

'Men-streaming' gender? Questions for gender and development policy in the twenty-first century

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Abstract: Insofar as gender is still so often equated with women alone, the move from Women in Development to Gender in Development has changed very little. Men as a human category have always been present, involved, consulted, obeyed and disobeyed in development work. Yet men as a gendered category in a feminist sense – involving unequal power relations between men and women and between men – have rarely been drawn into development programmes in any substantial way. This paper addresses conceptual and operational obstacles to men's involvement in gender and development, drawing on interviews with over 40 representatives of development organizations in Britain and the USA in 1999.

Key words: development policy, gender inequality, men, women.

I Introduction

Gender and Development (GAD) policies encompass a broad range of approaches and interventions, but to date have largely been associated with programmes established by women for women. This is despite the fact that, in theoretical terms, GAD is concerned with gender relations, and therefore with men as well as women. As noted by Harrison (1997: 61):

Over the last fifteen years, feminist analyses have apparently influenced both thinking and practice in international development agencies. The language of gender and development has been widely adopted. For example, awareness of the differences between practical and strategic gender needs is evident in the policy documentation of many multilateral and bilateral donors. However, the tendency for women's projects to 'misbehave' noted by Buvinic

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in 1985 is now replicated by the tendency of 'gender planning' to slip subtly and imperceptibly into the much older 'projects for women'. A relational approach to gender is replaced by a focus on women while male gender identities lie unexamined in the background.

'Male-blindness' in practical applications of gender and development policy is in part a legacy from the early years of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–1985), when the 'WID' (Women in Development) movement emerged as the first step in a struggle against a seemingly universal 'male bias' in development programmes. WID aimed to see women integrated into development on an equal basis as men, notwithstanding that the tactic of concentrating exclusively on women failed to shake the patriarchal foundations of mainstream development thought and practice. Other identifiable reasons for men's relegation to the periphery of gender and development include the concern to ringfence for women the relatively small amount of resources dedicated to gender within the development field, worries about male hi-jacking of a terrain that women have had to work very hard at to stake out, lack of acknowledgement and understanding regarding men as gendered beings, the pragmatic difficulties of incorporating men in projects that have long been aimed primarily or exclusively at women, and last, but not least, an apparent lack of interest on the part of men in gender and development in general and working with men on gender issues in particular (Chant and Gutmann, 2000).

Yet, it has become increasingly clear that a 'women-only' approach to gender planning is insufficient to overturn the patriarchal structures embedded in development institutions, and to redress gender imbalances at the grassroots in any fundamental way. This has prompted moves to 'mainstream' gender, such that instead of integrating gender into pre-existing policy concerns, attempts are made 'to transform mainstream policy agendas from a gender perspective' (Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1996: 1, emphasis in original; see also Jahan, 1995; Levy, 1996; MacDonald *et al.*, 1997). Increasingly inscribed in principle, if not necessarily in practice, the process of mainstreaming entails the re-working of structures of decision-making and institutional cultures such that gender becomes a central rather than a peripheral issue. Theoretically, at least, mainstreaming also calls for men to be more involved both at operational and project levels. As observed by Rathgeber (1995: 212), planning for change in women's lives clearly entails changes for men, with structural shifts in male–female power relations being 'a necessary precondition for any development process with long-term sustainability' (see also Pineda, 2000; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 1997).

The fact that much of the impetus for men's involvement in development work originates with women – both at the grassroots level and in development agencies – indicates more than simply a lack of interest on the part of men in GAD. More significantly it points to a certain reluctance among both men and women in GAD work to engage with various core issues and problems that gave rise to gender and development frameworks in the first place. In this paper we address several of these conceptual and operational obstacles, basing our discussion in part on interviews with over 40 representatives from nearly 30 development organizations, agencies, foundations and consultancies in Britain and the USA in 1999. These interviews were conducted as part of research commissioned by the Latin America and Caribbean Division of the World Bank, and are more fully reported in Chant and Gutmann (2000).

II How far is GAD from WID?

