

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT  
ASSISTANCE: GAPS BETWEEN THEORY, POLICY AND PRACTICE 1970-2019

by

Namubiru Annet

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## DEDICATION PAGE

This thesis is dedicated to my family: beautiful grandmother Gladys, mother Cissy, my late little sister Gladys (little angel I love and miss you every day your unexpected passing broke me to the core leaving me guilty, lost, confused and angry; what keeps me going are the dreams and promises we shared), for their endless encouragement and my most loving paternal uncle Stephen for the all the financial support since primary five; *dear uncle I am because you are* above all I thank God for the precious gift of life

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## Abstract

The main argument of this thesis is that the gaps in the practice of equality have limited Canada's capability to transform inequality. The research is *What are the policy gaps and problems weakening Canada's transformative gender and development policies/strategies when translated into practice?* In this analysis, the development bodies to be analyzed are Canada International Development Agency (CIDA) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC)-CIDA was created in 1968, was renamed GAC in 2015 (Tiessen & Baranyi 2017; Brown 2016; Rempel 2006). Chapter one provides a brief history on how Canada has integrated gender perspectives into its development policies and the second chapter will analyze the Gender and Development (GAD) theoretical framework. In the thesis, I make it clear that the GAD perspectives such as gender equality and empowerment are commonly reflected in Canadian Foreign Policies (CFP)-what is missing are the proper tools to translate them into action. Given the fact that the thesis is analyzing the policy gaps and problems in the way Canada has put gender and development strategies into practice, I believe the GAD framework is the most suitable for identifying the issues in Canada's gender and development policy practice. In the third chapter I analyze the practical steps taken by CIDA and GAC to implement gender and development strategies. The fourth and last chapter is a detailed discussion of the policy concerns that FAC should be aware about, recommendations. In the final thesis conclusion, I call upon GAC to shift from integrationist, essentialist, reductionist approaches to gender and development into non-essentialist practice by rethinking its fundamental themes in an intersectional and transformative policy

Key words; gender, gender mainstreaming, empowerment, equality, intersectionality, and feminist framework

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED**

### Glossary

AANDC	Aboriginal Affairs and National Development Canada
AGE	Agenda for Gender Equality
BHN	Basic Human Needs
CFP	Canadian Foreign Policy
CHRC	Canadian Human Rights Commission
CIDA	Canada International Development Agency
CWIBI	Canadian Women's International Business Initiative
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of OECD
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DFAIT	Department for Affairs and International Trade
DFATD	Department for Affairs, Trade and Development
DND	Department of National Defense

EAC	External Aid Office
EBP	Evidence Based Policy making
ESCR	Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
FAC	Foreign Affairs Canada
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy
FLS	Forward - Looking Strategies
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GAD	Gender and Development
GBS	Gender Budget Support
GE	Gender Equality
GoC	Government of Canada
GPSF	Global Peace and Security Fund
G7	Group of 7 Industrial Countries
HRD	Human Resource Development
IAE	International Assistance Envelope
IANWGE	Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
IBPA	Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis
ICC	International Criminal Court

ICCPR	International Covenant on Political and Civil Right
ICERDC	Interdepartmental Committee on Economic Relations with Developing Countries
ICHRDD	International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development
IDEA	International Development Executives Association
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPS	International Policy Statement
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPM	New Public Management
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
PCO	Privy Council Office
PFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCSW	Royal Commission on the Status of Women
SCR	Security Council Resolution

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSR	Security Sector Reform
START	Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force
SWC	Status of Women Canada
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WAGE	Women and Gender Equality
WB	World Bank
WID	Women in Development

## **Glossary**

**Gender** is a sociocultural variable that refers to the comparative, relational, or differential roles, responsibilities, and activities assigned to females and males. Gender is relational in that it identifies the relationship between men and women. Gender refers to the social characteristics and culturally prescribed roles of men and women but are not bound to either men or women. These roles vary among societies and over time.

**Gender-based analysis** is a process that assesses the differential impact of proposed and/or existing policies, programs and legislation on women and men with an appreciation of gender differences, of the nature of relationships between women and men and of their different social realities.

**Gender roles** are what a society or culture constructs and prescribes as proper roles, behavior and personal identities, wherein that which is associated with women is femininity, and against men is masculinity, with the latter given more hierarchical value.

**Gender analysis** is a method to collect and analyze information regarding the different needs and concerns of women, and to address the barriers that have disadvantaged them. As an analytical framework, it is used to identify gender roles and to systematically study the different conditions and positions of women and girls versus men and boys.

**Gender and Development (GAD)** refers to efforts to mainstream gender into development programs so that they can account for men's and women's different social and economic conditions and opportunities by applying a more relational approach to understanding women's inequality.

**Gender bias** refers to providing differential treatment when it is ill-founded or unjustified; it has come to refer to favoring men as a gender.

**Gender equity** refers to treating men and women differently, or the same when appropriate, to achieve outcomes that satisfy the needs of both.

**Gender mainstreaming** is an approach that considers why gender analysis is *integral* to the policy and program process and incorporates women's views and priorities into the *core* of policy decisions, institutional structures, and resource allocations. It is the conceptualizing stage of a gender management system.

**Gender Impact Assessment** is an integrated web of structures, mechanisms and procedures put in place within a given institutional framework for the purpose of guiding, managing and monitoring the process of gender integration into mainstream policies, plans and programs in order to bring about gender equality and equity.

**Gender neutral** refers to ignoring or not taking into account sex composition and/or gender characteristics.

**Gender planning** is the development of a plan of action and operational framework for applying the conceptual framework. It facilitates the process of institutional change from gender-neutral to gender-sensitive policies and programs by developing and implementing specific measures and organizational arrangements for the promotion of gender equality.

**Intersectionality** process of analyzing how the interactions among various factors can affect human lives

**Practical gender needs** refer to meeting women's everyday basic requirements such as water and sanitation and other needs that assist women as beneficiaries to carry out the roles they currently have.

**Sex** is an analytical category that distinguishes males and females based on biological characteristics; the categories are mutually exclusive, and exhaustive and the sexes are not

interchangeable. Sex roles are universal; they do not change over time, nor do they change depending on their context.

**Strategic gender interests** refers to meeting the needs of women by transforming gender relations, that is, recognizing that many problems are rooted in the unequal power status of women compared to men, and by including women in planning processes as agents of change.

**Substantive gender equality** refers to efforts to attain equal conditions for women to be able to contribute and to benefit politically, economically, socially, and culturally; women are thus empowered as agents of change.

**Women in Development (WID)** refers to the efforts made to ensure that women as well as men participate in and benefit from development projects.

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## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

Demands for greater gender equality have been made in both international agencies and Canada's politics for many years. One aspect of this issue is *gender and development* - within which great emphasis has been placed on the equal representation of women and men's issues in foreign assistance policy (Woodward 1999 as cited by Elgström 2000). Women activists that are critical of gender irresponsible foreign aid practices have forcefully advocated for the inclusion of gender equality perspectives (gender mainstreaming, gender equality, women empowerment) in all development programs, policies, and projects as a way of responding to the forms of inequality embedded in international development systems (Woodward 1999 as cited by Elgström 2000).

The main argument is that the adoption of transformative gendered development strategies in Canada's foreign assistance policies has not necessarily transformed development policy practice and the primary objective of this thesis is to analyze the gaps and problems that have hindered the transformative potential of Canada's gender and development policies. The reason that this thesis is focusing on these gaps and problems is because the disconnects between policy, theory and practice are making it difficult for policy makers to identify what gender and development approaches are effective, appropriate and where they should be focused (Harris & Manning 2007).

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Since the 1960s, Canada has spent over CDN \$60 billion on foreign aid which has among other objectives funded the integration of gender equality strategies into development policies, programs, and projects (Harris & Manning 2007:69).

The adoption and presence of the gender responsive policy guidelines, strategies in Canada's foreign assistance and the financial contributions reflected Canada's commitment to transform development approaches and structures that ignored the forms of inequality that existed in Canada's gender and development processes (Eveline & Bacchi 2005; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). To this day however, the government continues to wrestle with how to best formulate and implement policies and programs that equally benefit everyone. In this thesis therefore, I analyze the loop holes in the gender and development policy practice and how these have made it difficult for Canadian foreign policy makers to identify what gender and development approaches are effective, appropriate, and where they should be focused (Harris & Manning 2007).

### **RESEARCH GOAL**

1. To provide a comprehensive analysis of how the GoC has integrated gender equality and its strategies into development policies
2. To examine whether adopting transformative gender equality strategies has caused any transformation in Canada's foreign policy practice
3. To examine the weaknesses in Canada's foreign development policy approaches
4. To examine whether FIAP objectives reflect the core principles of GAC's feminist vision and strategic themes
5. To highlight the policy issues GAC should be concerned about moving forward

### **MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

This thesis is responding to the question: *What are the policy gaps and problems weakening Canada's transformative gender and development policies/strategies when translated into practice?*

#### Sub-questions

1. What has transformed about Canada's gender and development practice?
2. How can the gaps between Canada's adoption of gender theories, perspectives and policy practices be best explained?
3. What can we learn from earlier literature on the transformative concepts of gender equality and feminist theory in relation to GAC's approach to these concepts?
4. Why does Canada's application of strategic gender and development perspectives weaken in translation?
5. What does the focus of FIAP objectives say about Canada's gender and development practice?

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The importance of this research is to show development policy makers the challenges that hinder the transformation of inequality by highlighting the gaps and disconnects between theory and practice. It potentially can help strengthen gender and development programs, aimed at addressing issues of inequality in development. If these gaps are fixed, the policies and programs responding to issues of inequality such as gender-based discrimination in development will be more effective when translated into practice-with greater positive impacts on the targeted beneficiaries.

## METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative secondary data review thesis therefore, there is no field data to be collected or quantified and the gender impact assessment is the method to guide the analysis. Impact assessments were first developed in the field of environmental problems (Environmental impact assessment) and later their application was expanded in to assess the issues of inequality in gender and development policy processes (Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006). The expansion led to the creation of the gender impact assessment method which was designed to give policy makers an insight into the potential effects of development policies and programs on gender relations before putting them into practice (Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006; Sevenhuijsen & Meehan 1991). The process of gender impact assessment involves

1. Description of current gender relations which itself involves policy makers generating questions relating to lived gender and power relations, so as to determine the forms of inequality and how social experiences can be evaluated in terms of equality (Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006; Sevenhuijsen & Meehan 1991).
2. Description and analysis of the new policy plan; the new policy plan has to be analyzed in detail, and the most important part is the deep analysis of policy theories and their causal relations (what is considered to be the cause and consequence), final relations (what are the goals, and which means are supposed to about bring these goals) and normative relations (what values and norms are part of the plan). When doing policy theory analysis, a lot of attention has to be paid to the implicit notions of these relations and in the case that these remain unclear, then the policy theory has to be reconstructed, or even deconstructed. The analysis, re- or deconstruction of the policy theory can make clear not only what the intended

effects of a certain policy plan are, but also what unintended or unforeseen effects can be expected (Sevenhuijsen & Meehan 1991).

3. Description of the unintended potential effects of development policies on gender relations (Townsend & Kunimoto 2009; Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006). These are labelled as unintended because it is difficult to assess the potential effects of a policy plan. To minimize the unintended effects, Canadian policy analysts have come up with Evidence-based policy making (EBP) and the New Public Management (NPM) as tools to ensure policy efficiency (Tiessen 2016). At this stage, policy analysts should carry out critical analysis to determine the specific ways in which its development goals are taking into account the theoretical and contextual differences in the strategies of gender equality (Woodward & Meier 1998; Shore 2008; Young 2013).
4. Evaluating the positive and negative potential effects on gender relations is the final step and it involves the use of gender impact assessment principles to assess and value policy effects (Woodward & Meier 1998; Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006).

The rationale for choosing the gender impact assessment method is because using this instrument, policy makers can identify the inconsistencies and contradictions between policy theories, perspectives and practice at early stages of policy processes (Woodward & Meier 1998; Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006). Being able to identify policy inconsistencies cannot be any more important than today where there is increasing recognition of the need for foreign assistance policymakers to better understand the intersectional impacts and outcomes of their development plans on gender and other categories of difference (LGBTQ+; and racialized groups) targeted by particular policy interventions-which makes the gender impact assessment tool a great instrument for analyzing Global Affairs Canada's GAC's capacity to address the diverse but interconnected

(in) equality issues. The gender impact assessment method is key to the success of GAC in a way that, using this method, the agency will be better equipped to address policy gaps such as treating social groups the same or differently when it is appropriate or inappropriate to do so respectively (Health Canada 1997, 1998). Policy makers should therefore be aware that inequalities within social groups vary depending on factors other than those readily identifiable- gender impact assessment is a policy instrument that is meant to address this problem; and so policy makers need to take assessment of gender impacts on development policies more seriously (Sevenhuijsen & Meehan 1991; International Labor Organization (ILO) 1995 as cited by Miller & Razavi 1995; Woodward & Meier 1998; Rathgeber 1990; Hankivsky 2012; Elgström 2000; Carriere 1995). It is however important to note that, for policy makers to maximize the gains that come with the transformative potential of this method, they must apply the method on a broader scale.

The major weakness of the gender impact assessment method is that in most cases, the availability of data at either formal or informal levels can be problematic especially when describing the current situation which may for example require gathering information on personal relationships and sexuality (Rathgeber 1990; Hankivsky 2012; Elgström 2000; Carriere 1995). However, I still choose this method for my analysis mainly because its descriptive stages do facilitate the use of: GAD; an intersectional framework and GBA/+ strategy to analyze the diverse forms and causes of inequality- which later in chapter 4 guides my recommendations on how GAC should move forward. The research question seeks to understand the gaps and problems in Canada's gender and development policy practice and how we can bridge the policy gaps to achieve sustainable transformation in the new FIAP. The major weakness with this analysis is that a bigger percentage is based on the review of other people's research henceforth, its focus on is limited primarily to

analyzing the changes in gender and development policy approaches, rather than on the substance of policies except for GAC.

In the 1970s into early 1990s, Canada's approaches to gender and development were largely based on equal treatment, and the goal was to make sure both men and women were treated equally before the law (Lombardo & Meier 2008; Stratigaki 2005; Rees 2002). The equal treatment approach was however criticized by feminist reformers, for its failure to analyze the diverse but interconnected factors that led to inequality such as gender-based discrimination and unequal power relation (Eveline 1994; Beveridge et al. 2000). By focusing on equal representation before the law, Canada's policy makers failed to challenge the root causes of inequality, and to acknowledge the relevance of assessing the impact of development programs and plans on gendered social relations (Eveline 1994; Carrier & Tiessen 2013; Tiessen 2015). As the approach could neither assess nor explain the impact of socio-economic inequalities on advancement of women's social status and as a result, activist groups demanded for a change in policy approach (Women's Bureau 1997: 22 as cited by Eveline 1994).

Sandra Burt (1993:212), explained that:

In Canada, [and] throughout the world, public policy has been made almost exclusively by men and has generally reflected men's assumptions about women's and men's needs and abilities. While over time some of these assumptions have changed, overall policy has been framed within the context of the patriarchal patterns of authority.

The demands by activist groups for change in the way women were perceived and presented started to impact on development policies through international conferences, notably those held within women's decade (1975 - 1985) including: "Mexico City (1975), (was the first world conference on women), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995)" (Tong 2009:230). Through these conferences, gender equality strategies, such as mainstreaming (details in chapter two), were

adopted to guide the policy practice in gender and development processes. In this thesis, I make many references to the Nairobi (1985) and the Beijing (1995) women conferences because these two have had a direct impact on Canada's gender and development policies. The 1985 Nairobi conference marked the end of the women decade and introduced the Forward-Looking Strategies for the advancement of women as a policy guideline to help governments integrate equality perspectives in their development programs and policies (UN 1985). The Forward-Looking Strategy served as a policy guideline that was to be used by policy makers to integrate gender equality in developing programs and policies (UN 1985). Forward-Looking Strategies was the name of the final document of the Third UN Conference on Women that was held in Nairobi.

### **Gender Based Analysis (GBA) in Canada's Foreign Assistance policy**

In 1990, instead of a world conference on women (which previously had been held every five years - 1975, 1980, 1985), a review of the progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the advancement of women was held at the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (SWC 1995, 1999; UN 2000). In the review conclusions, highlighted was the fact that while there was progress in the removal of discriminatory laws and biased perceptions against women, progress in equality policy practice was uneven. In a sense that the policy commitments that were made by development agencies to achieve equality were not accompanied by practice (SWC 1995, 1999; UN 2000). It was discovered that many governments had adopted legislation to deal with the concerns that were highlighted in the *Forward-Looking Strategies*, but they had not allocated sufficient resources to ensure adequate and effective implementation of the legislation (UN 2000). In other words, activities aimed at promoting gender equality in social, economic, and political development were more of superficial references in policies than in field implementation (Rathgeber 1990; Hankivsky 2012; Elgström 2000). In the policy resolutions, it

was decided that a Fourth World Conference on women was to be held in 1995 which led to the 1995 Beijing women conference in China. The motive was to mobilize political will to secure more meaningful progress in the implementation of gender equality strategies.

One of the main challenges that was noted in the review was the fact that the Nairobi strategies had very broad goals with a general coverage but with no specific policy engagements on how gender equality perspectives were to be put into practice. Thus, in the review reports, the UN called upon development agencies to use the Fourth World / Beijing Conference on women to make explicit policy measures stating how they planned to move the equality agenda forward. The conference was attended by 189 UN member countries including Canada. The UN member states were mandated to produce a concrete and action-oriented blueprint for change (SWC 1993, 1995, 1999; UN 2000). In response, the UN member countries adopted the Platform for Action (PfA) which represented a commitment to support women's empowerment, women's human rights, and achieve gender equality. After adopting the PfA strategy, mainstreaming gender considerations became "a key element in a global movement to institutionalize the goal of promoting women's equality at every level of state and organizational functioning" (Lahey 2002:5). The PfA also included detailed methodological guidelines which the UN member states were expected to follow when mainstreaming gender into their public policies. The three strategic objectives that governments were required to achieve included:

1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies
2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programs, and projects
3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation (UN 1996: 196-209).

