and accepted into the EU political system and by the European civil society. Generally, the EU tries to frame most of its actions at the UN level; one can see this through the creation of the inter-institutional website "EU@UN".³⁸ This website serves the purpose of increasing the visibility and understanding of cooperation between the two organizations. Though not strictly a framing activity, this heightened visibility allows for more knowledge exchange and for more acceptance by civil society for the activities which take place at the UN level.

Although gender mainstreaming had been the key strategy of the European Union since 1996 in promoting gender equality, its implementation and practice received quite a bit of criticism from feminist scholars and women's organizations³⁹ until the mechanism was framed by the European Commission as a "dual strategy" for gender equality policy. However, even after framing the mechanism in that manner, there seemed to be much confusion about the definition and purpose of gender mainstreaming within the EU itself. Prior to this framing, the application of gender mainstreaming within the EU had caused friction which led to other gender equality approaches, i.e. positive action, being questioned and weakened. One study found evidence of gender mainstreaming being used to eliminate positive action measures in EU labor market policy texts (Stratigaki, 2005, p. 176). By framing gender mainstreaming as a dual strategy approach, the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Commission (the unit whose responsibility it is to ensure compliance with EU Directives relating to equal opportunities for women and men) hoped to remedy the imbalance resulting from the shift in equality policy frames.

³⁷ See, for instance, European Parliament, Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (2003).

³⁸ <http://eu-un.europa.eu/>

³⁹ For an in-depth discussion on feminist evaluations of European gender equality policy, please see (Kantola, 2010, pgs. 19-23); for a brief discussion on critiques of the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the EU, please see (Schmidt, 2005, pgs. 72-73).

The dual strategy utilized and promoted within the EU was then effectively applied by feminist politicians; three women commissioners in particular exploited competing policy frames concerning the take-up of gender mainstreaming by using Commission rhetoric and official documents (Stratigaki, 2005, p. 178). These commissioners were successful in mobilizing European women's groups, e.g. the EP Committee on Women's Rights and the EWL, as well as in building up a political environment that was receptive to enhancing gender equality throughout the EU. The legal basis for gender mainstreaming in the European Union level of policy-making lies in Article 3 of the Treaty of Amsterdam and partially reflects the dual strategy. It states, "the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women".⁴⁰ Although this treaty does not explicitly refer to gender mainstreaming, through this Article one can see the dual track approach forming. The constitutional incorporation of gender equality norms into the Treaty of Amsterdam has come to represent an important victory for European feminists (Mazey, 2002, p. 227). Gender mainstreaming was also explicitly promoted and framed through the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005). This framework aimed to provide structure for the utilization of gender mainstreaming within the European Union.⁴¹

Regardless of official documents, however, some scholars argue that, especially concerning gender equality, "EU policy discourse may evolve rhetoric devoid of substance with regard to political commitment and concrete policy instruments" (Stratigaki, 2005, pgs. 180-181). In her study comparing positive action and gender mainstreaming in the EU, Stratigaki (2005) also contends that certain official documents of the EU concerning gender equality policy are intended "less to increase the speed of gender equality policies and more to hamper progress" (p. 181), which is a fear that was expressed by feminists and women's rights activists within Europe prior to the heavy promotion of gender mainstreaming.

⁴⁰ Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, The Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, 2 Oct. 1997, p.25. Retrieved September 23, 2014, from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/treaty/pdf/amst-en.pdf>.

⁴¹ Proposal for a Council Decision on the Programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005), 2000/C 337 E/31.

In summary, the EU's attempts to strategically frame gender mainstreaming are very visible and numerous: through its official documents and websites, through the framing done by the Commission, and through the inclusion of the mechanism in the Treaty of Amsterdam (albeit not explicitly). It is apparent that the EU took the task of framing gender mainstreaming, and thereby promoting the mechanism, seriously in order to ensure its longevity in the policy-making process.

6. Comparative Results

The following will be a brief summary of the in-depth discussion from the previous chapter of the factors under consideration for explaining why the United States and the European Union would first implement gender mainstreaming and then promote the application of the mechanism at the national level.