To the extent that gender still largely is equated with women alone, the move from Women in Development to Gender in Development has really changed very little. The concept of including men in development work is undoubtedly more systematic as policy rhetoric than as actual practice. Nonetheless, the fact remains that many aspects of men's beliefs and behaviour cannot be understood if they are not viewed in the context of gender relations between men and women and among men themselves. If many women and some men have been subordinated because of gender identities and discriminatory practices, it necessarily follows that men have been the instigators of these forms of inequality. In addition, in development programmes to date, there has been a notable lack of interest, especially among male development workers, in working with men on gender issues such as those involved in the issues of reproductive health, education and violence. Among other problems there has emerged a debate regarding the prudence of promoting men's involvement in issues primarily centring around proclaiming and defending 'men's rights', in contrast to efforts aimed more at the incorporation of men in already existing projects conceived and executed under the aegis of feminist leaders.

Men as a human category have always been present, involved, consulted, obeyed and disobeyed in development work. Yet men as a gendered category in a feminist sense – involving unequal power relations between men and women and between men – have rarely been drawn into development programmes in any substantial way. While many development analysts and policy makers believe that more work with men should be conducted under the Gender and Development umbrella, there is far less consensus as to how this should be done, and the extent to which this should become a component element within development work around gender issues.

III Why should men be incorporated in gender and development operations?

Although to date there seems to be something of a hiatus between the imperative of 'mainstreaming' gender and the actuality of 'men-streaming' gender and development, there are two pressing sets of reasons why more dedicated efforts might be made to realizing the latter. One is the increasingly widespread recognition that, without men, gender interventions can only go so far. The second is that gender roles, relations and identities have been undergoing considerable upheaval in recent years (Chant, 2000a; Chant and Gutmann, 2000). This has created both a space and a need for men to be brought more squarely into the frame of gender and development work.

To deal with the latter set of issues first, while it cannot be refuted that, for reasons relating to gender, most women continue to face greater social and economic disadvantages than their male counterparts, habitual emphasis (by design or default) that men benefit from development in ways which women do not, gives the very misleading impression that men's power and privileges are uniform, fixed and universal (Kajifusa, 1998: 11). As summed-up by Sweetman (1998): 'women are not always the losers'.

This has become increasingly apparent during the last ten years in which there has been growing talk of 'men in crisis', 'troubled masculinities' and 'men at risk', and

where particular groups such as young lower-income males have been noted as especially vulnerable to insecurity and marginalization (Barker, 1997; Cornwall, 1998: 46; Chant and Gutmann, 2000). In various parts of the South, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to a lesser extent in Southeast Asia, male youth are beginning to fall behind their female counterparts in rates of educational attainment, and have more difficulty obtaining employment (see Kaztman, 1992; Corner, 1996; Lumsden, 1996; Chant and McIlwaine, 1998). Male concerns about being unable to provide for wives and children is also noted in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa (see Morrell, 2001; Obote Joshua, 2001).

Declining prospects for assuming the economic responsibilities attached to the widely idealized male role of 'breadwinner' have not only undermined men's status and identities, but are also linked with men's marginalization within, if not detachment from, conjugal family households (Moore, 1994; Escobar Latapí, 1998; Güendel and González, 1998; Silberschmidt, 1999). This, in turn, has been exacerbated by shifts in domestic power relations as women have entered the labour force in rising numbers and become increasingly enabled to take charge of their own domestic arrangements (Gutmann, 1996; Chant, 1997, 2000b). Rising emphasis in social policy on female household heads, and the intensification of social problems such as crime and violence, have been important corollaries of these trends (Sweetman, 1997: 4; Moser and McIlwaine, 1999).

Despite prevailing cultural norms that define men's familial responsibilities as revolving around their breadwinner capacities, in many parts of the world patriarchal family units dependent primarily or exclusively on male incomes are declining, and ideological challenges to traditional gender relations overall are growing. In this context, researchers are exploring the differential impact on men and women of recent and dramatic transformations in labour markets (see Safa, 1995, 1999; Gutmann, 1998, 1999). For instance, in Mexico, Agustín Escobar Latapí (1998: 123) has sought to 'understand the restructuration of men's lives that began with the broader economic and social restructuration . . .', as well as to gain a richer appreciation in terms of gender analysis and power distinctions of these larger macro-level processes.