In addition to these objectives, was a commitment by the UN member states to "integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programs and projects and to ensure that before policy decisions are taken, an analysis of their impact on men and women, respectively is carried out"

(UN 1996: 117) which represented a global realization of the fact that achieving gender equality would require mainstreaming gender concerns in all forms of development and political processes (UN 2001 as cited by Ferguson 2015; Roberts 1996; Tiessen 2014; Rankin et al. 2004).<sup>1</sup> Donor governments were thus able to pin-point poverty, violence against women, armed conflict, and the lack of institutional mechanisms for addressing inequality as the major critical areas that deserved attention in the policy processes of achieving gender equality in international development (UN 1996). In sum, the 1985 Nairobi conference, the 1995 Beijing conference and the Gender and Development (GAD) theoretical framework adopted in the 1980s (details in chapter two) have played a significant role in changing the way development agencies perceived gender and development by highlighting the impacts of gender inequality in everyday life on development outcomes. Henceforth, to this day, using the gender assessments made in GAD perspectives and the conferences, governments and development agencies find it important to ensure that all development programs are monitored for their potential to achieve equality so as to make sure that views from diverse social groups equally shape the development agendas intended to address the inequalities in development systems (Burt 2001; Anderson 1996; Derbyshire 2002; DAC 1998 as cited by Porter & Sweetman 2005). Therefore, in 1995, international development policy approach shifted from special programs for women to *mainstreaming* gender concerns, or the application of a *gender lens* into government policy (Carriere 1995). The term mainstreaming refers to the “systematic integration of gender equality into all systems and structures, policies, programs, processes, and projects, as well as into ways of seeing and doing and into cultures and their organizations” (Rees 2002:2). The mainstreaming process involves assessment of the potential

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<sup>1</sup>Through the Platform for Action (PfA) for example, the Government of Canada (GoC) called upon other developed countries to ensure that sexual violence and gender-based persecution became valid grounds for refugee status (Riddell-Dixon 2001; Tong, 2009).

impacts of any development planned action-including legislation; policies or programs on the targeted beneficiaries (Carriere 1995) (details covered in chapter two). In Canada, the gender lens was labelled Gender Based Analysis (GBA)-in 1996, following the ratification of the United Nation's Beijing Platform for Action, to promote gender equality, GBA and more recently(2011), Gender Based Analysis/ plus (GBA/+) (to include LGBTQ+ issues) was unveiled as one of the key components of the wider strategy to promote equality (Burt & Hardman 2001; Carriere 1995; SWC 2016 as cited by Gladu, 2016). Status of Women Canada (SWC 1996:4) and Grace (1997:584), define GBA as follows:

Gender-based analysis is a process that assesses the differential impact of proposed and/or existing policies, programs and legislation on women and men. It makes it possible for policy to be undertaken with an appreciation of gender differences, the nature of relationships between women and men and of their different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances. It is a tool for understanding social processes and for responding with informed and equitable options

On the other hand, GBA/+ is based on the feminist /intersectional understanding that all policies have the potential to impact social groups differently - thereby creating and sustaining unequal power relations. The difference between GBA and GBA/+ lies in the fact that unlike in the GBA strategy, the GBA/+ approach is meant to result into gender policy analysis occurring at a wide scope to represent views of all social groups regardless of their gender as opposed to the GBA strategy within which gender concerns were analyzed the impact of development processes and programs on women and men (Young 2013; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018; Grace 1997; SWC 1996).

In Canada's case, despite a long history and presence of women's activism in the Canadian politics, the idea of incorporating gender interests and equality concerns into the policy process is relatively new. It was not until 1995 that federal public servants particularly within CIDA, began to use gender-based analysis to examine the potential impacts of policy outcomes on gender equality (Burt & Hardman 2001; Carriere 1995; Roberts 1996; Bacchi & Eveline 2010; Rankin,

Vickers & Field 2001). Prior to that, gender politics in Canada was largely represented by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) which was made of women's policy agencies, an advisory council and represented several distinct approaches to women's issues such as supporting women's community groups in the early 1970s. The work of the RCSW represented the first comprehensive state response and systematic study of the status of Canadian women (Anderson 1996; Rankin, Vickers & Field 2001; Stephanie 2010). In 1996, alongside drastic changes to this institutional design and the disbanding of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and considerable decrease in funding for community groups among others, there emerged an integrated approach to gender politics (Women's Bureau 1997; Anderson 1996). Under the gender-integrated approach, the goal was to allow policy makers use a GBA approach to perform development policy assessments and to create an easier understanding of how to translate gender theories and perspectives into policy practice and distinguish between 'integrationist' and 'transformative' policy agendas (SWC 2001: 50 as cited by Eveline & Bacchi 2005; Jahan 1995; Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000). An 'integrationist' agenda is one which introduces a gender perspective into existing policy processes but does not challenge existing policy paradigms. A 'transformative' agenda is one which involves fundamental policy rethinking, not simply of the means or procedures of policy making, but also of the ends of policy goals from a gender perspective (Columbia 1997; Hankivsky 2005; Harris & Manning 2007). SWC (1996: 4) stated that:

The potential differential effects of policies, programs and legislation on women and men can often be masked. When gender is explicitly considered in policy analysis, these effects are revealed, and previously hidden implications come to light.

Status of Women Canada (SWC), promoted GBA to the policy community as representing a fundamental shift in the way government was to think and act on (in)equality issues in

development processes. It was devised to facilitate the use a gender lens in the development and assessment of policies to make it easy for policy makers to identify the sources of inequalities and their potential impacts on policy processes. The GBA approach and required federal departments and agencies to incorporate a gender perspective into policies and programs within their operational spheres of activity (Grace 1997; SWC 1996, 1999). Canada’s federal plan for practicing GBA centered around eight objectives (Grace 1997:584):

1. Implement gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies
2. Improve women's economic autonomy and well-being
3. Improve women's physical and psychological well-being
4. Reduce violence in society, particularly violence against women and children
5. Promote gender equality in all aspects of Canada's cultural life
6. Incorporate women's perspectives in governance
7. Promote and support global gender equality
8. Advance gender equality for employees of federal departments and agencies.

GBA was cast by the government of Canada as an “important aspect of good governance – one which leads to informed policy – making” (SWC 1996: 5) “[...] great fairness, equity, and justice for women and men; and contributes to social, cultural, and economic progress” (SWC 2000:6). Canada’s GBA policy analysts were responsible for providing knowledge and information to CIDA’s policy makers on the potential implications of policy outcomes on women and men and the public interest. The strategy was intended to change existing policy practices so that gender analysis became the core of policy process, and not just an add-on to development programs (Squires 2007; Verloo & Lombardo 2007, 2005). Thus, the GBA strategy made the policy formulation process more proactive than reactionary as it facilitated an insight into the potential consequences of policy and program legislation on (in)equality issues in development (Bacchi & Eveline 2010; Rankin, Vickers & Field 2001; SWC 1996).

Since its implementation in Canada’s gender and development policies, GBA has undergone significant changes. For example, since 2007, GBA was required for all cabinet submissions

which were overseen by the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) (Young 2013; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). The other change was a shift in the general organization and administration of GBA from a more centralized approach in which Status of Women Canada (SWC) was centrally located to oversee the implementation methods and processes to a decentralized format with which federal government allowed individual departments the responsibility to implement GBA where they deemed appropriate (Burt 1997; Paterson 2010). Previously, the interdepartmental committee meetings were carried out in round table formats and provided a forum for identifying and sharing policy information, resources, and best practices on implementing GBA. In 2002 this format was replaced with consultancy firms which use professional policy experts to carry out policy information exchange and recommendations, and the move was part of a broader commitment to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government policies (Young 2013; Lahey 2002).

In 2011, SWC formally reoriented GBA towards GBA+, which takes into account how gender interacts with identity factors, such as ethnicity, age, ability, geography, sexual orientation and gender identity and other aspects of identity among individuals and within broader social structures (SWC 2016 as cited by Gladu, 2016). The expansion of GBA to GBA/+ reflected CIDA and SWC's desire to integrate a more intersectionality approach -with which the interactions between gender and other categories of difference would be considered in policy analysis (Scala & Paterson 2017; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). As such, by adopting a GBA+ approach, policy makers were expected to carry out an intersectional based policy analysis to determine the impacts of various intersecting identity factors on the effectiveness of government initiatives.

The concept of intersectionality is defined as the “interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives” and most importantly, “the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power” (Davis 2008:68). The intersectionality theory emerged in the late 1970s, its roots can be traced back to Black Feminism Intersectionality (Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015: 230). Broadly speaking, intersectionality “seeks to illuminate various interacting factors that affect human lives and tries to identify how these different systemic conditions varying in place, time, and circumstance cooperate to reproduce conditions of inequality” (Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015:230). The interaction this framework presents in policy processes challenges essentialism tendency - which “conceptualizes individuals as having unchanged, fixed, or “essential” identities that they carry around with them from one situation to the next (Hills Collins & Bilge 2016:124-5). As Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove (2015:77) argue, in the related context of using intersectionality in disabilities studies, “[p]eople have multiple roles and identities and being members of more than one “group”, they can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression” . What makes intersectionality a transformative step towards understanding the systemic and broader causes of inequality are the “central tenets that capture the unique nature of this paradigm” These include but not limited to:

1. human lives cannot be reduced to single characteristics
2. human experiences cannot be accurately understood by prioritizing any one single factor or constellation of factors
3. social categories/locations, such as ‘race’/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality and ability, are socially constructed, and dynamic

4. social locations are inseparable and shaped by interacting and mutually constituting social processes and structures, which, in turn, are shaped by power and influenced by both time and place; and
5. the promotion of social justice and equity are paramount (Hankivsky et al 2014:2)

These, can fundamentally change the way marginalized groups are looked upon by policy makers-by making them recognize that inequality experiences are different even within a particular group (LGBTQ+, women)-thereby challenging the essentialist assumptions of group uniformity (Hancock 2007). The intersectionality framework “argues for policy processes to be rooted in a deep awareness of the forces of [...] oppression, past and present, situated and developed in the local Indigenous community and knowledge” - this requires integrating and responding to both the traditional and contemporary descriptive and transformative policy questions (Hankivsky et al 2014:11-12). This helps: “to expand and transform the ways in which policy problems and processes are understood and critically analyzed in order to ensure finetuned and equitable policy recommendations and responses” (Hankivsky et al 2014:3). Intersectionality recognizes that all social categories are equally important hence, it “considers the interaction of such categories [...]” as key transformative components with the potential to influence political access, equality, justice and organize structures of society (Hancock 2007:64). Today intersectionality is viewed as an analytic tool (Hill Collins & Bilge 2016), a theoretical and methodological paradigm (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall 2013), a research paradigm (Hancock 2007; Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015), and a means of creating better public policy (Manuel 2019; Hankivsky & Mussell, 2018). However, although the concept itself seems to have provided a solid framework, as Nash (2008:4) notes, there is a “lack of clearly defined intersectional methodology”. Scholars (Nash 2008; May 2015) are concerned that due to the

inconsistencies in the way it is being institutionalized, the concept is losing its historical and transformative foundation in feminist theory and Black feminism. On that background, although GBA+ represents the full promise of intersectionality, in contrast, Hankivsky and Mussell (2018) argue that GBA+ represents an additive approach, rather than an intersectional approach. They define an additive approach as “when gender, as a category of difference, is given primacy and other categories of difference are considered add-ons” (Hankivsky & Mussell 2018:304). In their argument, since an intersectional approach cuts across many-and does not prioritize one category of difference over another and rather recognizes the interactions between multiple categories as well as political institutions, its ability to maintain gender in a central position of intersectional policy analysis is weak (Hankivsky & Mussell:2018; Hancock 2007). Nevertheless, GBA/+ is recognized as a step forward in incorporating intersectionality into public policy analysis in Canada (Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). I however do find their criticism, along with Nash (2008) and May’s (2015) concerns to be confirmed in the fact that despite the commitment expressed by CIDA to support the first GBA, a 2009 report by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) found its application across departments to be inconsistent and incomplete. The report highlighted that there was limited evidence to suggest that GBA was informing development policy and program initiatives - as the civil servants could not assert how the application of this strategy in Canada’s foreign assistance would empower and lead to conditions of self-supporting prosperity in the targeted developing countries (Burt & Hardman 2001; Harris & Manning 2007;OAG 2009 as cited by Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). In fact, the same issues were raised in the 2016 OAG follow up report - found that GBA/+ continued to be missing or incomplete in most federal departments and agencies (OAG 2016 as cited by Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). I take these weaknesses as a revelation that within Canada, GBA/+ was being used to simply

integrate or add other categories of gender differences into development policies-and without a comprehensive and critical reflection on what GBA/+ is exactly in practice and what needs to be changed in the existing approaches, GBA/+'s transformative potential-one that can contribute to the development of concrete intersectional methods is essentialized and less likely to fully bring out intersectional perspectives. The OAG reports were especially useful institutional levers for building capacity in the application of the GBA/+ strategy in such a way that their criticism prompted action on the part of senior managers and Status of Women Canada (SWC). Thus, with the support of Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and the Privy Council Office (PCO), both SWC and GBA/+ senior policy managers were able to develop gender training courses aimed at educating policymakers on more gender informed development processes of monitoring, assessing and implementing GBA/+ (Eveline & Bacchi 2005; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018).

GBA/+ training is now offered mostly on-line and it includes three frameworks

1. The gender-neutral framework, based on the assumption that policies affected all people in the same way.
2. The gender-specific framework, which is made of proactive measures that aim to challenge systemic gender biases
3. The gender-integrated framework, which was based on the relational nature of gender differences-developed as a response to the inequalities that had been reinforced through the gender-specific approach (SWC 2001 as cited by Eveline & Bacchi 2005).

The challenges of practicing GBA/+ may include but not limited to meeting the policy efficiency standards and working the political and economic spaces of power to compel departments to undertake GBA/+ (Kirner & Rayner 1999; Newman 2012; Paterson 2010). Manuel (2019), observed that the reductionist and incremental nature of public policy, short time horizons, a lack

of analytical and methodological approaches and the tendency of public policy to exclude certain groups in its application, serve as barriers to the translation of GBA/+ into practice. Clearing these concerns is very crucial in ensuring that civil servants do not use these models to silence community voices in policy discussions on the impacts of privileging efficiency in policy processes over gendered forms of oppression (McNutt 2010,2011; Meier, Petra & Celis 2011; Rankin & Wilcox 2004). That said, as the current Liberal government continues to emphasize its intersectional approach, it is safe to expect that GBA/+ will be used as a tool to incorporate intersectional logics into policy and program-making.

In next chapters, I discuss the steps Canada has and continues to take towards responding to gender (in)equality issues in its development policies, as well as the gaps and problems in these steps. Based on the above background, the main concern in this thesis is to highlight the gaps in the approaches applied by Canada International Development Assistance (CIDA) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to transform gender and development perspectives into practice. If we want to better understand the problems in the way Canadian policy makers put equality perspectives into practice, we need to pay closer attention to what they are doing and how they do it thus, in this chapter, I do a critical analysis of GAC's FIAP objectives and their implication for gender equality, feminism and intersectionality.

## **CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The thesis is organized as follows: the first chapter has introduced the study topic, statement of the problem, research questions, the objectives, the importance of the thesis, the gender impact assessment method, and the intersectionality theory. Chapter two, goes over the theoretical framework I use for my analysis: chapter three is a background chapter - introducing CIDA and

GAC, and how these have put gender equality perspectives into their development policy practices. Chapter 4 is the final chapter and: it analyzes the gaps in FIAP, highlight the issues that GAC should be concerned about moving forward; recommendations and the central conclusions of the thesis.

## CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A framework is a system of ideas or conceptual structures that determine the way we view, understand, explain, and change the social world. It guides our thinking on the kinds of research questions to ask which allows us to make recommendations on defined and analyzed social issues (Anthony, Dearden & Vancil 1965). This chapter explores the evolution of theorizing gender and development, the differences in the way theoretical frameworks (WID and GAD) define inequality in development and their differing approaches to equality (Kabeer 1999 as cited by Singh 2007). Thus, the assessment of GAD starts with a brief discussion on the Women in Development (WID) framework and the weaknesses in its strategies that led to the creation of the Gender and Development (GAD) theoretical framework. The focus is mainly on the GAD framework because I use it to analyze the gaps and problems in the approaches being applied by Canada's development agencies to put gender equality perspectives and strategies into practice. I choose to use the GAD framework because GAD perspectives such as gender equality, gender mainstreaming and empowerment are reflected in Canada's gender and development policy guidelines and so, using the framework makes it possible to highlight the transformative principles that are being ignored in the process of putting these perspectives into policy practice.

In international development, theoretical approaches have evolved over time from Women in Development (WID) to Women and Development (WAD) and eventually to Gender and Development (GAD) (Singh 2007; Schalkwyk, Thomas & Woroniuk 1996; Razavi & Miller 1995). The shift to GAD was in response to the under representation of women's issues and the poor assessment of the broader causes of inequality by the earlier approaches to development. Goetz (1997:1) defines GAD as a "critical approach to development [...] from a feminist perspective"- created to enable policy makers create and apply transformative gender and

development perspectives into policy programs intended to assess the impact of inequalities on development and address their root causes (Unterhalter 2005; Day & Brodsky 1998). In this framework gender concerns are integrated into development programs as a way of accounting for the different social and economic conditions of all social groups (Schalkwyk, Thomas & Woroniuk 1996; Razavi & Miller 1995). In this section, my analysis of GAD and what it stands for begins with the discussion on the concept of gender.

## **2:1 Gender**

Gender is defined as the “socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity [...] and is crosscut by differences in class, race, ethnicity, religion, and age” (Momsen 2004:2). The concept of gender is not a fixed structure, but rather constructed through different agencies of socialization such as families, schools, peer groups, mass media (Whelehan & Pilcher 2004; Kabeer 1999; Price 2005; Eveline & Bacchi 2005; Peterson 1992; Young 2017; Kerfoot & Knights 1996). The social interactions that take place within these agencies lead to “socially imposed and internalized lens through which individuals perceive and respond to the world” by determining the processes of self-construction (Peterson 1992:194). This socialization component of the gender concept is made explicit by Simone de Beauvoir who refers to gender as a process through which we construct ourselves. In his arguments for example, he cites that “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (1989:36). In sum, unlike in the early literature of the 1960s/1970s, within which the concept of gender was considered and interpreted as women, what is being stressed in the above descriptions of the gender concept is the fact that the meaning of *man* and *woman* is neither fixed nor naturally/ biologically determined (Spelman 1988; Scott 1990; Collinson & Hearn 1994). Thus, between 1975 to 1985 a period commonly referred to as the women’s decade, the shallow interpretation of gender as woman was rejected by scholars and activists who wanted to analyze

and theorize men and masculinity and how it related to the broader root causes of inequality (Woodward 1999 as cited by Elgström 2000; Tong 2009; SWC 1995, 1999; UN 1985 2000). Their aim was to determine how the concept of gender is constructed, produced, reproduced and how it relates to power and (in)equality. They also wanted to create awareness on the negative impacts of representing women as a single category on the implementation of social and economic development goals (Spelman 1988; Scott 1986, 1990, 1995 Collinson & Hearn 1994; Collinson & Hearn 1994). According to Parsons' *sex role theory*, society assigns specific stereotyped roles to the members on basis of their sex (1952). Using the sex role theory, Parsons and Bales (1955) highlighted the ways in which society applies socialization to create partnership between sex and social traits to assign roles. For example, by using women's *emotional expressiveness* to place them into roles of care giving and using men's *instrumentalism* to place them into leadership and bread winning roles. What we should not ignore however, is the fact that stereotypes are a basis of gender inequality because they reinforce gender-based discrimination (Roggeband & Verloo 2006; Betz & O'Connell 1989; Kabeer 1999; Price 2005; Mitchell 2004).