6.1 Mimetic Isomorphism

When comparing the United States and the European Union in regards to mimicking the United Nations when concerning the implementation of gender mainstreaming at the national level, it becomes clear the EU has striven for a close cooperation with the UN in this case. It has been illustrated that both the US and the EU experienced uncertainty concerning their approaches to gender equality policy in the run-up to Beijing; however, this precariousness did not lead to both political systems mimicking the UN. This could be due to a number of different factors, but perhaps some of the most visible are the relationship the political systems have with the UN, the esteem the political system has for the UN, the perception the political system has of itself internationally and within the UN system, and the historic cooperation between the political system and the UN.

Summary of US

Uncertainty can be demonstrated in the case of the US through the growing dichotomy between action on the part of the US government concerning gender equality and women's rights and action on the part of American civil society groups mobilizing for better quality legislation and more attention for women's rights. However, this precariousness did not result in the US mimicking the UN with gender mainstreaming. This could be due to the complicated relationships between the US and the UN itself or the US and the other members of the UN, low public perception of the leadership of the UN, a lack of esteem for the UN, or to the notion of

“American exceptionalism” (i.e., if the US considers itself worthy of being mimicked, why should it need to mimic another organization?).

Summary of EU

In the case of the EU, uncertainty can be demonstrated by the pressure put upon the European institutions by European women’s movements. These movements voiced their criticism of EU gender equality policy during the preparatory stages of the UN conference in Beijing, causing uncertainty on behalf of the EU before the conference. Importantly, it can be argued that the strong public commitment of the EU to the UN, the high amount of esteem the EU has for the UN, the EU’s commitment to effective multilateralism at the UN level, and the importance of approval from the UN system for the EU, led to the EU mimicking the UN in the case of gender mainstreaming in order to increase its legitimacy and reduce uncertainty.

Therefore, the theory-informed assumption concerning mimetic isomorphism can only be partially confirmed. In the case of the US, uncertainty was demonstrated; nevertheless, due to the somewhat complicated relationship between the US and the UN, low public perception within the US of the United Nations, and the concept of American exceptionalism, it cannot be soundly argued that the US implemented gender mainstreaming at the national level as a way to mimic the UN. In the case of the EU, uncertainty was also demonstrated; however, it can also be argued that due to the strong public commitment of the EU to the UN, the EU’s commitment to effective multilateralism, and the esteem the EU holds for the UN, the EU implemented the mechanism of gender mainstreaming at the national level as a form of mimicking the UN.

6.2 Mobilizing Networks

When comparing the EU and the US regarding the mobilization of civil society groups for the promotion of the concept of gender mainstreaming, it can be argued that the American women's movements were both proactive and reactive within the US during the run-up to the UN women's conference while the European women's movements were more reactive within the EU during the follow-up of the conference. In both systems, pressure to implement and promote gender mainstreaming was felt as a result of these civil society groups; however, it can be maintained that pressure was exerted at different times and in different ways, leading to divergent results concerning the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming in the two political systems.

Summary US

Although the US government is not well-known for its activism in the promotion of gender equality, US-based NGOs have played a major role in advocating for gender equality. In the case of gender mainstreaming, American women's rights activists were very engaged in the preparation of the UN conference in Beijing as well as ensuring that advances made at previous conferences would not be lost. Following the conference in Beijing, these activists continued to monitor the implementation and promotion of the Platform for Action in the US government.

Summary EU

After the European Commission framed gender mainstreaming as a dual strategy for gender equality policy, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) worked closely with the Commission during the aftermath of the UN conference in Beijing in order to ensure proper promotion of the mechanism within the European institutions and member states. It was women's rights groups and EU-based NGOs that were successful in their lobbying efforts to include gender mainstreaming in the Treaty of Amsterdam.

Therefore, the expectation that pressurizing on the part of social movements will increase the likelihood of the implementation and promotion of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming can only be partially confirmed. In the case of the US,

mobilizing networks created pressure prior to the UN women's conference and continued to be active regarding the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming after Beijing. In the case of the EU, pressure was also exerted by women's networks; however, this pressure can be most visibly demonstrated after the conference took place, i.e. during the promotion of the concept within the political system, so it cannot be argued that pressure from civil society groups increased the likelihood of implementation of the mechanism by the EU, although it can be argued that these groups increased the likelihood of promotion of the mechanism.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the factor of mobilizing networks is actually an insufficient factor for explanation within this study because both cases proved the involvement of mobilizing networks; however, only one system (the EU) truly implemented and promoted gender mainstreaming while the other (the US) did not.