The issue of men's shifting responsibility for providing financially for their families relates in turn to a more general relationship between gender and a host of related social divisions such as class, ethnicity and age. These relationships may be, and should be, made explicit. For example, in many societies in which poverty alleviation programmes and women's participation in microenterprise efforts have been underway for years, men's breadwinner status has been roundly challenged, with severe repercussions for both men and their families. Vijayendra Rao, an economist at the World Bank whom we interviewed in our survey, described the ramifications of a programme in South Asia:

... in a micro-credit programme, there's some evidence that men are using women as a conduit for bringing resources into the family. And there's resentment that only women can bring resources to the family. In a programme I was involved in six to seven years ago, men would ask, 'Why isn't there anything for me?' 'Why is there only help available for the women?' And these are valid questions. They didn't have access to credit, but we were giving it to women when the men were better educated and perhaps in a better position to take the information we provided them and be productive. There was a lot of confusion about what it was we were trying to do and there were a lot of conflicts that arose inadvertently. (Interview with Vijayendra Rao, economist, World Bank, Washington DC, 20 July 1999.)

Flowing in part from such changes is a range of 'lifestyle' factors such as domestic violence which has added to a widely noted increase in ill-health among men as well as women in developing countries. Male violence against women is in some respects better analysed than male violence against other men. Throughout the world, laws and penalties are becoming stricter, and therapy and assistance for women and children are growing. Though still badly underfunded, programmes designed to assist women who are victims of domestic abuse now have a long history, and many of the elements involved in providing shelter and counsel to these women are better understood. With respect to male-on-male violence, however, aside from many commonplace assumptions regarding the relationship between masculinity, testosterone and violent proclivities, there is still too little scholarly research and even less programmatic work on this problem.

Male gendered violence against men, motivated by homophobia, for example, provides a separate set of data for which reliable statistics are rarely available (see Rivera Fuentes, 1996). The issue of men and violence is further complicated because, although men and masculinity are clearly implicated, gender research no longer relies on the simplistic foundation that universally equated men with violence and women with peace. Still, the key problem that remains for development workers is not so much analytic as practical: how to engage men as well as women in work around crucial questions such as rape and sexual coercion, male homicide and gang activities. Greig *et al.* (2000: 4–5) write more generally about the importance of practical efforts around engaging men in development work and their relation to overall goals of gender equality:

Examining masculinity and the role it plays in the development process is not simply an analytical exercise, but has widespread implications for the effectiveness of programmes that seek to improve economic and social outcomes in virtually every country . . . Gender equality is not only an end in itself, but also a necessary means to achieving sustainable human development and the reduction of poverty.

IV Identifying a problem is not enough to resolve it

To note that there is a preponderance of males who are perpetrators of violence does not resolve the questions as to *why* this might be the case nor *what* may be done to relieve the situation. Efforts aimed at resolving these problems must incorporate the understanding that men-as-men are themselves engendered and they in turn engender others. Those involved in homicides (and suicides) are in most of the world men, and vehicular accidents, too, tend to affect men at far higher rates than women. Along with road accidents, work injuries and cardiovascular illness (Jiménez, 1996; Barker, 1997: 5–6; Pineda, 2000), men in many parts of the South also have disproportionate rates of infection from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Campbell, 1997). In part this is a result of same-sex sex among men and the climate of homophobia which prevails in many parts of the world that greatly hinders prevention and treatment efforts from the top levels of government down to those most plagued by this kind of illness. Nonetheless, the primary vector for HIV transmission in most parts of the world is heterosexual men, and HIV is today spreading faster among women than men, primarily through heterosexual sexual relations, both between spouses and between

female sex workers and their clients. Further, although the spread of AIDS stems in large part from unprotected sexual liaisons of men with other men, as well as with women, the fact that men are currently 80% of a global total of 6–7 million injecting-drug users is also significant (Foreman, 1999: 128).