To distinguish sex (a biology) from gender (as social attributes, norms and behaviors), sex is defined as the biological characteristics that define male and female, while gender is defined as an “array of norms, values, behaviors, expectations and assumptions differently ascribed to males and females” (Love et al 1997:1). In relation to sex, gender “refers to socially constructed sex-based roles ascribed to males and females; roles that are learned, change over time, and can vary widely within and across cultures” (SWC 1996: 6).<sup>2</sup> The main reason for distinguishing sex from gender

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<sup>2</sup> Culture, as defined by Kirson (1995), means more than ethnicity, it includes physical and social environments and the interaction of factors such as race, geography, ability, sexuality, family type, age, socioeconomic status, and religion. For many women, complexities of their culture are as critical as their gender, and definitely more critical than their sex.

is because confusing the two concepts becomes an impediment to doing effective gender impact assessment in policy application (Carriere 1995; Hoffman 1997; Woodward & Meier 1998; Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006). It is equally worth noting that the implications of both the distinction and relationship between gender and sex have significant connotations for understanding differences in gender identities and social categories during policy processes (Young 2017; Hoffman 1997; Youngs 2004; Love et al. 1997; Krook & Mackay 2011; Pankhurst 1992; Walby 2004; Walby & Britain 2007). GAD perspectives, like the FIAP, seek to challenge and change patriarchal structures that perpetuate inequality such as sexual division of labor and gender-based discrimination and the biased legal structures (Chant & Sweetman 2012; Moser 1989; Rathgeber 1990; Kabeer 2015; Moser 1989).

## **2:2 Gender and Development (GAD) theoretical framework**

In the 1970s, using Ester Boserup's work on Women's Role in Economic Development, the international community was able to recognize and acknowledge the differences in the way women and men experienced development. As a result, an approach called Women in Development (WID) was adopted to guide analysis of the challenges that limited women's ability to participate and benefit from development programs and projects (Rathgeber 1990; Boserup 1970; Moser 1993; Moser 1994 as cited by Unterhalter 2005; Eveline 1994). The WID framework was an extension of 1970s modernization theory that presented women as the "untapped resource that can provide an economic contribution to development" (Moser 1989:1800). Henceforth, it is defined as the "integration of women into global processes of economic, political, social growth and change" (Rathgeber 1990: 489). Under WID: "gender is interpreted as women and girls, development as

growth, efficiency, good governance and social cohesion, while equality as equality of resources or parity” (Goetz 1997:1). WID’s approach to equality were mainly oriented to equal treatment or opportunities approach and this approach dominated development policies between 1950s and 1980s (Lombardo & Meier 2008; Rees 2002). In this period, international development strategies were “focused on how women could better be integrated into ongoing development initiatives” (Rathgeber 1990:491) to enable them “catch up” with men in development (Quisumbing, 2003:187). This was largely because between late 1950s into early 1980s, equality was perceived as a formal or legal way of offering everyone equal opportunities and treatment before the law and so the concept was defined as “equality before the law, or equal treatment in similar circumstances” and the responsibility for administering equality was entrusted with legislators (Eveline & Bacchi 2005: 507). But this shallow definition and resolution to inequality was problematic in a sense that it limited the assessment of the impacts of gender bias on policy practice (Rees 2002). Plus, by focusing on economic efficiency, the equal treatment approach ignored the “pitfalls of economic determinism” (Samarasinghe 2014:31) and failed to address the deeply-rooted causes of inequality and injustice such gender based imbalances in resource distribution, control and access (Parpart, Rai & Staudt 2003; Tiessen 2014; Cockburn 1991). Chant & Gutmann (2002: 270) described the strategy as lacking the potential to “shake patriarchal foundations” of development practices. Thus, it can be concluded that although this approach played a significant role in promoting equal access and providing more choices, it only corrected openly visible forms of inequality and not their root causes. This can be linked to the fact that legal discrimination was perceived as an individual not a systemic problem of inequality (Day & Brodsky 1998; Daly 2005; Squires 2005; Rees 2002) Activists for gender equality were concerned that WID’s equal treatment protected laws that favored men and placed women in disadvantage positions. They thus demanded that social

structures and practices that promoted inequality had to be transformed to equally respect women's views, experiences and needs. As a result of these demands, from mid 1980s-present, Gender and Development (GAD) or "Gender Concerns in Development (GCID)" approach (Parpart et al 2000:38) emerged as the new framework with which equality evolved from narrow, formal and legal narratives to embrace broader notions of gender equality and the solution to inequality shifted from simply changing laws towards creating measures to address specific problems resulting from women occupying disadvantaged positions in society (Jaquette 2017; Cornwall & Althea 2015; Stratigaki 2005). In her description of women's oppression, Ann Whitehead linked socially acceptable gender relations with women's subordination-laying foundation for the shift from WID to GAD. She, cited that: "it is very rare to find any social situation in which women do not experience some of the limiting or downright oppressive dimensions of gender-whether in the workplace, the street, or the home" (Whitehead 1979 as cited by Cornwall 2014:127). This revelation impacted the way policy makers perceived gender based challenges to development in such a way that since the 1980s, inequality in development has been expanded to consider structural inequality, gender based discrimination as opposed to simply being perceived as unequal participation of women in development (Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006). What makes the GAD approach useful for this thesis, is the fact that to this day, its perspectives (gender equality, empowerment) are still reflected in Canada's gender and development policies-these pioneered the shift from simply adding women into development as was in WID, to analyzing the factors that led to their oppression. Thus, I have covered the perspectives at broad scope-the aim is to: present a deeper understanding of the GAD framework-that I am using in the analysis; what its perspectives stand for; and the core principles that ought to be considered by policy makers in policy practice.

During the 1980s–1990s, the focus in equality and development thus shifted from equal treatment to positive action—an approach rooted in the idea that even if there are similarities between women and men, there are also differences (which are sometimes used to disadvantage women) (Stratigaki 2005; Rees 2002). Unlike in WID and equal treatment, under GAD and positive action, the inequality problem was linked to the unequal starting positions for women in the social, political, and economic fields. Thus, positive action measures such as positive discrimination were/are introduced on many occasions to balance the shortcomings of equal treatment. In these measures, policy makers aim to go beyond securing equality of access, into securing equality of outcome and equalizing the starting grounds (Lombardo & Meier 2008). Gender experts, specialists, gender equality units and agencies were entrusted with the responsibility of creating strategies that would enable policy actors to respond to the development challenges that were resulting from women’s disadvantaged social starting point (Lombardo & Meier 2008; Stratigaki 2005; Rees 2002). However, by focusing on how to assist women to fit into male dominated structures, like the equal treatment approach, these measures fail to challenge the deeply rooted causes of gender inequality such as gender- based discrimination (Verloo 2005). I highlight these weaknesses because it is very important that policy makers are mindful of the fact that equality can only be achieved by correcting institutionalized forms of inequality such as practices that privilege masculinities (Hankivsky 2012; Elgström 2000; Woodward & Meier 1998; Verloo 2004; Stratigaki 2005). Under GAD, gender relations are interpreted as constructed social relations of power, and equality as challenging oppressive social relations (Unterhalter 2005). In effort to challenge the institutionalized forms of inequality, policy makers adopted the Gender Equality (GE) and the Gender Mainstreaming (GM) strategies which emerged from the 1995 UN Beijing conference on

women (Momsen 2004; Lombardo & Meier 2008; Grace 1997). The term Gender Equality (GE) has generally been defined as an environment in which:

women and men enjoy the same status and have equal opportunity to realize their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results gender equality” (CIDA 1999 as cited by Tiessen, & Carrier, 2015: p.96).

In Canada, GE strategies have been broadened to include governance, peace and security and climate change (Lombardo & Meier 2008; Brown 2012; Lewis 2016; Tiessen & Carrier 2015). Like the positive action approach GE requires society to equally value both the similarities and differences between diverse social groups, the varying roles that they play and analysis of all forms of inequality and their root causes (Hankivsky 2012 as cited by Tiessen & Carrier 2015; Brodie & Bakker 2008). GAD theorists switched from using the term *women* to *gender* because they were concerned that the definition of the word woman could not adequately respond to the issues of bias and inequality within development systems (Tong 2018). Some critiques (Neis 1998; White 2000; Sweetman 1998 as cited by Chant & Gutmann 2002) found the term-switch problematic, fearing that focusing on gender was taking the focus away from funding women-specific issues. However, I fully support the move primarily because shifting from women to gender-centered approaches allows policy makers understand how various factors do intersect to place women in needy positions (Grace 1997; Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015). One of the strategies that seemed better placed to sustain the shift from WID to GAD was gender mainstreaming-the many arguments surrounding its weaknesses and strengths are covered in this section.

## 2:5 Gender mainstreaming

In 1995, after the Beijing conference, international development agencies, governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) adopted gender mainstreaming as a core guideline for designing development objectives (Columbia 1997; Hankivsky 2005; Harris & Manning 2007; Rankin, Vickers & Field 2001; Booth & Bennett 2002; Schalkwyk et al 1996, 1998) that aimed to create “positive contribution towards promoting gender-aware vision and equality” (Brown 2012:135). Policy makers are expected to use this strategy to produce gender-equal policies (United Nations 1997 as cited by Moser & Moser 2005) and to achieve this goal, policy makers ensure that their policy processes reflect:

systematic integration of the respective situations, priorities and needs of women and men in all policies with a view to promoting equality between women and men and mobilizing all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their effects on the respective situation of women and men in implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Commission of the European Communities 1996: 2 as cited by Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000:434).

Inspired by both economic concerns and social justice goals, the World Bank (WB) interpreted “mainstreaming gender into development as a process of understanding the differing needs and constraints faced by women and men that affect productivity” and designing appropriate actions so that “gender-related barriers to economic growth and poverty alleviation are reduced, and the material well-being of men, women and children is enhanced” (World Bank 2002: 42 as cited by Sjolander 2005:28). Like the GAD framework, mainstreaming gender concerns into development involves changing socially legitimized and institutionalized practices and processes that discriminate against others on basis of their gender (Council of Europe 1998 as cited by Verloo 2005). Thus, the success of gender mainstreaming relies on three key pillars

1. national policies and bureaucratic machineries

2. women's movements and social justice organizations
3. feminist research (Hankivsky, 2008) and varies cross-nationally.

Maintaining the links between these three pillars is key in creating coalitions, alliances, and partnerships between the different sets of experiences and knowledge that are fundamental in achieving effective practice of this strategy (Squires 2007). Thus, the gender mainstreaming strategy “complements but does not replace previous gender-specific equality policies like equal treatment legislation and positive action” (Stratigaki 2005:169). Similar to Gender Based Analysis/plus (GBA/+), gender impact assessment and the GAD framework, the process of gender mainstreaming involves (re) organizing and improving the policy evaluation processes (Goetz 1997; Unterhalter 2005; Samarasinghe 2014; Sevenhuijsen & Meehan 1991). This is done to ensure that policy makers incorporate gender equality perspectives in all policies at all levels and at all stages of policy process and practice (Council of Europe 1998; as cited by Lombardo & Meier 2008). What makes gender mainstreaming different from other approaches to gender equality is the fact this strategy expands the application of gender equality principles beyond the sphere of work and economy in to structural transformation aimed at addressing the root causes of gender inequality rather than the easily identifiable symptoms. To emphasize its importance in policy transformation, Rees' (1998: 40), definition of gender mainstreaming considers “mainstreaming equality one of the three major tools of sex equality policies, together with equal treatment legislation and positive action in favor of women”. The focus it places on a systems approach gives gender mainstreaming “more potential to have a serious impact upon gender equality than other strategies have” (Rees 2000:3). It is in this sense that gender mainstreaming represents both a paradigm shift in international policy development and practice, and a breakthrough in the ways of dealing with inequality issues (Daly 2005; Mazey 2002;

Walby 2005; Daly 2005; Rees 2002; Lombardo & Meier 2008; Stratigaki 2005). Canada has reflected the gender mainstreaming strategy in many of its development goals. However, to what extent has this process of paradigm shift taken place in Canada's gender and development policy practice?

To maximize effectiveness, any steps in the gender mainstreaming process should begin with the political will to address gender hierarchies in development organizations, diagnosis of the extent of policy gendering within the organizations and creating an action plan to improve capacity building of all actors (Derbyshire 2002; Squires 2005; Verloo 2005; Walby 2005; McGauran 2009; Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2009; Mergaert 2012; Eveline & Bacchi 2005). These steps are vital because the concept of gender mainstreaming like GAD, GBA/+, gives an insight into the potential negative and positive impacts of development programs and policies on the targeted beneficiaries. In addition to developing the above steps, the chances of identifying these impacts can be enhanced by policy makers applying the gender impact assessment method which contains policy descriptive stages discussed earlier in chapter one (Sjolander 2005; Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006; Woodward & Meier 1998; Roggeband & Verloo 1996, 2006; McGauran 2009; Parpart et al 2000; Carriere 1995; Burt 2001; Grace 1997; Sevenhuijsen & Meehan 1991). One of the practical ways to do this is through continuously training public administrators on the practice of gender perspectives so as to ensure that they have adequate knowledge on how to use the GAD, GBA/+ and gender impact assessment resources to mainstream gender concerns at both policy-making and implementation levels. Gender training involves policy makers to commission the training and civil servants to participate in the training (Pauly et al 2009 as cited by Allwood 2013). Gender training can be defined as:

the training planned, organized or/and commissioned by public institutions; targeted at public personnel and aimed at facilitating the incorporation of a gender equality

perspective in all policies and at all levels and at all stages of the policy-making process (Council of Europe 1998:15; Pauly et al 2009:6 as cited by Mergaert & Lombardo 2014:297 ).

Although gender mainstreaming is a “potentially revolutionary concept” which demands that all central actors in the policy process adopt a gender perspective (Pollack &Hafner-Burton 2000:434), putting it into effective practice comes with challenges in such a way that:

methodological requirements for gender mainstreaming are demanding, including the appointment of key officials responsible for the overall mainstreaming strategy; the provision of training in gender issues for other officials whose substantive expertise lies elsewhere; the collection of statistics and other data disaggregated by sex, to be used in planning, monitoring and evaluating the effects of policy on gender inequality; and other specialized techniques such as ‘gender proofing’ and ‘gender impact assessment (Nelen 1997:43–8 as cited by Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2000:438).

The successful implementation of this strategy requires: “provision of training in gender issues for [...] officials whose expertise lies elsewhere; the collection of statistics and other data disaggregated by sex, to be used in planning, monitoring and evaluating the effects of policy on gender inequality; and other specialized techniques such as [...] gender impact assessment” to guide officials when mainstreaming gender concerns across all policy areas (Nelen 1997: 43-8 as cited by Stratigaki 2005:438). Using these techniques, the officials and policy makers can develop first-hand understandings of the institutional factors that contribute to inconsistencies in the implementation of gender mainstreamed policies and projects (Charlesworth 2005; Roggeband &Verloo 2006; Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2000). Gender mainstreaming requires making changes that often challenge the existing structural norms, practices and affect gender relations. As a result, actions and processes intended to mainstream the policy processes of development institutions and organizations are prone to either individual or institutional forms of resistance (Agocs 1997; Pauly et al. 2009 as cited by Allwood 2013; Razavi & Miller 1995; Matlin & Stephen 1998). Resistance

to change is most likely to happen “when the existing organizational culture, norms, beliefs, attitudes and values are affected by the change efforts” (Mergaert 2012: 57). Institutional forms of resistance include but not limited to under-staffing, dedicating insufficient funds, time, and personnel to gender mainstreaming processes such as training (Pauly et al, 2009 as cited by Lombardo & Mergaert 2013; Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000). Although passive, these forms of resistance can weaken the practice of mainstreaming gender concerns in development policy processes. In such ways that they not only place constraints on how gender and policy analysts negotiate what gender concepts to include in the policy objectives, but also on how they deliver and implement these concepts. For example, the Canadian GBA/+ analysts have to frame their equality work as neutral usable policy knowledge which compromises their ability to carry out meaningful gender impact assessments (Pauly et al 2009 as cited by Lombardo & Mergaert 2013; Townsend and Kunimoto 2009; Young 2013 Squires 2007; Verloo, & Lombardo 2007, 2005).

When it comes to minimizing resistance, the primary idea that gender mainstreaming benefits both women and men has been useful in winning over *some* individuals who would otherwise oppose an approach that problematizes their social behaviors and advantages (Eveline & Bacchi 2005). In my view, the idea reveals two things firstly, the “kind of bilingualism required in dominant and oppositional discourses, and the need for strong pressure from outside to be effective” (Sawer 1996: 23). Secondly, the constraints and compromises involved in making the gender mainstreaming strategy acceptable to conservative civil servants in senior administrative positions – who often value policy neutrality and tend to regard any form of change and advocacy with suspicion (Verloo 2005). Yet, “[...] the support from higher levels gives legitimacy, as it establishes an obligation and shows commitment on the part of leaders that may help ease resistances” (Pauly et al 2009:24 as cited by Mergaert & Lombardo 2016:54).

Acknowledging the forms of resistance to the policy changes is very central to understanding why Canada's efforts to practice gender equality in foreign assistance have been uneven and incomplete. The inconsistencies were made explicit in the 2009 and 2016 OAG reports that assessed how CIDA officials had put GBA and GBA/+ into practice (OAG 2009 as cited by Hankivsky & Mussell 2018) as discussed earlier in chapter one.