6.3 Strategic Framing

When comparing the United States and the European Union concerning the strategic framing of the concept of gender mainstreaming at the national level, there is a stark difference between the two political systems. It has been illustrated that, in the case of the US, there has been a glaring lack of strategic framing activity, while in the case of the EU, multiple examples of strategic framing are evident.

Summary US

There are very few examples of the US government attempting to strategically frame gender mainstreaming in order for it to resonate with existing gender equality policy and with the American public. There is evidence of the US framing the Platform for Action that resulted from the conference in Beijing; however, when it comes to the mechanism of gender mainstreaming, there is a definite lack of strategic framing in

order for the mechanism to be better understood and accepted in both the political system and in the public perception.

Summary EU

The EU has made many visible attempts to strategically frame gender mainstreaming: in its official documents and the website concerned with its work at the UN level, through the Commission framing gender mainstreaming as a dual strategy for gender equality policy, and through the inclusion of the mechanism in the Treaty of Amsterdam, albeit not explicitly. It is clear that, on numerous occasions, the EU took the task of framing gender mainstreaming earnestly and seriously.

Accordingly, the theory-informed assumption concerning strategic framing can only be partially confirmed: In the case of the US, there is little evidence of gender mainstreaming being strategically framed in order for it to be promoted, i.e., practically applied, within the administration of the US government. In the case of the EU, however, evidence of the political system strategically framing the mechanism of gender mainstreaming abounds.

Table 3. Overview of Comparative Results

POLITICAL SYSTEM	PHASE 1: Implementation <i>(i.e., formal implementation of mechanism into political systems)</i>	Mimetic Isomorphism	Mobilizing Networks	PHASE 2: Promotion <i>(i.e., practical application of mechanism in administrations)</i>	Strategic Framing
EUROPEAN UNION	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNITED STATES	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

The comparative results have all been compiled in Table 3 in order to provide a visual representation of all factors, phases of action, and political systems. Through this table, one can clearly see that during both phases of action, the implementation and promotion phases, the European Union exhibited its commitment to the mechanism of gender mainstreaming through both implementation and promotion whereas the United States only indicated support of gender mainstreaming during the implementation phase while it demonstrated a lack of commitment during the promotion phase. Concerning the factors for consideration, the two political systems are only similar with regard to mobilizing networks, which was the only factor for which the US exhibited positive inclinations. On the other hand, the European Union showed positive results for each and every factor under consideration: it mimicked the UN as a response to uncertainty in order to gain more legitimacy and stability, the European women's movements were mobilized to promote the support of gender mainstreaming following the conference in Beijing, and it clearly engaged in the strategic framing of the mechanism within Europe.

An interesting result is how the political systems differ regarding two factors and only agree on one, contrary to the expectation discussed in the methodology chapter concerning the method of difference, which expects the cases to agree on all but one. Nevertheless, despite the expectations based on that methodology, this result is interesting in and of itself because it highlights the role played by civil society activists and social movements regardless of the political system in which they operate. This could have important implications for scholars in the area of civil society organizations and social movements.

6.4 Considerations for Variation

Although there are certainly numerous explanations for the differentiations seen between the two political systems, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the most relevant of these. Even though these explanations will not be tested here, it is

still an important exercise of any study to consider why or how the results can be explained and described.

One plausible explanation for the variation between the EU and the US is the focus on human rights in general, and on women's rights in particular, within the political systems themselves. As discussed earlier, there has been and remains a large dichotomy in the US between action on the part of the government and action on the part of the civil society regarding women's rights. There is simply less of a focus in the United States government on human and women's rights as there is in the European Union. While both systems subscribe to and support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Union has the additional Charter of Fundamental Rights whereas the United States has the Bill of Rights and the Amendments to its Constitution dealing with citizens' rights. However, a quick perusal of official websites and documents as well as a thorough reading of some academic studies show the strong, normative focus of the EU on human rights which the US clearly lacks.

Another reasonable explanation for the variation between the political systems could be the prior introduction of the gender mainstreaming approach in the European Union before the UN women's conference in Beijing. As mentioned previously in this study, gender mainstreaming had been introduced in Europe in 1991 in the Third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities; however, it was not widely discussed or utilized until after the Beijing conference. Following the conference, the approach was disseminated throughout the whole of the European Union. Since the gender mainstreaming approach to gender equality had already been known in Europe prior to the conference, it was not exactly new or novel in the sense that it was within the United States. Therefore, it is reasonable to speculate that this previous introduction may have played at least some kind of role in the ensuing implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming within the European Union.