The extent to which men's 'risk behaviour' reflects the expectations encoded in formerly dominant/predominant masculinities or is a response to the progressive unseating of patriarchal power structures is unclear, but there is mounting evidence that men's fears and insecurities are growing. In the Kisii District of Western Kenya, for example, men are observed to be 'left with a patriarchal ideology bereft of its legitimising activities and not able to fulfil new roles and expectations' (Silberschmidt, 1999: 173). This also applies in northwest Costa Rica, where men's increasingly tenuous position with the household and the labour market is widely perceived to have been exacerbated by recent legislative and policy initiatives in women's interests. These include laws and programmes strengthening women's access to property, to social welfare, to the exercise of personal rights and to the elimination of domestic violence. Men feel that these measures have made them increasingly redundant in women's lives, especially given women's rising levels of employment (Chant, 2000b). In some cases men have broken the veil of silence traditionally surrounding male admissions of vulnerability, and are seeking help. As observed by Barker (1997: 4):

Worldwide, men largely derive their identity from being providers or 'breadwinners', and lack ideas, or alternative gender scripts, to find other meaningful roles in the family in this changing economic environment. Research worldwide reports that men are confused about their roles in the family and about the meanings of masculinity in general and are requesting opportunities in which to discuss and deal with these changes.

Quite apart from men's growing needs for attention and assistance in their own right, it could also be dangerous for women and children if such needs are neglected. Castells (1997: 136) and Foreman (1999: 14), amongst others, observe that individual and collective anxiety over the loss of male power is provoking increases in male violence and psychological abuse. Alcoholism and marital strife are also on the increase (Barker, 1997). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) further adds that where men lose power and status and are unable to enjoy their traditional entitlements, women may be the main victims:

Where men have economic advantages over women, they have a privilege to defend, which may be defended with violence, or may make women vulnerable to violence. Economic changes which put at risk or destroy men's traditional livelihood without providing alternatives, makes violence or militarism attractive options (UNESCO, 1997: 6).

With respect to violence brought about through war and national conflict, it is important to have projects that reach not just men in general, but more particularly young men, and that these projects engage them in programmes that include as a central component the examination of what it means to think and behave as men in particular social contexts in the twenty-first century. In addition to these larger questions it is also essential that more mundane problems such as alcoholism, and even the widespread reluctance of men in many countries to seek medical assistance until it

is 'too late', also be addressed systematically. In their own right and in relation to the lives and health of women, the gendered aspects of men's customary behaviour have pervasive implications for the lives of whole societies (see UNICEF, 1997).

V The problem of women-only interventions

If a 'crisis of masculinity' provides one set of justifications for thinking men into gender and development, the previously mentioned fact that women-only approaches have their problems is another. As Färnsveden and Rönquist (1999: 90) write:

The recent focus on men and masculinities opens up possibilities for an increased male interest for participation in GAD, since – all of a sudden – men's interest and positions are at stake when discussing gender issues. However, men still need to be encouraged to become involved in gender work, since women still feel that they have an epistemological privilege when discussing, and working with, gender issues. Here lies a great challenge for both men and women in the future work for promoting gender equality.

One major consequence of excluding men from GAD projects is that this can give rise to the emergence or aggravation of hostilities between men and women at the grassroots and to the blocking or sabotage of moves to enhance women's lives and livelihoods. An analysis of women's income-generating projects in Honduras, Greece and Kenya by Safilios-Rothschild (1990), for example, indicated that projects aimed at raising women's access to income in situations where men have difficulty being breadwinners were often unsuccessful. Men facing pressures of long-term employment insecurity responded to what they regarded as 'threats' posed by improvements in women's economic status by taking over projects, by controlling the income generated and/or, as a further backlash, increasing their authority and control within the home (see also Gutmann, 1998).