Determining the factors behind the ineffective implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies is still an inconclusive debate and this is because the assessments of the mainstreaming strategy among scholars are both contradictory and sometimes conflicting. There is still an ongoing disagreement amongst social scientists about the theoretical and practical problems within the concept of mainstreaming itself (Bennett & Booth 2002; Daly 2005; Lewis 2006; Lombardo 2005; Lombardo & Meier 2006, 2008; Mazey 2000,2002; Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000, 2002; Rees 2002; Shaw 2002; Squires 2005; Stratigaki 2005; Verloo 2005; Walby 2004, 2005) as discussed in this section. According to Rees, gender mainstreaming represents a 'paradigm shift in thinking about gender equality', though 'misappropriated and misunderstood' (2002:11). Lombardo and Meier regard gender mainstreaming definition as an "open signifier that can be filled with both feminist and non-feminist meanings" (2006:161). Stratigaki argues that mainstreaming "lost most of its strategic sense vis-a-vis gender equality" as it has become "an abstract 'principle' used interchangeably with the 'principle of equality'" (2005:175). Bennett and Booth (2002:433) define mainstreaming as a "fuzzy" concept with chaotic implementation strategies which have been interpreted as mere new sets of methods and not as transformative ideologies. Cornwall's (2007: 479) is mainly concerned that the problems with the incorporation of language, like mainstreaming, is that development can reduce "concepts that were good to think and debate with" to "euphemistic buzzwords".

More generally, the scholars are concerned about the confusion created by the differing definitions and interpretations of the mainstreaming concept and the gaps between what mainstreaming promises and what it fulfills (Daly 2005; Mazey 2002; Walby 2005; Daly 2005; Rees 2002; Lombardo, & Meier 2008; Stratigaki 2005; Lewis 2006). Their concerns, are questioning whether mainstreaming means the incorporation of a gender perspective into all policies, and therefore the possibility of transforming gender-biased structures, or whether it represents just *politically correct* approaches intended to avoid real structural changes that are required of the concept (Daly 2005; Mazey, 2002; Walby 2005; Daly 2005; Rees 2002; Lombardo & Meier 2008; Stratigaki 2005). This questioning comes after Cornwall (2007) citing the problems with the incorporation of language, like mainstreaming, is that development can reduce “concepts that were good to think and debate with” to “euphemistic buzzwords” (479) In the case of Canada, gender mainstreaming has not been immune to the influence of the New Public Management (NPM) and the audit culture (Brown 2012; Shore 2008). As part of the Treasury Board’s Management Accountability System, gender mainstreaming runs the risk of being reduced to a ‘tick-box’ within the policy-making process (Lewis 2006:427) with policy makers paying more attention to the technical aspects of mainstreaming instead of the implications of its transformative content (Rees 2002; Hankivsky 2008; Peterson 2010; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). In their view, the concept of gender mainstreaming is being used by the Government of Canada (GoC) to serve other development interests than gender in development – paying less attention to how gender mainstreaming is implemented by those required to balance the often competing and contradictory demands of the bureaucracy with those of the feminist knowledge that informs GBA/ + (Meier & Celis 2011; Brown 2012). The lack of a general agreement on how to define and approach gender mainstreaming may have to

do with the fact that the concept of mainstreaming is always under dispute. Thus, while it is a “potentially radical strategy” (Mazey 2000:342) in such a way that its perspectives challenge the root causes of gender inequality by addressing “[...] institutionalized practices that cause both individual and group disadvantage in the first place” (Rees 2000: 3), the institutionalization and implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies, still needs to be given more priority in policy processes (Stratigaki 2005). Mainly because development agencies have failed to move towards creating instruments and objectives that are suitable for integrating this strategy into regular policy routines (Mazey 2002; Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000,2010). As a result, since its launch in the mid-1990s, the ability of the gender mainstreaming strategy to “affect core policy areas or radically transform policy processes” (Stratigaki 2005:181) within development institutions was and *is* to date still unclear, uneven and much about it remains uncertain and unpredictable (Lombardo & Meier 2008). I use *is* because the interventionist frames that are being used mainstream gender concerns and put equality projects into practice have failed to question and transform many of the biased cultural values and policy frames that existed prior adopting GE strategies. Instead, the focus in contemporary development is placed on connecting the strategies to general concepts, such as the reproductive health, democracy, peace, and security (Mazey 2000, 2002; Tiessen 2019; Swiss & Barry 2017; Mason 2019). But not the “structural conditions under which general mainstreaming is likely to succeed” (Pollack& Hafner-Burton 2000:450).

This weakness largely links to the fact that development agencies are engaging with politically and socially conservative institutions which need to be involved on their own terms. Henceforth, if these agencies use arguments based on justice and a commitment to equality they may have less chance of success as opposed to using arguments linking gender mainstreaming agendas to cost-

effective existing development goals (Chant & Sweetman 2012; Verloo 2005; Brown 2012; Lewis 2006; Eveline & Bacchi 2005; Bennett & Booth 2002; Mergaert & Lombardo 2016; Lombardo & Miere 2008). In sum, the major task lies in the extent to which conservative institutions are willing to change their conception of what gender inequality means, what should be done about it, and who is supposed to do it (Mazey 2002; Stratigaki 2005; Walby 2005). The question of who is to do it is very significant because more often, pressure for identifying the inequality problems and solutions in development programs is targeted at the authorities, legislators and gender experts as opposed to involving all actors routinely involved in policy-making (Mazey 2002; Stratigaki 2005; Walby 2005; Verloo 2005). The gradual introduction of the mainstreaming strategy into “existing policies has the potential to transform the discourse, procedures” and bring about sustainable gender equality in international development policies (Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000:453). However, the transformation will not happen overnight thus, concerns that have been raised by critics such as “the fear that a policy of gender mainstreaming will lead to the abandonment of specific, positive actions on behalf of women”(Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000:452), and the implementation procedures which make the strategy an “integrationist”- rather than a transformative “agenda-setting” approach (Jahan 1995:13) still need to be addressed by all parties involved in the long term transformation of policy processes.

Effective translation of the gender equality strategies, the GAD framework, GBA/+ and the gender impact assessment method into action requires that these concepts, are extended into institutional general operations by people with adequate levels of gender awareness and not exclusively by gender experts or private professional consultants. This is so because professional consultants have a tendency of framing gender mainstreaming as an effective means to the ends of achieving GE rather than an explaining the challenges embedded in extending the concept into general policy

practices (Rees 1998 as cited by Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000,2010; Verloo 2005; Squires 2005).<sup>3</sup> They do this by presenting gender mainstreaming “as a single concept, with no accompanying analysis of gender, gender relations, gender impact assessments and other related concepts and instruments” (Stratigaki 2005:175) or how it connects with the previous approaches to GE (equal treatment and positive discrimination). That said, the question of how GAC’s GBA/+ and feminist strategies influence policy outcomes and the ability of its strategic actors to skillfully overcome structural obstacles to gender mainstreaming remains to be seen.

### **2:3 Practical and Gender Strategic Needs**

Under GAD, everyday requirements /needs or interests are classified as Practical Gender Needs (PGNs) and Strategic Gender Needs (SGNs). PGNs can be defined as women’s basic needs that are related to women’s immediate needs such as food and water, health care and usually relate to unsatisfactory living conditions. In sum, PGNs tend to be immediate, short-term, and unique to women according to age, race, ability, and social status. Thus, meeting them is very key to securing family survival (Gurr et al.1996; Molyneux 1985; Moser 1989; Pickup 2001).They are determined according to gender division of labor in a given community and programs designed to meet practical needs do not alter traditional roles and power relations and so they do not respond to (in) equality issues (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1989; Pickup 2001; Gurr et al. 1996). Satisfying PGNs is

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<sup>3</sup> Applying gender mainstreaming strategies in policy implementation processes can help to show ways in which gender is constructed, reproduced and changed in the development policy making processes (Rao and Kellner 2005 as cited by Allwood, 2013). Mainstreaming gender in to policies, implies transforming cultural and social institutions which requires change not only in the policy processes but also in the policy actors who participate in challenging institutions that resist change (Council of Europe1998 as cited by Verloo, 2005).

key to promoting women's ability to contribute and benefit from programs intended to fulfill strategic needs (Oxfam 1995).

Strategic Gender Needs (SGNs) on the other hand arise out of established unequal gender roles and gendered power relations. They tend to be long-term and relate to improving women's position (empower women and transform gender relations and attitudes) (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1989; Pickup 2001). Strategic interests include self-confidence, women's disadvantaged position, distribution of resources, political mobilization and unlike with PGNs, achieving SGNs involves both policy makers and the targeted communities engaging in long term processes of change such as empowerment, transformation of gender relations and attitudes that may require them to question the factors responsible for unequal gendered power dynamics that make some social groups occupy disadvantaging positions in society (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1989; Pickup 2001; Gurr et al. 1996).

Strategic solutions are more complex than practical ones and this is because programs designed to meet strategic needs are focused on transforming gender relations and challenge the root causes of inequality (Gurr et al. 1996). In summary, PGNs only affect women who identify them- depending on socio-economic status, race, age, location, education (Moser 1989; Pickup 2001). SGNs on the other hand are also known as *feminist* because they seek to challenge unequal power relations, structural inequality and fulfilling them plays a significant role in achieving gender equality. PGNs are only considered feminist when they turn into SGNs (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1989; Pickup 2001).

Understanding PGNs and SGNs is useful for this analysis because it is one way of policy makers can obtain reliable and usable information that can be incorporated into policy processes aimed at benefiting all regardless of their gender identity and social status. Thus, creating a link between

fulfillment of these needs and achieving sustainable equality gives policy makers an insight into the practical challenges they are likely to face when implementing long term programs intended to affect all.

## **2:4 Empowerment**

The concept of empowerment has existed in the works of social change since the 1970s but women empowerment came to be articulated in the 1980s and 1990s as a radical approach that was concerned with transforming economic, social, political structures and power relations in favor of women's rights and social justice (Cornwall 2007, 2016; Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Batliwala 1994, 1997, 2007). In the literature of the late 1980s and early 1990s, empowerment was interpreted as an act of "recognizing inequalities in power, asserting the right to have rights, and acting individually and in groups to bring about structural change in favor of greater equality" (Cornwall 2016: 343). Batliwala cast empowerment as "the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power" and power, "as control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology" (1994:129-130).

Power refers to one's ability to make choices and one becomes disempowered when denied the right to make choices (Cornwall 2014; Rai, 2007; Pickup 2001; Rowlands 1995). Many scholars have interpreted empowerment as power and in their view if power means control, empowerment is the process of gaining that control (Batliwala 1993, 1997; Sen 1993; Rowlands 1995; Cornwall 2014; Eyben & Napier-Moore 2009; Rai 2007; Rowlands & Townsend 1996; Kabeer 2005). Practicing empowerment involves transforming unequal gendered power relations and deconstructing oppressive structures, norms, and practices (Cornwall 2014; Momsen 2004; Pickup 2001; Rai 2007; Rowlands 1995). In the 1990s, the over application of the empowerment concept in development agendas became a concern to Batliwala (1994, 2007) who feared that the concept

was in danger of losing its transformative potential. Her concerns were rooted in the fact that many development organizations integrated the empowerment concept in their programs without accurately articulating its primary political agendas such as mediating structures of class, race, ethnicity, and challenging patriarchy. It is therefore important that before implementing any empowerment objectives, policy analysts take deep analysis into understanding the concept itself. For example, they should be aware that the sense of empowerment and desire to challenge inequality often begins from power within. It is rooted in how people see themselves and their desire to develop a sense of self-worth and confidence to undo the effects of internalized oppression (Cornwall 2014, 2016; Eyben & Napier-Moore 2009; Pickup 2001; Rai 2007; Kabeer 1999, 2005; Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Sardenberg 2009; Rowlands & Townsend 1996). Henceforth, interventions performed by external actors should not be conceived as empowering women but as clearing some of the obstacles that hinder women from empowering themselves (Kabeer 1999, 2005). Against this argument, development agencies should stop replacing empowerment cores of collective action to achieve rights, equality and justice with economic investment and returns (Cornwall 2014, Alsop, Heinsohn & Somma 2004; Kabeer 1999, 2005). The concept of empowerment has been reflected in many of Canada's gender and development policies thus, analyzing the initial implications of this concept is crucial for analyzing the factors making transformative goals weak in practice. In summary, the three important insights that are critical to the process of achieving effective implementation of the empowerment concept in policy practice include:

1. Empowerment is not just about improving women's capacity to cope with inequality but changing power relations.

2. Empowerment is relational in that it concerns the relations of power in which people are located and may experience disempowerment.
3. Empowerment is a process with no foreseeable end point hence, it should not be reduced to measurable targets and goals (Rowlands 1995, 1996; Batliwala 1993, 1994, 1997, Kabeer 1999, 2005; Cornwall and Rivas 2015; Sardenberg 2009).

### **Chapter conclusion**

This chapter introduced the theoretical the GAD framework which I use to analyze the problems and gaps in Canada's gender and development policy implementation process. GAD focuses on unequal power relations in connection to gender inequality and it emphasizes that the process of achieving equality should begin by tackling the root causes of gender inequality. From gender equality, the concept of empowerment emerged which refers to the process by which those with limited choices gain the power to make more choices. GAD complements the gender impact assessment method which seeks to assess the impact of development policies on gender relations. Implementing GAD strategies such as gender mainstreaming requires making changes in institutional processes, which often causes to resistance. Next chapter, illustrates Canada's approach to gender and development under CIDA and GAC

## CHAPTER THREE

### **3:0 Gender and development policy and practice in Canada's development agencies**

This chapter illustrates the ways in the Government of Canada (GoC) has and continues to integrate equality issues into development projects and programs through CIDA and GAC. It begins with a chronological discussion of Canada's gender and development policy practice since 1970-2019. This will be followed by a brief discussion on how the shift in language from gender equality to equality between women and men in the Harper government (2006-2015) shaped and impacted the goals of the Muskoka Initiative. I then analyze the new Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) that was released in 2017 by GAC (2015-present) its GBA+, intersectional and feminist approach in the six areas of focus and funding. By doing this analysis, I aim to reflect on the areas of weakness in Canada's gender and development policy and practice.

### **3:1 CIDA**

Established in 1968, CIDA was a federal government organization responsible for implementing Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) policies and administering majority of the ODA budget. The agency served as a model for putting equality strategies such as equal treatment, gender equality, Forward-Looking Strategies, Platform for Action (PfA), GBA and GBA/+ in to practice (Morrison 1998; Cooper 1997; Blanchette 2000; Rees 2002; UN 1985,2000; SWC 1993, 1995, 1999). In the late 1970s CIDA started to commit to international agreements intended to implement gendered foreign policies that would bring about equality, development, and peace for women both in Canada and the global South (Roberts 1996; Pratt 1994). In 1976, the agency adopted the WID framework which marked the first formal commitment to integrating equality. Using the WID strategy, the agency highlighted the need for improving and increasing women's

participation in the design and implementation of development projects and Status of Women Canada (SWC) was created as a policy unit in charge of putting into context the challenges that faced by women in development (Head 1995; Gabryś & Soroka 2017; Mason 2019; Tiessen 2016, 2019). SWC, the present-day Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) was mandated to co-ordinate and administer development policy processes and programs. Its major role was to make sure that development plans and proposals reflected equality and the policy impacts on women (Brodie & Bakker 2008; Cooper 1997; Morrison 1998; Elgström 2000; Grace 1997). In the early stages of integrating perspectives of equality into CIDA's foreign assistance policies however, there was lack of interest in WID and its equal treatment perspectives amongst CIDA's civil servants. Which made it difficult to convince policy makers to invest into programs intended to address issues of inequality that were embedded in Canada's development policies and programs (Press 2004; Lombardo & Meier 2008; Rathgeber 1980). As a result, challenges such as poor accountability for women's participation in development activities and resistance to gender training courses and activities became inevitable (Press 2004). The early 1980s were characterized by resistance to WID specific programs mostly from high ranking civil servants that controlled the development agendas. They criticized WID project workers for "staking too much on claims of equality and social justice and not enough on women's economic impact" and demanded for more persuasive data on WID justifying the need for change (Morrison 1998: 240). This criticism can partly be blamed on the fact that the WID project workers were ill equipped in terms of gender skills, tools, knowledge and competence which limited their ability to work the male dominated spaces of power (Newman 2012; Stratigaki 2005). As discussed earlier, this type of reaction from the civil servants could have been used as a disguise to cover up institutional (CIDA) active norm resistance; which, links to ignorance, indifference towards new norms and practices (Lombardo &

Mergaert 2013; Baranyi & Powell 2005; Pauly et al. 2009 as cited by Allwood 2013) for fear that WID perspectives were to both challenge and change CIDA's "[...] culture, norms, beliefs, attitudes and values [...]" (Mergaert 2012: 57) and general ways of doing things. When active norm resistance merges with institutional bureaucratic tendencies and unwillingness to change, it can result into formation of change-resistant organizations which makes it difficult for new norms especially those questioning the status quo to penetrate structural shields put up by those benefiting from the old practices (Elgström 2000; Lombardo & Mergaert 2013). Analysis of these gaps is very key to gaining an insight into the potential effects of power relations amongst civil servants on the new FIAP before its implementation.

In efforts to address these policy loopholes and institutional resistance attitudes, from the late 1980s, CIDA extended the Harvard Institute of International Development training on gender and development to civil servants, development agencies and professional employees (Morrison 1998; Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2009; Elgström 2000; Elgström 2000). By the end of the training, the focus of CIDA civil servants had shifted from promoting "women's participation in development to a better understanding of gender inequality—how development paradigms supported unequal treatment of women and men" (Tiessen 2016:192). Thus, the development projects submitted to CIDA for approval had to be assessed based on their gender implications (Morrison 1998). In 1981, CIDA created eight Gender Equality (GE) principles to guide plans and activities aimed at "supporting [...] women in development" (Morrison 1998: 239).

1. Gender equality must be considered as an integral part of all CIDA's policies, programs, and projects
2. Achieving gender equality requires the recognition that every policy, program and project affects women and men differently,
3. Achieving gender equality does not mean that women become the same as men,

4. Women's empowerment is central to achieving gender equality,
5. Promoting the equal participation of women as agents of change in economic, social and political processes is essential to achieving gender equality,
6. Gender equality can only be achieved through partnership between women and men,
7. Achieving gender equality will require specific measures designed to eliminate gender inequalities, and
8. CIDA policies, programs, and projects should contribute to gender equality (SW C 1995).<sup>4</sup>

In the above principles, CIDA emphasized the importance of men's participation in transforming gender equality misconceptions, biased attitudes, and behavior in local communities. Thus, like GAD perspectives, the GE principles were not exclusively about women's concerns but the broader causes of inequality. Through the eight principles, CIDA made clear reference to the fact that gender equality was to be a cross-cutting theme in all its development policies and greater emphasis was placed on the question of how the agency was to ensure that differing views, experiences, interests and needs of social groups shaped the development agendas (Parpart, Rai & Staudt 2003; Lewis 2005; Tiessen 2014,2016). It is also clear from these principles that CIDA substituted the term 'women' for 'gender' as the key concept to broaden the measures aimed at promoting equality in development. However, what I find interesting with the GE guiding principles articulated above, is the fact that there is no considerable explanation for shifting from the prior policy objective of *women's equality* to *gender equality*. In the GE policy plan, CIDA gave neither the description of the gender- specific tools and instruments that the policy makers

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on CIDA and Gender Equality principles visit [http://www.sice.oas.org/Genderandtrade/CIDA\\_GENDER-E\\_Policies.pdf](http://www.sice.oas.org/Genderandtrade/CIDA_GENDER-E_Policies.pdf)

were going to use to tackle the inequalities that were embedded in the policy processes nor an evaluation of the potential impacts of the new approach on social relations.