7. Conclusion

This study has focused on explaining whether the mechanism of gender mainstreaming, introduced at the global level in 1995 at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, has been implemented in and promoted by the political systems of the United States and the European Union, examining the factors which may explain the main institutional motivations for implementing the mechanism of gender mainstreaming, and questioning whether the political systems themselves helped promote the application of gender mainstreaming. Within this study, questions concerning the implementation and effectiveness of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming were not addressed; although questions on the impact of the mechanism on gender equality policy-making and the effectiveness of the mechanism are also incredibly important, they have already begun to be addressed in the scholarly literature (see Beveridge & Nott, 2002; Daly, 2005; McGuaran, 2009; Moser & Moser, 2005; Staudt, 2003; Walby, 2005). Conversely, this study aims to fill in the research gap of why countries with different levels of gender inequality and differing approaches to reducing this inequality, countries as culturally and geographically diverse as Peru, South Korea, Bangladesh, and Switzerland would adopt the same mechanism for gender equality policy – which factors explain the implementation and promotion of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming?

By comparing the cases of the United States and the European Union, it has been possible to create narratives which allowed for discerning instances of deviance between the two cases. Consulting primary and secondary sources has allowed for creating in-depth accounts of the motivations for or deterrents against the implementation of gender mainstreaming and the ensuing promotion of it within the political systems themselves.

It was found that while the EU implemented and clearly demonstrated its promotion of the mechanism of gender mainstreaming, the US also implemented gender mainstreaming but did not demonstrate any clear amount of promoting the application of the mechanism at the national level. The cases differed on two of the

three factors for consideration, mimetic isomorphism and strategic framing, while they agreed only on the factor of mobilizing networks; the factor which was proven to be an insufficient factor for explanation due to the fact that although it existed within both systems, one system implemented and promoted gender mainstreaming (the EU) while the other did not (the US). Although these results were unexpected, they could have important research implications for further studies in the field of social movements as well as practical knowledge for social movements and civil society organizations.

It is important to note that additional explanatory factors may also impact the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming within political systems. These include, but are not limited to, the prioritization of human rights issues in general, and women's rights in particular, within a given political system, as well as the approach to gender equality policy utilized within the political system prior to the introduction of gender mainstreaming.

As the 20-year anniversary of the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing is quite rapidly approaching, a reconsideration of the resulting Platform for Action will take place not only within UN institutions, but also in varying institutions worldwide – from official, governmental bodies to small NGOs who hold the Platform for Action in high esteem. Therefore, the results of this study and the implications derived from them offer yet another consideration for the review of the Platform for Action and its contents from the UN Fourth World Conference on Women.

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9. Abstract

At the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, the mechanism of gender mainstreaming as an approach to gender equality policy was introduced at the global level. The Platform for Action, the resulting document from the conference, was signed by 189 countries present at the conference. Countries with different levels of gender inequality and differing approaches to reducing this inequality, countries as culturally and geographically diverse as Peru, South Korea, Bangladesh, and Switzerland signed the Platform for Action, and by doing so, supported the mechanism of gender mainstreaming. How and why did this transfer of practice and belief occur? What factors explain the initial support and implementation of gender mainstreaming and then the ensuing promotion at the national level?

As the 20-year anniversary of this significant world conference approaches, the Platform for Action and its contents are not only up for review within the United Nations, but also within the countries themselves that signed and supported the document. This study contributes to this review process by comparing two large, yet quite different, political systems and their motivations for supporting the mechanism of gender mainstreaming and their promotion of the concept within their systems.

Examining the political systems of the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) allows for a comparative approach to qualitative case studies with an analysis of primary and secondary sources to be employed in order to ascertain what factors may be used to explain the difference in the outcome of the utilization of gender mainstreaming in the two political systems. Both systems supported the Platform for Action, and in doing so, supported the approach of gender mainstreaming; however, there is quite a disparity when it comes to the utilization of the approach in policy-making.