Aside from deliberate responses on the part of men to being 'left out', a major consequence of male exclusion from gender projects is the likelihood of women ending up with greater workloads and responsibility than they can actually take on. As summed-up by Sweetman (1997: 2), a focus on women alone can lead to 'overload and exhaustion'. Targeting women has become a particularly favoured route to economic and developmental efficiency since the onset of debt crises and neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s. Yet in Costa Rica, for example, evidence suggests that the increasing emphasis in social policy, and particularly in poverty alleviation programmes, on female heads of household can drive men still further from assuming familial responsibilities (Chant, 2000b). Lack of male involvement can also mean that benefits of such women-only projects may be seriously constrained. The first programme for female heads of household established by the Figueres administration in Costa Rica in 1996 had arguably less impact than it would otherwise have done had it included men. Despite proposals for a male-inclusive 'Re-socialization of Roles' component in the programme, this was dropped on grounds that it would be too difficult to execute. Instead, workshops on rights, self-esteem and so on were restricted to women who continued having to deal with unsensitized men in their personal lives, and with patriarchal structures in both private and public arenas (Budowski and Guzmán, 1998). The limited effectiveness of this approach was such that some women made specific

requests to local programme organizers that their menfolk should participate (Chant, 2000a).

In other contexts, a push from the grassroots by women to involve men in gender work has already translated into practice, such as in the Nicaraguan NGO CISAS (Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud) (see Sternberg, 2001), and the Mexican NGO 'Salud y Género'. At the inception of the latter in 1992, Salud y Género worked on health promotion with women. Subsequently, however, its operations broadened to include men in response to the need to work holistically as opposed to compartmentally in respect of health problems with gendered causes and outcomes, such as alcoholism, violence and sexuality (de Keijzer, 1998). This also includes working on masculinity itself as a risk factor. Indeed, acting as if men are irrelevant and that men do not have gender can impose demands on women that are impossible to fulfil and/or have serious implications. If men are not incorporated into gender and development work, the implicit assumption will be that women should continue to be largely if not solely responsible for problems relating to such issues as domestic violence and contraception. With respect to health, for instance, in addition to the need to address male-specific problems such as prostate and testicular cancer, the goal of educating men about reproductive health is premised on the notion that involving men with their partners in taking responsibility for safe sex, contraception and health care decisions more generally is essential if persisting inequalities are to be tackled. Making education and discussion about subjects such as condom use and vasectomies central to gender and development work will, or at least should, imply the central participation of men.

In addition to these considerations, Wood and Jewkes (1997: 45) note that ignoring men belies misplaced assumptions, for example, about women's ability to 'control their bodies and thereby achieve and sustain sexual health'. Such assumptions are perhaps particularly serious as far as female genital mutilation and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are concerned (UNICEF, 1997; Foreman, 1999; Wasser, 2001). As identified by a representative of the International Planned Parenthood Association, in our interview survey, for example:

You could treat a woman every day for a sexually-transmitted disease and, if her partner has it and doesn't get treated, then he just keeps reinfesting her. So, in epidemiological terms, it doesn't make sense to keep wasting medication on women. (Interview with Judith Helzner, Director of Sexual and Reproductive Health, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere Region, New York, 11 June, 1999.)

Leading on from this, it is obvious that incorporating men as well as women could make gender interventions more relevant to people's daily lives, and thereby enhance their chances of success. Moreover, in a longer-term perspective, active efforts to engage men in gender projects could help not only to dismantle gender inequalities, but make men bear greater responsibility for change. For example, a UNICEF project in Zambia for prevention and control of maternal and congenital syphilis sought to break the cycle of recurrent syphilis infection by encouraging men to seek treatment. This led to a jump from 6–8% to 60–80% of male partners attending the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinic in the interests of their children being born healthy (UNICEF, 1997: 32). Another UNICEF project in Vietnam, on child health, reached men through the Vietnam Women's Union to educate them in basic health prevention measures for infants and children. The initiative not only led to the participation of 47 000 men, but also to a 60%

increase in the use of oral rehydration salts, and to immunization reaching a level of 90% in less than one year (UNICEF, 1997: 32). Another example is provided by 'Stepping Stones', a pilot project in Uganda that consisted of training young men around HIV/AIDS awareness, gender issues, and communication and relationship skills. This resulted in a decline in domestic violence and alcohol consumption after only 16 months of participation (Large, 1997: 28).