Canada has been an active participant in the United Nation (UN) programs and in 1981, it became one of the first member countries to ratify and formalize the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which it implemented in 1982 (Roberts 1996; Tiessen 2016).<sup>5</sup> To achieve these development and gender equality inclusive commitments, CIDA, created the GE guiding principles to tackle the inequalities that existed within its development programs. A year later in 1983, a WID Directorate was created to support and guide the creation of equality policy developments. The Directorate consisted of a WID committee which called upon development policy makers to focus on promoting the participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries of development programs (Pratt 1994; Tiessen 2016; Blanchette 2000). In 1984 the agency developed its first WID policy and a five - year action plan (1985/86-1990/91) which consisted of objectives for integrating women into every project CIDA planned and implemented around the world (Rankin & Wilcox 2004; Morrison 1998; Mason 2019; Tiessen 2016). Upon approval of the above gender responsive tools and approaches, Canada under CIDA became a world leader on gender and development issues and was selected to chair the 1985 Nairobi International Women's Conference (UN) which marked the end of women's decade (McGill 2012; Swiss 2012; Canada 2005: 25 as cited by Howell 2005 & Swiss 2017). From this conference, CIDA adopted the Forward - Looking Strategies (FLS) for the advancement of women (SWC 1995, 1999; UN 1985, 2000) which it used to support the UN Development Fund for Women, Women's World Bank and through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International

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<sup>5</sup> CEDAW is also known as an international bill of rights for women was created to ensure that the development policies recognized full social, economic, and cultural advancement of women in development (Roberts 1996)

Trade (DFAIT), CIDA created a Canadian Women's Mission in both the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (Morrison 1998; Sjolander 2005). The skills that CIDA staff acquired from attending the Harvard gender and development courses included; knowledge on detailed studies of gender and development projects and using these skills, the WID unit members were able to successfully have their WID policy framework approved in 1993 (Morrison 1998). Both CIDA and DFAIT civil servants started to focus on integrating equality strategies into their policies and programs. In their commitments, they cited: "we are [...] associated [...] with the promotion of the rights of women and children" (Howell 2005:55). In 1994, a Gender Equality Division which served as the agency's focal point for gender equality was established to address issues of power imbalances in development projects. Its activities included developing mechanisms to mainstream gender concerns and perspectives into CIDA's policy planning and performance assessments as well as participating in conferences and international policy dialogues on gender equality (Brodie & Bakker 2008; Anderson 1996). The focus on power relations led to the 1995 update of the WID policy and the newer version was named WID and Gender Equality policy. It largely emphasized the significance of women empowerment in development and poverty reduction (Blanchette 2000; Roberts 1996). In the same year, GoC through CIDA released a policy on human rights, democracy and good governance in which it recognized the centrality of women's human rights and policy participation to the social, political and economic advancement of local communities (Pratt 1996; Roberts 1996; International Development Agency 2005; Baranyi & Powell 2005). In 1995, Canada adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PfA) which was created at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Roberts 1996). PfA outlined "inequality for women, poverty, education, health care, violence, militarization, economic structures, policies and resources, power and decision - making, mechanisms to promote women's

advancement, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child” (Roberts 1996: 27) as the main gender and development challenges that were required to be addressed by development policies and plans. These challenges and the Beijing conference mandates have been reflected in not only Canada’s gender and development approaches, but also in many global development policy guidelines (Woodford-Berger 2007). Each UN member state was asked to formulate a national plan to advance women’s equality as part of the Beijing Conference and in 1995, as one of the signatories to the PfA, the GoC under CIDA, developed a federal plan for implementing Gender Equality (UN 1996; SWC 1995). The federal plan which was prepared through the collaboration of 24 federal departments and agencies led by SWC was Canada’s statement of commitment towards the goals of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women (SWC 1995). It documented some of the gender equality policy issues that needed to be addressed by Canada both within its own borders and globally. GoC made additional commitment to GBA by endorsing the international *commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development* in 1995, which like the Platform for Action (PfA), obligated UN signatories to implement gender analysis into the state’s policy processes. That same year, Canada’s GBA initiative as framed in the federal plan was approved by cabinet. This officially committed all federal departments and agencies to incorporate gender analysis into their development policies and programs (SWC 1996; DFATD 2013a, 2013b as cited by Tiessen 2016; Baranyi & Powell 2005). By integrating the GBA strategy, CIDA became pioneer in gender equality (Tiessen & Carrier 2015; Tiessen 2016)

CIDA officials on the policy committee thus conducted a gender equality-based policy assessment review and the focus was placed on improving the policy implementation processes (Sjolander 2005; Baranyi & Powell 2005). Conclusions of the review cited that much as the WID strategy targeted women as development beneficiaries, it ignored assessing the gender norms and structures

that limit or prevent their participation – which required that CIDA came up with more practical ways in which it was to promote and achieve gender equality. Thus in 1996, CIDA unveiled GBA as one of the wider strategies to mainstream gender concerns in development programs and projects (SWC 1996)- marking a shift from its *women's state approach*. The federal GE plan and GBA were to be used as a tool by the federal government departments to practice gender equality in foreign assistance policies and programs (Canada 2005: 25 as cited by Howell 2005 & Swiss 2017; SWC 1996; Rankin, Vickers & Field 2001; Burt & Hardman 2010). In preparation to achieve full equality in development, eight objectives informed by the GBA strategy were created to promote gender equality. The specific commitments made in these objectives stated as follows:

Implement gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies; improve women's economic autonomy and well-being; improve women's physical and psychological well-being; reduce violence in society, particularly violence against women and children; promote gender equality in all aspects of Canada's cultural life; incorporate women's perspectives in governance; promote and support global gender equality; and advance gender equality for employees of federal departments and agencies (SWC 1996:4; Grace 1997:584).

In addition to these objectives, SWC published a policy guide entitled *Gender-based Analysis; a Guide for Policy Making* within which GBA was presented as a key component of the success of the GE federal plans. The guide developed eight steps which explained how GBA was to be applied and they included (Grace 1997:585):

1. Identifying, defining, and refining the issue
2. Defining desired/anticipated outcomes
3. Defining the information and consultation inputs
4. Conducting research
5. Developing and analyzing options
6. Making recommendations /decision-seeking
7. Communicating policy
8. Assessing the quality of analysis

Like the gender - impact assessment method and its descriptive approach to policy assessment, SWC's GBA comprised of a list of questions that would be asked at each stage of policy assessment. Lahey (2002:17) noted that although the steps "may look like a checklist, [they are] really more like a framework for analysis that can become extremely detailed as relevant data is incorporated into the analysis". In respect with GBA, SWC was to collaborate with other departments to develop the concepts, methodologies, and sector- specific analytical tools to practice GBA. SWC was to also promote dialogue through policy roundtable discussions, workshops with both government and non - government agents and the focus was to be placed on understanding the core principles of practicing GBA and revising ways of tackling difficult conceptual issues in this strategy (Gillies 1997; Grace 1997; International Development Agency 2005). SWC, established a GBA directorate and appointed a director of GBA in 1999. Tiessen describes CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality (GE) as a historical moment in Canadian aid that saw gender analyses for the first time being officially considered "an integral part of all CIDA policies, programs, and projects" (2016:192). The role of the director was to encourage and assist other federal departments and agencies to set up their own processes to ensure that GBA was incorporated into their development activities (Lahey 2002). The director also chaired an interdepartmental committee on GBA. The interdepartmental committee was a focal point for coordination, facilitation, and support of GBA activities across all departments.

The federal plan and the PfA had a five-year implementation time frame and it expired in 2000 after which, Canada participated in a special session convened by the UN General Assembly in New York entitled *Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century* (UN 2000). The purpose of this session was to review and assess the PfA implementation progress and to allow UN member states to examine how much had been

achieved in the five years since Beijing (SWC 2000). After the review, governments acknowledged that the goals and commitments made in the PfA had not been fully implemented and achieved (SWC 2000; UN 2000). This was attributed to the lack of consistent leadership in senior management, coherence and consistency in prioritizing gender equality across government departments which weakened the commitments that had been made to translate gender equality into practice (Tiessen 2007, 2016, 2019). Governments of UN member states then agreed to accelerate the implementation of the PfA by holding policy engagements at local, national, regional and international levels to secure meaningful commitments to the realization of gender equality-in 2000 GoC led by SWC, created the Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) strategy which was built to help accelerate the engendering of development policies and programs (SWC 2000). The strategy was to address the persistent gender and development policy implementation imbalances that existed in CIDA's policy approaches. AGE included training on the GBA-strategy and the motive was to demonstrate how the strategy could be introduced into policy practice and the potential it had to contribute effective and better policy outcomes (SWC 2000). In the early 2000s however, there was a shift in the priorities of Canada's assistance policies from gender equality in development to peace and security as discussed in next section.

### **3:2 Shift from GE to peace and security**

The integration of gender equality into CIDA's development processes had a slow start and gained momentum over the years-shifting from equal treatment to mainstreaming gender concerns in policy processes. The progression in gender and development policy commitments made CIDA an "important player on the world stage in identifying the significance of gender relations to the success of development project" (Tiessen 2016:191).

The country's development assistance policies have however never been stable in terms of approaches, thus the priorities in foreign aid have shifted over the years and despite the above success in adopting and committing to equality in development, by early 2000s, both CIDA and DFAIT's priorities in foreign assistance had greatly shifted towards peace and security (Black & Tiessen 2007). In order to include the perspectives and security concerns of Canadians, in 2003, UN (2000) Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 as the "was written into the human security agenda" whose strengths and successes depended on the "inclusion of women, [...] their full and equal participation in [...] peace building, policy formulation and implementation"(Sjolander 2005:27) by CIDA. In 2003, the agency also launched the Gender Equality and Humanitarian Assistance Guide to promote women's full and active participation in the peace and security processes (Baranyi & Powell 2005). During the presentation of the 2004 report on UN (2000) SCR 1325 to the UN Secretary General, GoC presented Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC), CIDA, Department of National Defense (DND), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) as the departments through which it was going to support, implement and fulfill the peace and security resolutions (Canada 2004 as cited by Sjolander 2005).

In honor of its commitment to these statements, CIDA in 2000 allocated 0.25 percent of its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the global peace and security project which was within the Foreign Affairs department (Tiessen 2016:163). The global peace and security fund units channeled and delivered peace and security ODA to Canada's International Assistance Envelope and they were also in charge of aid flow to donor recipient countries (IAE) (Brown 2012). Using the allocated funds, DFAIT created the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) in 2005 to ensure that the security operations were reflective of the policy commitments that had been

made by the GoC. Canada also used its membership on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to prosecute gender-based crimes (DFAIT 2004 as cited by Sjolander 2005). In efforts to keep SCR 1325 objectives on track, Canada chaired the “Working Group of the United Nations (UN) Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (“C-34”)”, the New York “Friends of Women, Peace and Security” (Tiessen & Carrier 2015:97). CIDA’s new security policy was established to integrate defense policies into general foreign assistance policies (Dewitt 1995). Unlike in the prior GE policy plans in which CIDA commitments aimed at integrating GE in all policies, programs and projects as discussed earlier, in the 2005 International Policy Statements (IPS) (Tiessen 2016:163), the policy commitments on the new security resolutions had no specific reference on how gender equality was going to be reflected in the defense motivated goals (Rathgeber 2005; Baranyi & Powell 2005). One of the major achievements for CIDA’s GE negotiators might have come in 2005 when OECD declared Canada a global leader on addressing gender (in)equality and development issues (OECD 2007 as cited by Tiessen 2016). However, this leadership recognition became questionable following the financial changes which were characterized by cuts on gender equality programs funding and advocacy work between 2006 and 2010 (Tiessen & Carrier 2015) and the closure of “12 out of 16 regional offices” for SWC (Brennan 2010 as cited by Tiessen & Krystel 2015:97). In 2009, while still under the leadership of the Harper Conservative government, CIDA made another significant shift by replacing the term *gender equality* with *equality between women and men* (Tiessen & Carrier 2015). At first glance, these two terms may seem to mean the same thing, and so the shift from gender equality to equality between women and men may appear insignificant (Hankivsky 2012; Tiessen & Carrier 2015) but in this section, I examine the key differences between these two concepts and why the shift might have contributed to contradictions

and ineffective practice of gender equality and I briefly discuss the impact this might have had on the Muskoka Initiative.

### **3:3 Gender equality and equality between women and men in CIDA**

Equality between women and men can be defined as “promoting the equal participation of women and men in making decisions; supporting women and girls so that they can fully exercise their rights; and reducing the gap between women’s and men’s access to and control of resources and the benefits of development”(DFATD 2013 as cited Tiessen & Carrier 2015:96). In comparison, gender equality implies society having bias free acknowledgement of both the similarities and the differences amongst social groups irrespective of their gender (CIDA 1999 as cited by Tiessen & Carrier 2015). What makes these two concepts different is the fact with *equality between women and men*, as with equal treatment approach, there is perceived *sameness* and the goal is to ensure that both sexes receive same treatment. While in *gender equality*, the concept acknowledges the fact that men and women may share similarities, but they are also different (Hankivsky 2012). Gender equality is concerned not only with equality in treatment, as is the case with *equality between women and men*, but also with equality in outcomes regardless of one’s gender identity (Brodie & Bakker 2008). Hence, when the Harper government replaced gender equality with equality between women and men, and limited the use of the term *gender equality* in the Muskoka Initiative projects, it caused criticism from advocates for transgender rights in whose view gender equality was more inclusive as it recognized diverse social and sexual identities beyond man and woman (Brodie & Bakker 2008; Collins 2009; Tiessen 2015). To the critics, the word replacement was damaging to the advancement of equality in development processes as it could easily be used to silence feminists, and to further erase gender equality from the Canada’s official foreign policies

(Brodie & Bakker 2008; Collins 2009). In this section, I briefly analyze how this shift influenced the perspectives of Canada's foreign policy commentators on the Muskoka Initiative. I am certainly aware that CIDA had many development projects that aimed to achieve equality in development. However, examining how all of them practiced equality in development is beyond the scope of this thesis.

### **3:4 Muskoka Initiative**

The Muskoka Initiative – or the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Initiative was announced at the 2010 G8 meeting and the focus of the initiative was placed on advancing some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) thus, the Initiative targets were comprised of MDG no.4 (reduce child mortality); no.5 (improve maternal health); no. 1 (on nutrition) no.6 (on HIV/AIDs and malaria). Notably, MDG no.3 (promote gender equality and empower women) was excluded (Tiessen 2015,2016; Carrier & Tiessen 2013; Huish & Spiegel 2012). Canada led other G8 member countries by committing CDN \$1.1 billion towards addressing maternal health issues (Proulx, Ruckert & Labonté 2017:40). The initiative's projects aimed at improving access to health services, strengthening national health services, and bridging the gaps in the health service provision systems and the focus was placed around the three priority areas of nutrition, health systems, strengthening and reducing the burden of disease for mothers and children (Black 2011; Brown & Olender 2013; Huish & Spiegel 2012; Carrier & Tiessen 2013; Tiessen 2015,2016).

The federal government used the CDN \$1.1 billion to support the Micronutrient Initiative (\$75 million over 5 years), which included the GAVI Alliance (\$50 million over 5 years) - focused on distributing vaccines against pneumonia and diarrheal, Health 4 (H4) (\$50 million), and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (\$540 million over 3 years) (Tiessen 2015:

79). These initiatives were created to improve access to nutritious food and nutrient supplements thus, they focused on delivering essential vitamins and mineral supplements to women and children so as to reduce the burden of killer diseases on mothers and children. Using its G8 membership and the MNCH initiative as platforms, the GoC encouraged the international development agencies to take maternal health problems seriously by rallying support and funding for maternal health goals (Tiessen 2015,2016; Carrier & Tiessen 2013).

In international development, addressing maternal health is central to improving the lives of women, communities and has the potential to address gender inequality. Thus, by choosing to focus on child and maternal health, and adopting nutrition and integrated health interventions as a new strategy for addressing development concerns, Harper's conservative government had both won international praise and had held great promise to achieve the implementation of gender equality strategies (Webster 2010; Tiessen 2015; Carrier & Tiessen 2013). However, this did not last long as critical analysts shortly realized that in most of the objectives in the documents on the Muskoka projects women were categorized as mothers-reducing their diverse experiences and health problems to heterosexual normativity and reproductive motherhood roles (Auld & MacDonald 2010; Grosz & Grosz 1994; Carrier & Tiessen 2013). That is, the choice of word mother implicated that the Muskoka Initiative was created to only benefit woman who conformed to the gendered expectation of motherhood and discriminated against childless, lesbians, intersex or transsexual women who do not conform to this gender expectation (Webster 2010; Tiessen 2015; Carrier & Tiessen 2013, 2015; Auld & MacDonald 2010). By replacing gender equality with equality between women and men and excluding GE perspectives, the Harper government did not take gender (in)equality concerns to be relevant to maternal health and much as the government had adopted a comprehensive approach that focused on strengthening health systems, its initiative

ignored the various forms of inequality. Thus, making it difficult for CIDA officials to identify and address gender concerns such as the absence of rights and options in programs designed to provide and improve maternal and child health care, and other social determinants of health (including gender equality, education, work opportunities and family planning) that lead to maternal and child mortality (Huish & Spiegel 2012; Carrier & Tiessen 2013; Tiessen 2015,2016). Omitting GE overshadowed the importance of the Muskoka Initiative in addressing gender issues and human rights of women and girls. In such a way that without analyzing the forms of gender (in) equality, the Muskoka projects failed to penetrate the traditional gendered societal norms that prevent women from accessing health services even when they are available (Carrier & Tiessen 2013,2015; Tiessen 2015; Richey 2001; Stratigaki 2005).