The results of the study demonstrated that the two cases differed on two of the three factors for consideration, mimetic isomorphism and strategic framing, while they agreed only on the factor of mobilizing networks. It was found that while the EU implemented and demonstrated clearly its promotion of the mechanism of gender

mainstreaming, the US also implemented gender mainstreaming but did not demonstrate any clear amount of promotion of the mechanism at the national level.

10. Zusammenfassung

Der Mechanismus des Gender Mainstreamings wurde im 1995 bei der United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China als eine Herangehensweise für Gleichberechtigungspolitik vorgestellt. Die „Platform for Action“, das auf der Konferenz entstandene Dokument, wurde von den 189 anwesend Staaten unterzeichnet. Diese Staaten wiesen damals schon verschiedene Stufen von Gleichberechtigungspolitik und unterschiedlichen Herangehensweisen um diese Ungleichheit zu reduzieren auf. Sie sind weiters kulturell und geographisch unterscheidlich wie Peru, Südkorea, Bangladesh, und die Schweiz und haben die „Platform for Action“ unterschrieben und haben dabei den Mechanismus des Gender Mainstreamings gefördert. Wie ist die Übertragung des Mechanismus Gender Mainstreamings und dessen Anwendung geschehen? Welche Faktoren erläutern die Befürwortung und Umsetzung von Gender Mainstreaming und auch die folgende Beförderung auf die nationale Ebene?

Als das 20-Jahr Jubiläum dieser bedeutungsvollen Weltkonferenz näher rückt, stehen die Inhalte der „Platform for Action“ sowohl in den Vereinten Nationen als auch in den Signatarstaaten des Dokuments auf dem Prüfstand. Diese Studie soll zu diesem Review-Prozess beitragen und durch einen Vergleich von zwei großen, doch politisch unterschiedlichen Systemen und ihre Motivationen für das Umsetzen des Mechanismus von Gender Mainstreaming einen wissenschaftlichen Mehrwert schaffen.

Es wurde eine vergleichende Herangehensweise zu qualitativen Fallstudien der Vereinigten Staaten (USA) und der Europäischen Union (EU) durch eine Analyse der primären und sekundären Quellen ergänzt, um festzustellen, welche Faktoren zur Erläuterung der Unterschiede in der Benutzung von Gender Mainstreaming in den beiden politischen Systemen verwendet werden können. Beide Systeme unterstützte die „Platform for Action“ und dabei den Ansatz des Gender Mainstreamings; jedoch gibt es durchaus Unterschiede wenn es um die Beförderung des Ansatzes in den politischen Entscheidungsfindungsprozess geht.

Die Ergebnisse der Studie legen nahe, dass sich die zwei Fälle in Bezug auf zwei der drei Faktoren zur Überlegung, mimetic isomorphism und strategic framing unterscheiden, sich lediglich auf dem Faktor der mobilizing networks einig sind. Es wurde festgestellt dass während die EU Gender Mainstreaming umgesetzt hat und deutlich seine Beförderung des Mechanismus gezeigt hat, haben die USA Gender Mainstreaming zwar teilweise umgesetzt, aber keine eindeutige Beförderung auf der nationalen Ebene demonstriert.

11. Curriculum Vitae

Whitney Kathryn Isaacs, B.A.

Address: Kaiserstrasse 87/1/5
1070 Vienna, Austria

Contact: +43 (0)699 17028014
wisaacs4@gmail.com

Education

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Mar. 2011 - present | Master's Program: Political Science
(University of Vienna) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Specializations: International politics and development; Policy and governance analysis |
| Oct. 2009 – Feb. 2010 | Exchange Program: German and Political Science
(Bowling Green State University in cooperation with University of Salzburg) |
| Sept. 2005 – May 2009 | Bachelor's Program: Political Science
(Radford University, graduated with honors) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Specializations: International Relations and Foreign Affairs |
| Sept. 2001 – June 2005 | Advanced High School Diploma
(Menchville High School) |

Work Experience

Institute for European Integration Research, University of Vienna
Mar. 2013 – present Language Assistant

Institute for European Integration Research, University of Vienna
Oct. 2012 – Mar. 2013 Student Assistant

Debate Club of the Academic Forum for Foreign Affairs (AFA Wien)
Oct. 2011 – Feb. 2014 Director of English Debating

Academic Forum for Foreign Affairs (AFA Wien)
Feb. 2012 – June 2012 Organizational Team Member: Meisterschaft im
Deutschsprachigen Debattieren