VI Ways to include men in gender and development

One important strategy to increase male participation and responsibility may be to bring more male staff into gender-related development work. In various cultural contexts, for example, it seems that men are more likely to listen to men, including when it comes to talking gender (see, for example, Cornwall, 1998; Tadele, 1999). In the context of gender training in East Africa, for example, Obote Joshua (2001: 38) notes that '... a female trainer has a "less legitimate" voice than the men she is training, notwithstanding her education and knowledge'. Although male gender trainers may initially be perceived with disdain or mistrust on the part of other men, on balance they are more likely to be successful in communicating and gaining acceptance of new and alternative notions about gender (Obote Joshua, 2001: 38). The East African experience is also found in reproductive health programmes in Bangladesh, where the government has attempted to educate influential male religious leaders about the benefits of family planning in the hope is that this will persuade more men to use and/or allow their wives to use, contraception (Neaz, 1996). Similarly, in Nicaragua, the NGO 'Puntos de Encuentro' has developed programmes and workshops among men to prevent male violence against women (Montoya Tellería, 1998).

In light of the above, it is clear that 'male inclusion' in GAD cannot be treated in any straightforward or unilateral way. As summed up by Cornwall and White (2000: 3):

The debates around inclusion centre on pragmatic, as well as political concerns. What might 'inclusion' mean? In what, at which stages, at which levels? Is it simply a matter of including men in the arena as currently defined, or extending the scope of GAD to engage with specific concerns that men may have, as men? So we need to ask, what is in it for (which) men? What roles should men be playing in promoting 'gender issues' within development institutions?

Summarizing from diverse experiences throughout the world to date, there is no automatic organizational format for approaching these issues. In some contexts, such as in health and reproductive health programmes, men-only and women-only clinics seem to have been most effective, while in others the reverse has proved to be the case. Flexibility is crucial in providing substantial, and at times differential, access to facilities. Among men – for instance in Ghana (see International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), 1996) – some pilot programmes designed to involve men in educational and health care initiatives have been launched inside factories. Yet, as noted by Wegner *et al.* (1998: 2),

... policymakers, programme managers, health care workers and other types of providers can block male involvement. This may occur because of conservative cultural and political values, the conventional wisdom that men are not interested in reproductive health matters or simply the assumption that family planning is a woman's responsibility.

Aside from the desirability of stepping up male inclusion as clients and personnel in gender and development programmes, building a critical mass of gender-sensitive male staff within development agencies more generally could have a domino effect, and work towards the destabilization of patriarchy in institutional cultures. Difficult though some of these questions might be, we know that, in general terms, the equation of gender with women has produced a weak, marginalized and under-funded sector, especially where gender issues are dealt with by specialized female-only or female-dominated units (Levy, 1992: 135–36; Porter *et al.*, 1999: 8). In the longer term, therefore, some ‘de-feminization’ of gender planning could result in greater resources for gender and development, and more enthusiastic and sustained commitment to the reduction of gender inequalities (Färnsveden and Rönquist, 1999: 85). As Foreman (1999: 35) has suggested: ‘The challenge of the future is to create societies where women’s strength achieves its full potential without relegating men to insignificance’.

Given the fact that men as well as women have problems with ‘gender culture’ (White, 1994: 108), especially during an era now widely identified as one of ‘male crisis’, the idea that men might be able to shake-off the straitjacket of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ may be decidedly appealing. (‘Hegemonic masculinity’ is defined by Robert Connell (1997: 186) as an idealized, dominant, heterosexual masculinity, constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities, and closely connected to the institution of marriage.) As Foreman (1999: 14) has summarized: ‘Masculinity brings with it privileges and, in many societies, freedoms denied to most women. Such privileges, however, impose burdens’. Renegotiating gender may be especially desirable for those men who suffer domination, homophobia and other forms of discrimination and violation from other men (Quesada, 1996: 47). This also applies to those who are caught up in acts of violence and/or armed conflict as a result of social and ideological pressures surrounding manhood (see Large, 1997; UNESCO, 1997: 6).