The shift from gender equality to equality between women and men is described by gender and development policy scholars for example Stratigaki (2005), as one of the many passive ways through which institutional heads and civil servants resist the policy changes that often challenge the existing power dynamics. The more active forms of resistance (disguised as changes) in the Harper era included CIDA demanding that NGOs and advocacy groups used particular phrases in regards to gender and development, CIDA deducting the economic funding for gender equality programs, and closing SWC offices (Richey 2001; Carrier & Tiessen 2013; Tiessen 2015). As discussed earlier in chapter two, changes as these can greatly hinder meaningful assessment of the impacts of development programs on gender and the transformative potential of gender and development approaches (Pauly et al 2009 as cited by Lombardo & Mergaert 2013). Institutional resistance can take the form of small policy changes – expressing ideas that may be used by conservative policy makers to distance themselves from the goal of promoting GE or, it can take the form of actual policy actions that go against that goal (Stratigaki 2005). Thus, any type of

resistance (passive or active) to gender initiatives-more so at institutional levels, needs to be taken seriously and challenged by not only by gender activists but all parties interested in the translation of gender and development policy practice from integrationist theories to transformative practices (Richey 2001; Stratigaki 2005).

Globally, Canada's Gender Equality (GE) leadership prestige started to fade when the country's global rank on gender equality performance declined from fourteenth in 2006 to twentieth position in 2013. Placing Canada behind "Cuba, Sri Lanka, Lesotho and South Africa in gendered issues such as [...] political empowerment, health and survival, and wage equality" (World Economic Forum 2013 as cited by Tiessen & Carrier 2015:97). In 2010, Canada lost to Portugal in a UN Security Council (UNSC) election and withdrew its application to seat on the UNSC for 10 years (Keating 2013). Nonetheless, in 2011, "Canada developed its first Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security" (GAC 2017:58). After 47 years of existence, in 2015, CIDA was officially renamed Global Affairs Canada (GAC) by current liberal government-elected in October 2015 (Tiessen 2015; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). By the end of its existence, CIDA had issued various gender and development strategies and tools such as the GBA, GBA/+ strategy and the GE federal plan to guide Canada's foreign assistance policies and programs (Tiessen 2015,2016; SWC 1993, 1995, 1999). In Tiessen's remarks on Canada's gender and development approaches, what is made explicit is the fact that during an almost decade-long conservative rule under Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006-2015), there were steps that significantly impacted its CIDA's work on gender and development processes- including:

1. Creation new policy frames and aid targets
2. The merger of the former CIDA with DFAIT

3. Replacing gender equality with equality between men and women
4. The erasure of the term “gender equality” from official policies and government speeches
5. The use of Muskoka Initiative - MNCH to target mothers as “victims” in gender inequality (Tiessen 2016, 2019).

### **3:5 Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)**

In general, Canada’s theoretical approaches to gender equality and development have evolved during the past three decades from equal pay and equal treatment in the workplace, to GBA/+ and feminism-which shows an institutional commitment to inject and mainstream systematic gender concerns in development processes (Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000). My purpose however is less associated with the distinctive stages of policy evolutions and has more to do with the practical principles that target to make these evolutions in approach translate into transformative policy practices in development and in this section I do particularly look GAC’s transformative policy themes vs its policy focus and targets. In this section therefore, I analyze GAC’s new FIAP - launched in 2017 and although its implementation is still in early stages, I comprehensively explore how the agency officially presents its new feminist approach. My intention is to examine the extent to which FIAP objectives reflect its transformative: gender equality, inclusivity, feminism, and intersectionality strategies. The overall objective is to highlight those areas that I find to: be contradictory to the principles and methods of feminist and intersectional policy practice; lack clarity on how GAC will use this feminist approach to bring about transformation in Canada’s foreign assistance policy practice. I am interested in how particular views and ideas in FIAP’s six objectives are used to explain what a transformative feminist policy is and how that compares to how the history of transformative activism mandates the policy to be applied. In this section therefore, I employ the gender impact assessment method

to assess whether the impact FIAP objectives are having on gendered relations and inequality aligns with the transformative feminist vision of gender equality. This method gives insights into conceptually unintended policy gaps which often result from policy makers failing to weigh their implementation plans against how the earlier teachings require perspectives such as empowerment and gender mainstreaming to be applied (Batliwala 1993, 1994, 1997, 2007; Kabeer 1999; Rees 2000, 2002; Mergaert 2012). Canada has the financial and human resource capacity to effectively shape and implement GE programs-which is why discussions on the practical concerns that may limit its reach in the practice of the new transformative feminist policy approach matters.

In her introductory remarks on FIAP, the Minister of International Development, Marie-Claude Bibeau, was explicit in stating that a feminist approach to development is “one that takes into account all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, place of birth, color, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability or migrant or refugee status” (GAC 2017: ii). According to GAC, 15,000 people in 65 countries participated in the process of developing FIAP, including Canadian civil society (2017:ii) and through Bibeau, the federal government promised to commit up to CDN \$300 million to blended financial partnerships-Canada intends to form with other donor countries to fund gender equality programs-aimed at closing gender gaps, reducing poverty and eliminating barriers to equality (GAC 2017:66). Thus, with such a wide coverage and strategic partnership plan, if GAC is to use the new FIAP to re-engage internationally in a meaningful way to meet inequality challenges in development, policy analysts ought to investigate and make ensure that the translation of the FIAP strategies from theory into practice is relevant and effective. By assessing how they can enable GAC gain from GBA/+, intersectional and feminist approaches that are informing FIAP’s transformative agendas.

GAC in 2017 approved the FIAP with an intersectional policy approach to equality – strategically prioritizing (in)equality concerns such as discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, place of birth, color, religion, language, age, migrant or refugee status in all development objectives (GAC 2017). The primary objective of the FIAP is to contribute to global efforts by supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aim to eradicate poverty by 2030. The policy focus is placed on using GE and the empowerment of women and girls as both contextual and crosscutting policy perspectives in development objectives. Contextual in a sense that the two perspectives will guide the FIAP’s response to women and girls - specific sexual and reproductive health problems as well as child, early and forceful marriage. According to Bibeau, “a crosscutting approach to gender equality means that all [...] international assistance initiatives, across all action areas, should be developed and implemented in ways that improve gender equality and empower women and girls”(GAC 2017:ii). To achieve this, GAC calls for 95% of Canada’s international assistance for a period of five years to be focused on GE and the empowerment of women and girls, 15% to fund the GE activities and 80% to fund the objectives of the initiatives that integrate GE (GAC 2017:9,71). In other words, GE and the empowerment of women and girls are the core action areas that GAC seeks to integrate across all development processes and objectives. By treating GE as a “cross-cutting theme” and a “core action area”(Brown & Swiss 2017: 118) in FIAP, GAC’s gender and development programs are perceived as more feminist which marks a significant perspective shift from more conservative WID (mainly associated with CIDA) to progressive GAD approaches.

Following the shift in perspective, we cannot ignore the fact that GAC’s FIAP goals are exposed to careful assessments by not only gender and development scholars, but also feminist theorists - with a growing concern by the way contemporary development is translating feminist and

intersectional core principles into practice (Hankivsky & Mussell 2018; Nash 2008; Mason 2019). FIAP is made of six gender and development priorities which include gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, human dignity; growth that works for everyone; environmental and climate action; inclusive governance-informed by a feminist framework and guided by three major themes intersectionality, inclusiveness and gender equality (GAC 2017). In the case of FIAP, the intersectionality framework addresses feminist concerns about essentialism by capturing multiple positionalities, placing an explicit focus on differences among social groups - assessing how social inequality results from multiple, interacting systems of power and privilege (Davis 2008). This framework is key in understanding the unique experiences of marginalized groups living at the intersection of patriarchy, racialization, colonialism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and/or other systems of oppression and has been cited by (McCall 2005; Nash 2008; Cho et al 2013) as the most important intervention in racist movements and feminist theories. It serves to push policymakers into undertaking practices that denaturalize the use of grand narratives to justify “universal subject of reason” - it challenges systems that represent women and their diverse experiences as a single group (Dhamoon 2011: 231). It is this aspect of intersectionality that can add a richness to FIAP’s feminist transformative potential as it provides policy makers the opportunity to better comprehend the multiplicity of inequality experiences amongst the populations-GAC aims to serve as opposed to essentializing those groups along one category of difference (Hancock 2007; Hankivsky & Mussell 2018). In the context of using a feminist approach to achieve policy transformation and sustainable gender equality, using an intersectional approach enhances GAC’s capacity to determine if the priority area of empowering those that are disempowered and vulnerable is being fulfilled in a way that will truly empower them enough to continue challenging with or

without external intervention the structures and practices that discriminate, stigmatize and disempower them (Syme et al 2015; Hunting, Grace & Hankivsky 2015).

As I stated earlier, the aim of this thesis is to explore how GAC uses intersectionality to realize the transformative potential of its feminist vision. That said, many opportunities remain for Canadian scholars to identify the challenges in adopting an intersectional approach that would need to be addressed to truly integrate intersectionality. This will offer new ways in which intersectionality can be operationalized in Canadian policy processes.

### **3:5:1 Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls**

GAC has allocated CDN \$150m for a period of 5 years to fund advocacy and awareness projects that are pushing for changes in discriminatory social beliefs and practices such as female genital (GAC 2017:6).

### **3:5:2 Human Dignity (health and nutrition, education humanitarian action)**

Health and nutrition: CDN \$650 million over a period of 3 years to support family planning, comprehensive sexuality education, post abortion care, prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, STDs and STIs. CDN \$ 3.5 billion in programs that strengthen health and data system (GAC 2017:25-26). In regards to education, CDN \$3.8 billion was raised in 2018 G7 meetings to fund advocacy efforts intended to help women and girls, marginalized youths get trained in technical and vocational skills that they need to find better-paying work (Tiessen 2019:3)

### **3:5:3 Growth that Works for Everyone**

Inclusive growth is defined as growth that works for everyone (SDG 8; Decent Work and Economic Growth) and to promote women's full participation and their access to and control over resources,

GAC will use international gatherings and platforms to rally support for women's economic advancement (GAC 2017:35)

### **3:5:4 Environmental and Climate Action**

GAC is allocating CDN \$2.65b to facilitate the implementation of low-carbon economy and renewable energy sector to improve both resilience of subsistence farm crops and access to water and natural resources - to enable women and girls adapt better with the impacts of climate change on their domestic needs and responsibilities such as water, food and firewood supply in a household (GAC 2017:44).

### **3:5:5 Inclusive Governance**

To facilitate a politically conducive environment for all in governance especially in the global south, GAC has allocated CDN \$150m to support women's safe and active participation in politics and human rights (GAC 2017:49). In 2018, Bibeau announced that CDN \$8.3 million was to be spent on Haiti's Women's Voice and Leadership Initiative (Tiessen 2019:3)

### **3:5:6 Peace and Security**

As part of GAC's National Action Plan, the focus here is on having more women participate in development processes, activities that promote peace and security in conflict – affected states - to bring about post-conflict state-building and long term interventions to address the root causes of instability. The focus on women is based on two convictions: one, “women's participation in the peacebuilding process increases by 35 percent the probability that a peace agreement will last for at least 15 years” and two, that their input can lead to more comprehensive solutions that are reflective of the experiences and needs of the communities affected by conflicts (GAC 2017:61).

Adopting transformative strategies such as GBA/+, gender equality and intersectionality to implement the above action areas represents major steps towards achieving transformation and effectiveness in Canada's gender and development policy and practice. GAC might expect the FIAP to be a prime candidate for bringing about the targeted policy transformations, however, we should equally be concerned about the ways in which the policy focus is likely to make FIAP's feminist vision fall short in attending to the specifics of broader unequal social and economic realities (Elgström 2000; Hankivsky 2005, 2012; Mason 2019; Tiessen 2016, 2019). Thus, in this section, I argue that while GAC has put innovative GE policies and guidelines in place, the risk of falling short in terms of actual implementation is still raising concerns. The argument is based on my critical analysis of where the agency has placed emphasis in the core action areas visa vis how GAC is to go about the question of how it's focus on women and girls will translate the transformative themes of: GE; inclusiveness; and intersectionality theory into practice (Swiss 2018; Tiessen 2019; Nacyte 2018; Mason 2019). There are four main problems from my critical gender impact assessment of Canada's approaches to GE are: 1. Integrationist; 2. Inexplicit; 3. Incompressive; and 4. Essentialist. This section, therefore, further illustrates how FIAP is still affected by these problems and their implication on its transformative feminist agendas

#### “Women and Girls”

Under each heading of all FIAP's priority areas, GAC (2017) inserts “women and girls”- the agency overly emphasizes the words “women and girls”-stating: “we must ensure that women and girls are empowered”(ii);[...] “I will speak up for the poorest and most vulnerable, especially women and girls”(iii);[...]“women and girls can change the world”(2); “barriers to success for women and girls”(3); “gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”;

“unique needs of women and girls”(9) and goes on in all the policy briefings - which rather frames its agendas in the old women-in-development approach. The focus of a feminist approach should be much more than focusing exclusively on women and girls; rather, it should target the root causes of poverty that can affect everyone. By contrast, a policy with ‘feminist’ in the title, the words ‘feminist’ or ‘feminism’ which appears only once are rarely implicated. On the other hand, the word “feminist” appears 34 times but as repeated references to FIAP title and not as actual discussions of feminist principles. By using women and girls instead of “feminist,” GAC’s feminist vision “is representing a narrow approach [...] without comprehensively examining the structural factors that contribute to women’s disadvantaged social status” (Grace 1997:586). Not surprising therefore, the objectives lack satisfactory discussions of how the transformative vision of feminism is to roll out.

Although, in her introductory remarks on FIAP, Bibeau acknowledges that a feminist approach is not about focusing on women and girls and hints that targeting root causes of poverty is the most effective way for development, the objectives are not clearly reflecting such ideas in comprehensive ways. The policy action strategy simply aims to better enable women and girls fit-into existing agendas and systems -making it integrationist-in a sense that, in FIAP action area 3, using the positive discrimination approach, GAC aims to fund local women-led agribusiness cooperatives and associations to improve women’s access to agribusiness loans. It is clear the agency’s focus is placed on individual disadvantaged economic positions of women rather than the broader structures, that are keeping them in these positions. I am particularly concerned that GAC does not show how it plans to respond in case the above approach leads to toxic gender relations in form of domestic violence over land use and ownership-given land is a major asset in agriculture and largely controlled by men. These social and gender “relations, including societal

expectations, attitudes and practices, [...] have a profound effect on women's differential access to socio-economic resources" (Grace 1997:586). Giving economic handouts to women is not treating the actual illness - patriarchy and gender-based discrimination instead, a "more comprehensive analysis of [...] the barriers they confront when entering the wage-labor market [...] would have provided a much needed" transformative tool to gender analysis ( Grace 1970:589). In fact, the act of helping women and girls displaces the focus on what keeps them economically vulnerable and gives the implication that GAC's understanding of feminism centers around making women and girls fit into existing economic agendas, and not aiming to change the systemic forms of inequalities and the root causes of poverty that affect women's social, economic and political security. By referencing to women and girls as a category of policy interest, GAC faces the risk of missing out on transforming the structures that place them in needy and disadvantaged positions in the first place.

### Intersectionality

When laying its intersectionality vision in FIAP, GAC (2017) states maintains that: "[...] others face social and/or economic marginalization, including on the basis of their sex, race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, or migrant or refugee status"(2). On the positive side, by framing gender equality policy to include all people, GAC has introduced a new policy direction – that is extending beyond equal treatment legislation and positive actions. It however very briefly mentions that "inequalities exist along intersectional lines" (8) and no discussions of the interconnected nature of oppressions inherent in inequality and patriarchy- which would otherwise help to avoid instances where "intersections of identity are privileged over the intersections of systems that create the conditions in which identity-based discrimination is made possible" (Mason 2019:8).

The pitfall is that GAC neglects the intersectional “ways to identify and rectify the multiple forms of structural discrimination that marginalized groups confront, such as the unchallenged symbols, habits, norms, discourses, institutional rules, and the consequences of following the rules” (Grace 1997:586) yet, challenging complex structures of inequality is core to the practice of the intersectional framework. In any transformative practice, “not only the intersections need to be examined, but also across the domains of power”-which are often in the form of structural (looking at how an institution is structured), interpersonal (how people relate to each other and the disadvantages and advantages experienced in social interactions), disciplinary (how rules are applied differently) and cultural (dominant ideas) (Hills Collins & Bilge 2016:27). In a feminist practice, the power dynamics between women and men, boys and girls must be examined and transformed, along with the intersecting oppressions that contribute to such dynamics-with this lack of clear description of the intersecting domains of power, it is unlikely that GAC recognizes that achieving gender equality and justice requires examining the relationships between women and men in interconnected ways and how that also intersects with other forms of oppression such as class, race, cultural norms, sexual orientation, religion, capitalism, and conflict. Despite stating that Canada is committed to providing international assistance that is “transformative and activist” where “unequal power relations, systemic discrimination and harmful norms and practices will be challenged as a broad range of stakeholders – including men and boys – are engaged” (GAC 2017:11). GAC (2017) remains inexplicit about what this exactly means in an intersectional analysis – it only briefly asserts that they must challenge “the traditions and customs that support and maintain gender inequalities” (10). Plus, there is very little description of how the new strategy is likely to affect the existing gender relations such as traditional gender roles in relation to how they connect to systematic causes of inequalities. For example, in core

action area no.4, GAC focuses on meeting women’s practical needs but does not establish any descriptive stages for assessing how the traditional gender relations have made women’s way of life more vulnerable to climate change. Without transforming the gender-biased structures and relations, the FIAP policy becomes more or less an equal treatment approach to Canada’s foreign assistance –with “limited concern for, or ability to address, either the structural challenges that perpetuate gender inequality, or the interpersonal power dynamics that foster uneven development gains for diverse groups of people” (Tiessen 2019:6).

While sexual diversity and inclusiveness are central to FIAP, in goal no.5, there is no mention of the role of men and LGBTQ+ people as intimate partners, colleagues and constituencies (Ogundipe 1987; Agocs 1997) in supporting women’s political advancements instead, the agency stresses that empowering women and girls “sends a clear message that equality is for everyone” (GAC 2017:2) which leaves room for different interpretations of what exactly it means and who is to receive that *clear message* thus, “gender equality becomes everybody’s – and nobody’s – responsibility” (Mazey 2002: 228) which Lewis (2006:125) and Rowan-Campbell (1999:21) refer to as making “[...] everyone accountable and no one [...] accountable [...]”. Put simply, a “fixation with women’s rights cannot be a magic bullet”- and this lack of “explicit inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons, engaging men, is instrumentalizing women’s rights”(Mason 2019:11)-the chances that the empowering women and girls, is equality for everyone strategy will bring about change are very slim. Furthermore, by assuming that empowering women and men, is giving everyone equality, GAC is using an intersectional approach as an additive to give one identity (women and girls) primacy and others (boys men and LGBTQ+) are added in for consideration. Thus, by attaching excessive significance to women and girls, narrow conceptions of the individual are maintained at the expense of using strategic conceptions as an opportunity to better comprehend the multiplicity

of inequality experiences hidden within gender hierarchies -which leaves the transformative potential of this policy questionable. Thus while the adoption of intersectionality marks a step forward for GAC's feminist vision, the strategy might not be all that impactful in practice because its ability to interpret and challenge the not easily identifiable hierarchal systems of oppression, marginalization and exclusion based on sexuality has been flattened to relatively easy measurements of policy progress- making an intersectional approach to gender equality less likely to contribute to policy transformation (Tiessen 2019; Nacyte 2018; Mason 2019; 2019).

### Gender equality and feminism

GAC (2017) stresses that: "our feminist approach is based on the conviction that all people should enjoy the same fundamental human rights and be given the same opportunities to succeed" (8). The agency however uses "feminism" and "gender equality" concepts interchangeably and by interpreting feminism as gender equality and empowerment, GAC not only dilutes the transformational core principles of feminism such as political mobilization and critical awareness but also portrays the original intents of feminist activism as vague and elusive goals. If the agency retains such portrayals of gender equality without independently "tackling the accumulated inequalities between the sexes and reinforcing gender specific policies" (Stratigaki 2005:169), I have to agree with Grace (1997: 584) - GAC is "sending mixed messages to policy developers about how to incorporate into policy development measures that attend to women's specific social and economic realities". This results from the fact that fusing gender equality with feminism "has far-reaching consequences not only for what it conveys but for what it does not convey" (Grace 1997:583). Unfortunately, this underestimates the long-term and deeper input required to challenge and transform structural inequality as the mix up makes it easy for every development project to be turned into gender regardless of its importance in the

field of gender and development-leading to gender washing especially by project managers whose agendas risk not being funded (Mason 2013). In my earlier arguments, I state that gender is an open concept which has led to a broader understanding among policy practitioners of how the link between gender relations and women's systemic discrimination affects the success of development goals. Yes, I do stand by that judgement because the concept of gender has a transformative potential and can bring about change especially if applied alongside: feminist transformative principles; gender impact assessment and intersectional tools. In practice however, turning feminist principles into gender equality can be a process in which the "original political edge of feminism" is lost (Kabeer 1999: 436). The policy shifts in gender perspectives and strategies for example from women equality to gender equality or gender equality to equality between women and men, can be problematic if not carefully navigated. In such a way that without substantial explanation, deep analysis, engagements and connectivity to the older practices, using women's equality, gender equality interchangeably with feminism can lead to: gender washing; policy misinterpretations; contradictions; confusion-not to mention, it makes it easy for conservative institutions to justify their resistance to policy change. I want to clearly state that the problem is not in the shift from one strategy or approach to the other but in the way that shift is done (Allwood 1997, 2013; Cornwall & Rivas 2015; Stratigaki 2005).

Furthermore, failing to give a clear definition of feminism in FIAP is detrimental to this policy in such a way that there are many types of feminist approaches to equality in development for example; an instrumentalist feminist approach – "generally concerned with ensuring women's greater participation in political and economic processes" and mainly applied with the positive discrimination strategy to ensure that those occupying disadvantaged social positions are not overlooked in development and policy programming (Tiessen 2019:7). The focus of this

approach, like in addressing gender practical needs, is mainly placed on easy-to-attain measures that do not alter the gendered traditional roles, power relations and structures that prevent marginalized groups from benefiting and participating in broader societal, political and economic processes (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1989; Pickup 2001; Gurr et al. 1996). For that reason, if this approach to feminism is applied in any feminist transformative agendas aiming to: bring about equality; challenge masculinities; cultural norms and power relations that marginalize others on basis of their gender, race, color and other identity differences, it narrows the possibilities of substantively analyzing women's experiences – henceforth, the impact and reach of the feminist agendas will be limited to easy measurements of progress and not equality outcome. Rather, women's lives must “be conceptualized and analyzed in conjunction with social systems of power and dependence that are the products of the particular way society is structured” (Grace 1997:586). A clear definition in feminist approaches plays a big role in enabling policy makers create the right tools and target-specific-transformative agendas that can transform systems and structures of inequality.

GAC (2017) rightly describes a feminist approach as one that “does not limit the focus [...]to women and girls; rather, it is the most effective way to fight the root causes of poverty that can affect everyone: inequality and exclusion” (vii) and does acknowledge that “more strategic interventions are required to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls[...]” (58). The agency adds that it will prioritize efforts: “that have the greatest potential to close gender gaps, eliminate barriers to gender equality [...] (8)”. “To better support gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in developing countries” (19) [...]“Canada will[...]support the development of gender-responsive curricula in schools”(17); [...]“advocate for the importance of more gender-responsive nutrition policies”(25);“Gender-responsive

humanitarian action”(28); “[...]work in support of greater gender equality”(52). Notably, in all these statements the agency refers more to the importance of involving as many women and girls as possible than to the feminist core element of transforming existing public policies and structures. This treats feminism as an additive to the gender equality vision which undermines and places FIAP’s feminist transformative potential into empty rhetoric political ideologies “that leave the prevailing and unequal power relations intact” (Mukhopadhyay 2014: 100). Neither does the agency explain the root causes of inequality nor what is meant by inequality and exclusion thus, failing to acknowledge what Mason cites in his interviews on intersectionality: “It isn’t the identity that causes the discrimination; it is the structures in place” (2019:6).

#### “Vulnerability” and “Empowerment”

In core action area no.2, combining dignity and education is a positive sign – reflecting an approach that looks at different dimensions of empowerment in a more holistic way. In the policy document (GAC 2017), Bibeau states: Above all we must ensure that “women and girls are empowered to reach their full potential so they can[...]benefit families as well as the economic growth of their communities and countries”(ii); Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs states: “We know that empowering women, overseas and here at home, makes families and countries more prosperous” (i). The ministers “[...] believe that empowering women and girls is the best way to achieve positive economic and social outcomes” (8). GAC goes onto make similar statements in most of the core action areas policy. On the surface, taking such intentions for a feminist approach to international assistance seems well meaning and compelling - unfortunately, on a deeper level, there is a problem with these justifications. One of them being the lack of understanding that subjectivity is structured by language (we, I, us, them). This argument is based on the fact that GAC has statements like: “this means *giving* women more

opportunities to succeed [...] empowering women to be full participants[...]" (35); "It is especially important [...] that women and girls be *given* an active role..." (44). This raises power and subjectivity related question: who gives who; how; why and in what capacity? By repeatedly referring to vulnerability as an entry point into "empowering" women and girls, GAC constructs unequal relations of power between Canada and the vulnerable other. To further elaborate on its empowerment strategy, the agency refers to the potential for women and girls to be "powerful agents of change" (29), it is laudable that Canada recognizes women's agency. However, without expressing any interest in understanding and contextualizing what exactly women and girls wish to change about their lives the agency's agendas paint a picture-where Canada is giving power to the vulnerable othered women and girls of the world, as opposed to being a development partner-working with women and girls elsewhere to transform oppressive structures and systems in their societies. Bibeau states: "after a year of consultations involving more than 15,000 people in 65 countries, I am proud to present Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy" (ii). It is still vague on the question of: who are the 15,000 people in terms of differing gender identities and discriminative experiences? The minister does little to improve readers' understanding of why and how the agency intends to implement differing experiences and perspectives that may not be embodied in "Canadian values" (70). The consequence of excluding "storying' lived experiences" (Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015:233) is that "the voice of authority is [...] from one point of view" - that of GAC (Grace1997:590). Intersectionality theorists (Dhamoon 2011; Hills Collins & Bilge 2016) argue that the use of language in policy practice is just as important as looking at how policy and program decisions may impact effects of power. Thus, phrases such as: "*We know* that empowering women, overseas and here at home, makes families and countries more prosperous" (i) do present GAC's failure to recognize that: in order

to foster women empowerment, it is “crucial for them to know the situations and circumstances of women's lives: to know them not just in their surface manifestations, but in their deeper implications and effects” (Grace 1997:588). In this context therefore, GAC is reducing women into a single (vulnerable) category- reducing women of the global south into victims in need of the Western savior while neglecting the important aspects of their social and economic realities. The agency has clearly learnt nothing from the colonial note of saving the *other* and stereotyping poor women as passive helpless victims in need of charity from the kind-hearted Western donors. Yet, feminist history teaches that: “once women are identified as agents of knowledge and “legitimate knowers” in their own right”; taking women’s experiences and differences [...] seriously” provides valuable insights into “practical, workable solutions that attend to their life situation”(Grace1997:590).In sum, by opting for a vulnerable strategy, instead of leading to meaningful and sustainable partnerships in the spirit of solidarity against gender oppression, the *vulnerability and empowering* accent reflects a hierarchical power relationship between Canada and the other.

#### “Empowerment and the global economic burden”

The distinctive feature of GAC’s articulations in its empowerment strategy is the confidence in the anticipation that women empowerment will lead to world transformation-the agency states: “The potential of women and girls to help build a better world cannot be ignored – but neither can the harsh realities facing vulnerable populations” (3); “The good news is that when women and girls are given equal opportunities to succeed, they can be powerful agents of change – driving stronger economic growth, encouraging greater peace and cooperation, and improving the quality of life for their families and their communities” (1); “As powerful agents of change, women and girls have the ability to transform their households, their societies and their

economies” (2); “by empowering women and girls as a means to achieve gender equality, we send the clear message that equality is for everyone” (2); “women and girls can be powerful agents of change and improve their own lives and those of their families, communities and countries[...]helping to reduce extreme poverty and vulnerability around the world enhances our own safety and prosperity” (2); “[...]when women and girls are given equal opportunities to succeed, they can transform their local economies and generate growth that benefits their entire communities and countries” (1). Freeland states: “We know that empowering women, overseas and here at home, makes families and countries more prosperous (i); the agency adds: “we believe that empowering women and girls is the best use of international assistance and the best way to achieve positive economic and social outcomes” (8) and so on. First, in these statements GAC reflects an overdose of enthusiasm in the assumption that when women and girls are empowered, it will solve the problems within their: economies, homes, communities and countries -but the agency has a limited reflection on how to integrate the different culturally embedded views, understandings, ideas and perceptions on empowerment. As discussed earlier in chapter two, by not specifically defining empowerment, GAC confirms Batliwala (1994, 1997, 2007) and Cornwall (2007:474) fears that contemporary development approaches dilute the concept from its transformative political origins to mere development jargon- converting it “from an approach that sought to fundamentally alter power relations to a status that constitutes development’s latest ‘magic bullet”

Second, these narratives are placing the responsibility of development on individual women and girls while overlooking the actual systemic causes of their poverty such as: “structural adjustment, debt, tax evasion, labor exploitation, financial crisis and corruption in the global governance system” (Hickel 2014:1356). Hence, “women and girls are made to bear the

responsibility for bootstrapping themselves out of poverty that is caused by external institutions – and often the very ones that purport to save them” (Hickel 2014:1355). By maintaining a project of ‘empowering’ women and girls to make them “powerful agents of change” (GAC 2017:29), “ the matrixes of what we call ”oppressions” are reduced in two ways: blame is placed on the disadvantaged individuals themselves, holding suspect their choices and capacities; or we attribute their disadvantaged position to the attitudes of other individuals” (Grace 1997:585-6). Thus, until GAC proves that this approach can tackle deeper issues of structural inequality, it’s project is a thin measurement of equality and intersectionality- given the reasons for their poverty and lack of power are due to the structural system that work against them.

Third, in these communications, Canada justifies its feminist vision by stressing the benefit it will bring to: the economy, peace and security, as well as families and communities of women and girls. However, justifications that are based on the standard assumption that empowering women and girls will bring good outcomes is problematic on two fronts: one, it suggests that showing the benefits to women alone is insufficient and needs backing up by all these additional gains that will be secured by their emancipation. Two, the cursory attention given to the feminist concept, sends the message that pursuing a feminist policy and focusing on the oppressions of women and girls is not a worthwhile goal-in -itself, but that it is a means to an end. This is evident in the fact that in its transformative vision, GAC’s focus is “stronger on policy formulation than on developing accompanying arguments, procedures and instruments for translating policy into practice” (Stratigaki 2005:168)- largely because the agency is mediating “in the interests of political consensus while at the same time allowing for the existence of several internal agendas” (Wilson 1992: 10). In my view, the agency is emphasizing the old-outdated version of ‘empowering’ women and girls as justification for bringing about economic

and social goods that will benefit the larger community. Not surprising therefore, (Swiss 2018; Nacyte 2018; Mason 2019) are criticizing GAC and the Liberal government for instrumentalizing gender equality by presenting women and girls as policy priorities, yet in practice, the motive is to achieve other foreign policy objectives such as security and economic gains-which GAC confirmed by “selling military weapons to Saudi Arabia” (Tiessen 2019:5) despite the country’s poor records on practicing gender equality and having high cases of human rights abuses. In their view, empowerment of women and girls within FIAP is framed as “a means of achieving other aims like global economic growth, peace and security, and combating poverty” (Swiss & Barry 2017:118) and less likely to mount to feminist practices. Finally, the financial commitments by GAC to ensure to reliable funding for empowerment projects and programs indicate positive steps towards achieving consistency in putting the perspective into practice. However as viewed in chapter two under the empowerment concept, by overly focusing on the monetary factors, the FIAP transformative potential of the empowerment concept is exposed to gender washing and risks being reduced to thin measurable values of instrumental feminism-not the transformative feminist conceptual work of mobilizing political action for change.

Analysis of Canada’s gender equality and action plans yields several important findings and my focus has been on the consistent reference to transformative perspectives visa a vis the efforts put into practicing these perspectives. Looking at FIAP’s core action areas, my concern is that GAC is applying the: GE; GBA/+; intersectionality; and the feminist framework with a very narrow vision that neither reflects the early writings and approaches that involved widely mobilizing informed political action and building critical awareness to transform structural barriers, discriminatory laws and practices that privilege dominant voices nor contemplates the social-

economic repercussions that may follow policy application. Yet, a feminist transformative theory and intersectionality framework call for comprehensive strategies that can both respond to the immediate needs of marginalized groups and at the same time build long-term systemic changes required to deconstruct the root causes of inequalities. It is therefore concerning that GAC lacks explicit gender impact assessments to determine what exactly should be transformed or retained in the lives of the targeted populations-which would otherwise enable FIAP analysts (within the early stages of policy processes) signal out the inconsistencies or contradictions such as the assumption that empowering women and girls means equality for everyone, and dangers of fusing general policy narratives with transformative strategies.

### **Chapter conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the approaches Canada's development agencies have deployed over the years to achieve equality in all development policies. In my view, during its time of operation, CIDA failed to use its transformative: GE federal plan; GBA and GBA/+ strategy to transform foreign assistance policy practices. FIAP on the other hand, is still in its stages of implementation thus, whether the policy is a failure or a success is an ongoing debate but what I can assert, - there is still a long way to go before strategic GE and feminist perspectives become fully and effectively institutionalized into Canada's gender and development agendas in a transformative way. I certainly recognize that FIAP marks a more progressive step in Canada's longstanding commitment to GE in development, but I also take its focus on women and girls vs feminism, intersectionality, diversity, and inclusiveness themes as serious concerns. For example, in her 2019 assessment of the GAC's objectives vs the policy's feminist vision, Tiessen clearly doubts FIAP's ability to bring about transformation or do anything different from CIDA. She maintains that the historical weaknesses in Canada's

approaches to gender and development such the excessive use of numerical reports as indicator of progress have weakened the translation of transformative strategies into practice. Based on that, I can only hope that GAC reassesses the old policy gaps and problems that were noted in the: 1990 review of the Nairobi Forward - Looking Strategies; 1995 review of CIDA's GE practice; 2000 UN GE policy review; 2009 and 2016 OAG review on GBA and GBA/+ respectively to determine the extent to which these are still impacting FIAP -undermining its transformative potential. For example, from the OAG report conclusions, I have learnt that diversification of GBA—adding the plus— did not lead to meaningful change in CIDA—which treated gender differences as “add-on characteristics” of the relations between men and women (Hankivsky 2012: 175). Whether GAC performs systematic analysis and evaluation of its focus on women and girls vs the methodological requirements of: GBA/+; feminist theory; intersectionality theory; gender impact assessment; and GE to fully address these concerns in FIAP remains a topic for future researchers. In the forthcoming chapter (4), the discussion is focused on the policy issues GAC should be concerned about moving forward- followed by general thesis conclusion.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4:1 Concerns

Over the years, through its development agencies, Canada has played an important role in: “benchmarking, best practices, and awareness-raising activities” as methods to integrate gender equality into international development agendas (Kooiman 2008:7). Continued training of Canada’s policymakers on gender and development perspectives is one way of showing that the government acknowledges the fact that understanding and translating GE strategies into practice is a long term - endless process. However, despite these considerable strides in prioritizing equality strategies in its foreign assistance, there are still conceptual concerns in the policy practice that continue to limit the translation of transformative theories, themes and strategies into practice. To illustrate this point further, in this section, I discuss the issues that GAC should be concerned about in the new innovative FIAP. In general, GAC’s FIAP lacks a clear definition of what is meant by feminist approach, the elimination of inequalities and the ensuring of equality for all. The core action areas are not explicit in the description of the GE strategies and do not highlight “the differences among women and men and the diversity of their circumstances, social relationships and consequent status” (Mason 2019:5), neither do they clearly underline the benefits of integrating LGBTQ+ people, men and boys into equality processes in development. As Tiessen (2019:2) cites: “the feminism at the FIAP’s center needs to be redefined and operationalized away from instrumentalist and toward transformational principles” (2019:2). Otherwise, the feminist vision stands to lose “most of its strategic sense vis-a-vis gender equality as” it is becoming “an abstract ‘principle’ used interchangeably with the ‘principle of equality (Stratigaki 2005:175). That is, the framing of the feminist vision is diverting attention away from the structural causes of oppression-failing to move out of the

outdated essentialist feminist model that simply includes ‘women and girls’ into the existing structure. In my view, until GAC uses the gender impact assessment and intersectional analytical tools to successfully fix these conceptual constraints, its feminist vision is still grounded in the WID version of gender equality and empowerment - which reinforced biased power structures instead of promoting long-term social, economic, political, cultural changes to challenge the roots of inequality.