Paradoxically, however, as Sarah White (2000: 35) observes, too often in discussions of masculinity there is a tendency to lose sight of some of such larger life-and-death issues:

In fact, there is a clear asymmetry in the way that men and women are approached in much of the gender literature. ‘GAD for women’ is robustly materialist, concentrating on social relations particularly as they define rights and responsibilities in work, consumption and households. That is, it has not been characterised by the exploration of female subjectivities. ‘GAD for men’ is by contrast much more individualistic and personal, much more preoccupied with the self.

One might argue that a key rationale for such an emphasis on male subjectivities stems from attempts to gain support for GAD by appealing to narrowly conceived notions of men’s self-interests. That is, by endeavouring to avoid altogether the issue of gender inequality, the challenge of transforming oppressive social relations might be most appropriately addressed. Having said this, such assumptions feed roundly into what Cornwall (2000: 21) has termed the ‘problematic male’ discourse, whereby oppositions between men and women – which pose the former as useless, irrelevant, parasitic and so on, and the latter as either victims or heroines – are taken as a norm, regardless of context or intra-group heterogeneity. In addition, constructions of Third World men as ‘idle’ and ‘irresponsible’ can also be used to serve wider North–South

political agendas, such as justifying why neoliberal reforms are not working (see Whitehead (2000) on the 'lazy man' in African agriculture).

VII Conclusions

Although there is considerable uncertainty regarding how exactly to go about including men as gendered constituencies in gender and development, many professionals would like to see debates and practice taken forward (see UNICEF, 1997; Sweetman, 2001). More specifically, our own survey of gender and development practitioners indicated that a strong desire to include men in GAD work was shared by all but a handful of our 41 respondents (Chant and Gutmann, 2000). As articulated by one of our interviewees:

I think it's really positive that there is a strong push now to looking at men. For political reasons it's vital, and for practical reasons as well. Because we all know stories about how projects have been undermined because men were excluded from them. (Interview with Helen O'Connell, Education and Policy Coordinator, Oneworld Action, London, 8 July 1999.)

The field of gender initiatives with men is currently led primarily by organizations concerned with family planning, health and/or domestic violence, but our survey also indicated that gender work in education, family and youth, micro-credit programmes and employment-generating schemes is also likely to benefit from broadening out the traditional focus on women (Chant and Gutmann, 2000). Clearly there is widespread support for finding ways to truly incorporate men in gender and development work generally. Yet without a doubt, too few practical efforts have been made to achieve this goal. There is a real need to clarify the means by which to accomplish the myriad tasks involved in such an endeavour as well as to develop a detailed series of policy goals that can actually lead to the greater involvement of men-as-men in development projects.

The concern that women will disappear from development work once the floodgates are opened to men is prevalent among many providers. As Muneera Salem-Murdock of USAID stated in her interview:

The reason – and this really comes from experience – that we keep focusing on women, is because experience has really taught us that if you do not focus, if you do not underline, if you do not specify, then more frequently than not they tend not to be considered at all. And you cannot do development without half the society . . . When we need to focus on men in GAD, I would welcome that time, because that means not only have women achieved equality, but they have surpassed it. And I would be more than happy to focus specifically on men if they are the underclass. Absolutely. Until that time, however, there's no need to focus specifically on men. (Interview with Muneera Salem-Murdock, USAID, Washington DC, 7 June 1999.)

The study of men and masculinities in both academic and development settings is in its true infancy. Inspired in large measure by feminist scholarship and advocacy, the fact is that, regardless of widespread popular opinions on the subject, we have relatively little systematic knowledge of men and their gendered beliefs and practices upon which to dependably rely. While important tactical issues remain to be worked out, and the process can in no way be fast-tracked, it is entirely conceivable that 'men-streaming' gender could become a critical tool in 'mainstreaming' gender (Chant and Gutmann,

2000). This, in turn, could help to sustain, and extend, the gains made by GAD advocates and practitioners thus far into the twenty-first century and beyond.

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