FIAP objectives and GAC transformative policy themes, do suffer a disconnection between practical focus and the strategic requirements for sustainable and meaningful policy transformation. GAC lacks the tools needed to distinguish between essentialist tools (use of a one-report-mechanical policy approach, as basis to indicate progress; ensure accountability; transparency; efficiency and effectiveness in policy practice) (Allwood 2013), and intersectional-comprehensive-transformative solutions. As a result, GAC’s agendas are compromising the transformative value in FIAP’s themes- making Canada’s new innovative feminist policy commitment “[...] comparatively weak” in a sense that they are too essential to create comprehensive and workable solutions to address the intersecting nature of inequality, women’s oppression and discrimination on basis of differences in gender identities (interview 4 Oct 2006 as cited by Brown 2012:151).

In CIDA’s GE approaches, there was conflict and contradiction when it came to defining understanding and analyzing the inequality problem and the concepts of GE. An example of this contradiction was on the issue of *gender equality* vs *equality between men and women* during the Harper regime as I have discussed earlier. In GAC, the use of inclusive terms such as “human rights,” “most marginalized” “for all,” “leaving no one behind,” “equality for all” to denote intersectionality, without acknowledging the difference between the two concept in FIAP is

contested by Mason (2019:7) in whose view, the differences between the two concepts is very fundamental in the successful use of GBA/+ as an analytical tool to assess the impact of FIAP programs and initiatives on diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people. In GAC's (2017) FIAP document I have also witnessed inconsistencies in the way officials use the intersectional and inclusive concepts to describe gender equality and empowerment of women and girls such as stating that: "empowering women and girls "sends a clear message that equality is for everyone" (2). Inconsistencies and confusion in policy framing are problematic in a sense that they can lead to treating social groups the same or differently when it is appropriate or inappropriate to do so respectively and ignoring gender practical priorities that would financially better be addressed using either the equal treatment, positive action/discrimination approaches. Policy conflicts, misconceptions and ambiguity can also be exploited by conservative institutions to resist instruments meant to put equality strategies such as gender mainstreaming and empowerment into practice-by filling the meanings of these strategies with negative connotations both inside and outside government (Health Canada 1997, 1998; Day & Brodsky 1998; Lewis 2006; Mason 2013, 2019). Further, by employing gender equality as a general term, both GAC's gender-based and gender relation-based policy assessments seem to foster equality. The two approaches show adequate funding and mobilization plans but when viewed from a deeper understanding of gender equality - one that challenges gender power mechanisms, norms and practices associated with it and from a gender impact assessment perspective, clarity on the practical evidence on how Canada is going to effectively engender its development policies is still lacking. The policy focus is mainly on: saving women and girls; expanding GE strategies into broader development objectives: peace and security; governance and climate change; and making vulnerable groups find better ways to

fit within existing systems-without necessarily giving them the power to deconstruct the settings that make them vulnerable (Tiessen 2015, 2016, 2017;2019; Brown 2012; Stratigaki 2005).

Majority of FIAP's "action areas" are promoting women and girls' "access to" various service deliveries, such as the access to justice, to psycho-social support, to programs, to health services, to supplements, to education, to employment, to trainings, to climate financing. Women and girls having "access" to these services is important but that does not tackle the actual reasons why they currently lack access to such services in the first place. Its assertions are not solving the systemic inequalities that negatively affect women's social, economic, and political potential. As a result, GAC fails to explore the intersectional and feminist core principle of using systemic solutions or explicitly framing gender in terms of gendered relations of power (not simply as women and girls) to solve systemic inequality and discrimination. The agency rather offers thin-aid-based solution to deliver an equality service framed in the neutral term of gender equality and gender responsive services. Trying to hide the GE ultimate objective in general development goals is a dangerous option because it hides the not easily identifiable forms of inequality into broader policy practices. Thus, applying the concept as a crosscutting theme is leading to poor contextualization of gender-specific issues that desire policy responses that can both confront structural barriers and the gender biased systems that ought to be transformed.

GAC (2017) does a recommendable job when addressing the question of policy accountability in foreign assistance-it states: "We will streamline and accelerate our funding and reporting procedures to reduce the administrative burden on our funding recipients [...] we will develop joint programming mechanisms that enable innovative funding partnerships" (69) or "Global Affairs Canada will also ensure active and meaningful participation and decision-making by women and girls in all international assistance initiatives, including in project implementation,

monitoring and evaluation” (71); “Our assistance will be informed by gender-based analysis and will rely on clear accountabilities for planning, achieving, tracking and reporting on gender equality results” (11). However, there is no concrete details on how exactly that will be achieved nor any acknowledgement of the fact that accountability also means being held accountable for having a comprehensive plan in place to enforce transformative change to inequality. The accountability language is inexplicit as there is no mention of how GAC will be held accountable to its new ‘feminist’ standards. To show its recognition of the vital role women’s movements and grassroots organizations play in achieving equality, GAC (2017) commits \$150 million over five years to support local women’s organizations and movements that advance women’s rights in developing countries” (19) but in these commitments, the agency does not indicate any methods it used to determine whether nurturing feminist and intersectional principles is the leading priority of funding-targeted movements and organizations.

GAC’s intersectional analysis is weak- the agency very briefly mentions that “inequalities exist along intersectional lines” (8) and while there is recognition of different identities within this statement, the comprehensive understanding of the impacts of its policy focus along the categories of difference is underdeveloped. This is evident in the fact the agency only signals inclusivity when it states: “All people must enjoy the same fundamental human rights, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability or any other aspect of identity” (11). Clearly, intersectionality is only presented as basis of non-discrimination in human rights and the critical dimension is missing-as there are no discussions of the interconnected nature of oppressions inherent in inequality and patriarchy. That is, there is a weak recognition of how equality in justice requires examining the relationships between women and men in interconnected ways and how that also intersects with

other forms of oppression such as class, race, cultural norms, sexual orientation, religion, capitalism, and conflict. Despite stating that Canada is committed to providing international assistance that is “transformative and activist”, where “unequal power relations, systemic discrimination and harmful norms and practices will be challenged as a broad range of stakeholders – including men and boys – are engaged” (11). GAC remains vague on how it applies an intersectional analysis to explain the role of men, boys and LGBTQ+ population in challenging/ transforming “the traditions and customs that support and maintain gender inequalities” (10), biased power dynamics along with the intersecting oppressions that contribute to such dynamics. To my opinion, a transformative feminist approach must be critical-embracing intersectionality as an important frame of reference (Goodley 2013; Meekosha & Shuttleworth 2009)

#### **4:2 Recommendations: Moving Forward**

In recent years, feminism has gained more and more attention among foreign assistance policy makers however, what is rarely acknowledged is that in any feminist-policy practice: “what we do is less important than how we do it” Patton (1990: 94)-it is one thing to integrate or state feminist principles in a policy agenda but; it is a different matter to translate those feminist principles into transformational development practices. Ultimately, GAC limits the scope and the potential of its feminist vision to vulnerability of women and girls-and the quest to build “on 30 years of Canada’s world-leading gender equality practices”(Tiessen 2019:2) by promoting country’s image in the world as a feminist state. My recommendations on how GAC should move forward are mainly in inform of policy-guiding questions and this is because I want to make them in such a way that, policy makers find it *simple* to apply them in development projects. In Tiessen’s assessments of Canada’s gender and development policy approaches,-

unless public administrators are able to distinguish the core principles and specific attributes connected to challenges and realities of practicing intersectionality that are different from those found in other areas of the public sector, applying an intersectional lens in feminist transformative approaches will “underscore the ways that other forms of discrimination cross-cut gender relations and can amplify inequality” (2019:7). Considering her concerns, the good news is, there are still multiple opportunities for intersectionality to generate transformative outcomes in GAC’s feminist vision because:

1. Intersectionality moves beyond traditional frameworks that separate social life into “discrete or pure strands” (Brah & Phoenix 2004:76) and so, “the concept can be a useful analytical tool in tracing how certain people seem to get positioned as not only different but also troublesome and, in some instances, marginalized” (Staunæs 2003:101).
2. Intersectionality focus allows an analytical process through which categories can be assessed as mutually constituting processes. That is, rather than piling them into “one another, intersectionality strives to understand the unique experiences and perspectives at the intersection of two or more social or cultural categories and positions that intertwine as complex, overlapping, interacting, and often contradicting systems” (Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015:230)
3. The “concept of intersectionality can be used to analyze how power and power relations are maintained and reproduced. Intersectionality scholars tend to look to the perspectives and experiences of unmarked and unheard groups” (Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015:230)

Using intersectionality to transform inequality and sustain equality will only happen if there is a clear methodology connecting intersectional theory to GBA+ processes and feminist vision. To

that assertion, there are three methods that GAC can apply to achieve transformation in the implementation of the intersectionality theory: the inclusive method-involves ensuring that the policy strategy is “grounded in the lived experiences of the participants”; the reflexive method-“intended[...]as ‘storying’ lived experiences and multiple intersections through individual and collective narratives”. It “permits the exploration of multiple and individual experiences, different connections, new questions and alternative understandings”; and the anti-essentialist method-“can shed new light on how institutions [...]use the traditional deficit and deterministic approach to shape interactions and traditional parameters in the theorization” of transformative policies(Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015:232-5). To this actualize these methods approaches, GAC must prioritize the need to build staff capacity to ensure that all those involved in its regular policy practice, do understand, own and integrate the intersectional and feminist principles in their daily work -thus, creating an environment that enables intersectional and feminist knowledge, leadership and culture.

Hankivsky et al, in his application of the Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis (IBPA) framework, offers innovative methodological questions to policy analysis that can make GAC’s approaches to intersectionality in policy practice more comprehensive. The questions are key to deepening our understanding of the descriptive, transformative, and reflective requirements of practicing an intersectional theory:

Descriptive:

1. What knowledge, values, and experiences do you bring to this area of policy analysis?
2. What is the policy problem under consideration?
3. How have representations of the problem come about?
4. How are groups differently affected by this representation of the problem

5. What are the current policy responses to the problem? (2014:4)

Transformative:

1. What inequalities exist in relation to the problem
2. Where and how can interventions be made to improve the problem
3. What are feasible short, medium, and long-term solutions
4. How will proposed policy responses reduce inequalities
5. How will implementation and uptake be assured
6. How will you know if inequalities have been reduced? (2014:4)

Reflective:

How has the process of engaging in an intersectionality-based policy analysis transformed: your thinking about relations and structures of power and inequality; the ways in which you and others engage in the work of policy development; implementation and evaluation; broader conceptualization, relations and effects of power asymmetry in the everyday world (Hankivsky et al 2014:4).

How do these questions help a feminist-intersectional vision? When applied holistically, they will provide GAC's policy analyst with reliable knowledge and information on how to: rectify inequality in a transformative way; formulate policy aspirations from the perspective of those with discrimination experiences; provide every one (regardless of gender identity) with explanations that are of benefit to them, not to governmental authorities, legal experts, social service providers or academics (Grace 1997). Consequently, I argue that using these questions as policy guidelines will enable GAC to create its own workable inclusive, reflexive, and anti-essentialist tools that are required for conducting critical and intersectional policy analysis (Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015). Wishlist make the agency realize that in transforming policy practice:

1. There are no one-size-fits-all recipes for empowerment

2. Effective change processes involve describing and evaluating the public-private gender relations, analyzing issues related to sexuality, and challenging societal expectations that dictate biased social norms, and practices
3. The process of achieving transformative development strategies involves overturning the traditional expectations that keep subjugated social groups locked into situations of subordination and dependency
4. Transforming gender and development practices involves creating shifts in consciousness and consistent mobilization of large political action for change
5. Empowering one area of a woman's life does not automatically translate into greater capacity to exercise agency and transform power relations in another part of her life
6. Poor theoretical understanding of key concepts and inadequate conceptual development of the goals can be barriers to effective GE planning (Cornwall 2014, 2016; Lewis 2006; Batliwala 1993, 1994, 1997, 2007)

To achieve the new feminist vision, GAC has recruited consultants to assist with the programing, planning and implementation. The agency is using donor partnerships, international gatherings and platforms, bilateral talks, and informal meetings to rally more support in the fight against inequality. The agency's focus however, has to shift from individual points of access as strategy to create opportunities for women and girls – the problem with individualized entry points is that, policy makers use them to: “introduce a gender perspective into existing policy paradigms without questioning [...]” how the existing policies and the new transformative concepts will impact on each other and the targeted beneficiaries (Lombardo 2005:415). This often creates the perception that gender mainstreaming has been achieved which diminishes the visibility of what is still lacking in the transformative agendas. In GAC's case, individual entry points to equality in FIAP

have given vulnerability of women and girls primacy over other key elements-meaning that the interactions among all determinants of inequality are neglected-this feminist vision indeed needs to be completed with inclusive, reflexivity and anti-essentialism approaches (Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015; Zakaria 2017; Paterson 2010). Tiessen (2019:10) has too developed four general strategies that GAC can apply to achieve transformation in its FIAP agendas:

1. Ensuring implementation engages the expertise of those with knowledge, lived experience and institutional experience [...] locally based women's rights organizations and other organizations that understand the nature and causes of marginalization and cultural impediments
2. Acknowledging and building on best practices in gender equality programming over the past 30 years of Canada's international assistance programming to demonstrate sustained commitments and enduring leadership. At the same time, closer analyses of the limitations of these previous strategies can guide new policy design
3. Including time-bound commitments to specific gender-equality outcomes; and
4. Defining and operationalizing a transformative feminist approach that focuses more explicitly on gender relations and intersectionality to better guide the translation of policy into practice

The conceptualization stage of any transformative policy processes is crucial to the policy implementation as it involves explaining the conceptual and operational frameworks for mainstreaming gender concerns into equality initiatives (Saulnier et al 1999). Thus, GAC should use the following questions to be clear on exactly what tools are to be involved in practicing FIAP

1. How will this policy advance or impede equality?
2. What effects does poor policy participation have on gender equality?
3. What effects does gender equality have on social norms?
4. What are the implications of inequality effects for policy formulation and practice?
5. What strategies are available to make development policy and practice more gender-equitable? (Sarkar & Narayana 2007:264).
6. What are we trying to integrate women into? (Kirson 1995: 6)

GAC has the capacity to effectively implement translate its feminist vision into practice and one of the many ways to exploit this potential begins with the adoption of proper approaches. According to McGauran (2009), proper approaches include top-down, bottom-up and hybrid. In the top-down approach, we learn that successful policy implementation requires creating clear policy objectives, clear lines of authority, good communication between various groups, and sufficient resources. The theories in the bottom-up implementation approach focus on the impact of organizational conflict and bargaining on policy implementation and the hybrid theories combine elements of top-down and bottom-up. Theories in these approaches highlight the ways by which broader and institutional processes can influence and impact policy implementation. For example, negotiating the: gender mainstreaming; GBA/+ and intersectional strategies into organization policies tends to be easier when it fits with the main framework of the organization adopting the strategy (Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2008, 2010; Prügl & Lustgarten 2006). Thus, engaging in these procedures at a deep level is fundamental to the effective application of transformative strategies- which has been criticized labelled *hard* to apply by policy practitioners (2010; Prügl & Lustgarten 2006; Kardam 1993; Ferguson 2015). For GAC to achieve the feminist vision, the policy agendas should cover both institutional and operational mainstreaming activities. Institutional activities will address the GAC's internal changes in structures, policies, and procedures while operational activities will highlight the impact of the FIAP programs on targeted beneficiaries, identify the policy programs that need to be changed and those that ought to be kept (Porter & Sweetman 2005; Hekman 2013;Baranyi & Powell 2005).

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I have shown the multiple commitments Canada has made to achieve equality in development policy and practice and in all the commitments, GE is referred to as a core policy guideline for setting development agendas. Over time, the government's policy approaches have evolved from: women equality or equal treatment; WID guidelines; to feminism, intersectionality and GBA/+. The director of International Assistance Research and knowledge Division (Ioanna Sahas Martin) during a lunch chat on 12/3/2019 stated that GAC officials are continuing to receive training on how to implement the concepts of gender equality in the new FIAP. Statements as these are a clear sign that the GoC is continuing to put gender (in)equality issues on the frontline of international development and what is missing are the concrete mechanisms to translate the adopted policies and theories into practice. This analysis has highlighted how poor understanding of key theoretical concepts, terms, as well as inadequate conceptual development of goals can be barriers to effective transformation of policy practice. It has also shown the importance of ensuring that the goals of gender equality and feminism are explicit on how they are to transform systematic and structural inequality. That said, much as GAC lacks conceptual clarity on: gender equality; intersectionality; feminist vision; and GBA/+ transformative themes, we cannot ignore the potential this FIAP approach holds for transforming Canada's gender and development practices. Thus, it is important that GAC:

1. Avoids overly generalizing or victimizing discourse while still acknowledging the ongoing relevance and effect of oppressive systems, such as gender inequality
2. Employs intersectional analysis from a feminist perspective with a focus on empowerment, agency, and ongoing attention to gender as a key axis of power

3. Draws on evidence from a variety of methodological approaches, including context-specific case studies and participatory methods
4. Designs strategies and methods for analyzing across such context-specific case studies to inform GBA+
5. Expands the focus of gender studies beyond binary classifications (men, women) and consider how gender and other norms (i.e., masculinity, femininity, age, binary and racialized identities) can influence attitudes, behaviors and capacities of people facing discrimination based on gender differences-thereby affect policy generation, program implementation, and the levels of response to change.
6. Conducts in-depth analysis of feminist and intersectional approaches to inform how GBA+ can be meaningfully applied to policymaking and assessments
7. Focuses on intersecting categories and factors of inequality is retained to ensure that the policy impact assessments are reflective of diverse gender concerns, needs and recommendations (Mason 2019; Goethals, De Schauwer & Van Hove 2015; Hunting, Grace & Hankivsky 2015; Hill Collins& Bilge 2016).

I hope that the comprehensive recommendations through this thesis can contribute to an improvement in the implementation of Canada's gender and development transformative strategies. The thesis is only the start of digging into the vast array of issues associated with Canada foreign assistance practice. Future lines of inquiry may wish to examine whether: the arguments and policy recommendations I have offered in this review are fairly assessing how: GBA/+; intersectionality and feminism have been implicated in GAC's policy commitments; Government of Canada is ready for policy transformation; the role of political ideologies in the practice of feminism.

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