The Politics of Mainstreaming in Critical Perspective

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By

Dr Sharleene May Bibbings

CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS

PUBLISHING

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This book first published 2012

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-3512-9, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3512-1

To my grandparents

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PREFACE

The politics of progressive public policy, such as gendered organisational change, has gradually become more important as understanding of the relationship between progressive organisations and the achievement of a progressive society has increased. In the United Kingdom, despite decades of attempts, the evidence clearly demonstrates that reform has had limited impact. In recent times, the strategy of gender mainstreaming (GM) has been heralded as offering important corrections to past failures. The potential of GM has been well documented; however, considerable confusion continues to surround the definition of the concept and its practice.

This book takes up the interrelated task of investigating the conceptualisation and the practice of GM from a critical perspective in an attempt to respond to these twin puzzles. It adopts the innovative approach of focusing on the process of mainstreaming itself rather than the normative issue of gender, a longer time horizon is used than is traditionally found in GM literature and, data is collected from the local level rather than national or devolved levels. The use of three innovative approaches, offer new directions to our understanding of the concept and practice of mainstreaming. In consequence, the book develops an inductive, qualitative methods approach to investigate first the etymology of mainstreaming and then five case studies of its practice using a process tracing exercise to unpack GM efforts in local government.

Through a combination of conceptual and empirical enquiry, four knowledge claims regarding GM are presented. Firstly, in terms of defining GM, the research identifies three core conceptual features of the politics of mainstreaming—Voice, Agenda Setting and Implementation. It is argued that this refined definition of GM provides a grounded conceptual basis from which to engage in public policy debate. Secondly, three forms of politics were evident in the pursuit of GM and lead to contrasting levels of change—GM, inclusion and non-intervention politics. Thirdly, the specific processes, actors, and strategies associated with different GM are explained by what I term the Crucial Cs: contrasting outcomes, critical junctures and exogenous triggers, cognitive processes of learning, and the cross-fertilisation of ideas both within and without organisational boundaries.

Finally, this book challenges conventional approaches to GM, which tend to centre on strong normative feminist ideas. It is argued that GM has greater conceptual utility if it is observed as a process of policy learning. However, it is also claimed that there are a number of findings which are exogenous to the theory of Social Learning that provide a novel argumentative turn on the limits of Social Learning. “Nine lessons” are offered for this purpose, generated through a productive theory-practice dialogue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In conducting and completing this book, numerous people and organisations have been instrumental. Firstly, at the University of York, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to Professor Mark Evans. In particular, I am grateful for his observations and suggestions. I also wish to extend my warmest thanks also to Dr Jim Buller for observations on early drafts and my appreciation for comments on early sections of this research by Dr Adrian Leftwich. Fieldwork was a central component of the research, and I would therefore like to thank wholeheartedly the target organisations for taking part and express my gratitude to all the participants in each of the cases. At Cambridge Scholars Press I wish to thank Carol and Amanda for their patience and support. Numerous family and friends gave encouragement, in particular my wonderful parents. Finally, I wish to reserve notable appreciation to James Gibbons who was a constant inspiration and source of support both personally and intellectually.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Audit Commission
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DDT	Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane
DIALOG	Diversity in Action in Local Government Unit
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EOC	Equal Opportunities Council
EPI	Environmental Protection Integration
ES	Equality Standard
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FLSfW	Forward looking Strategies for Women
GAD	Gender and Development
GLC	Greater London Council
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
IdeA	Improvement and Development Agency for local government
INRA	Impact and Needs/Requirements Assessments
LSPs	Local Strategic Partnerships
NALGWC	National Association of Local Government Women's Committees
OPDM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PDR	Personal Development Review
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PfA	Platform for Action
RES	Race Equality Scheme
REF	Research Ethics Framework
REMQ	Racial Equality Standard named Race Equality Means Quality
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SL	Social Learning
UK	United Kingdom
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
WEU	Women and Equality Unit
WID	Women in Development

INTRODUCTION

> There has been little attempt to develop a general theory of mainstreaming which transcends the diversity of state practice in order to provide a universal frame of reference, or set of criteria, by which mainstreaming may be understood and particular mainstreaming initiatives judged.
>
> (Beveridge et al. 2000, 388)

In the twenty first century, the pursuit of gender equality is seen as an essential feature of any progressive and modern organisation and, by implication, society (Connell 2005 and 2006; Squires 2007; Baines 2010). Across the globe, "the velvet triangle" (Woodward, 2003) of academics, advocates and practitioners have long criticised public organisations for their gendered nature and have challenged them to strive towards, and achieve, the progressive goal of gender equality (Boserup 1970; Acker 1990; Women's Eyes on the World Bank 1997; Goetz, 1995 and 1997, Benschop and Verloo 2006; Squires 2007; Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2010).

A long slow march to gender equality in the United Kingdom

Public sector organisations in the United Kingdom (UK), as a result of public critique have undergone a lengthy history of gender based reform (HMSO 1967; Cockburn 1983, 1991 and 1989; Young 1997; Wright 2002; Ball and Charles 2006; Miller 2009). Sadly, the velvet triangle, have concluded that gender inequality in British public organisations remains widespread (Breintbach 2006; McRae 1996; Women and Equality Unit 2003). The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) describes the advancement regarding, equal representation for example, as "a snail's progress."[1] We have a long way to go yet.

Aims of the book

A practice called gender mainstreaming (GM) has been heralded in the academic literature as a "new" method to overcome past and current failures in strategies designed to achieve gender equality in organisations

(Booth and Bennett 2002; Benschop and Verloo 2006). However, a number of questions keep resurfacing with regards to GM and which revolve around the concept/practice axis (Walby 2005). The central questions pertaining to the concept and practice of GM are eloquently captured in the quotation from Beveridge et al. (2000) outlined at the outset of this introductory chapter. Drawing from the GM literature, questions include; how do we define mainstreaming conceptually? (Booth and Bennett 2002, 433; Rees 2002a; Walby 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006; Ball and Charles 2006; Smyth 2007; Woodward 2008, 251). What are the political barriers and facilitators to the practice of GM? (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002; Woodward 2008; McGauran 2009). Why is there a lack of uniformity in the outcome? (Wallace 1998; Rees 2002a; Daly 2005). Such has been the disappointment surrounding GM that some proponents are asking: is it too late for gender mainstreaming (Woodward 2008)?

The aims of the book are, and in line with the proceeding discussion in the GM literature: (i) to map out the core conceptual features of mainstreaming; (ii) develop an evaluation framework for understanding the processes and outcomes of GM; and (iii) interrogate the findings through a productive political theory–practice dialogue. This book is a timely contribution to the debate on stability and change in the program of gender equality in public organisations. This is because the lessons learnt in this book come during a period of increasing attention to gender politics and the British state. To name just a couple of issues, first, the new public sector Equality Duty came into force across Great Britain on April 5 2011[2]. Legal changes aimed at enhancing equality are set against hot debates on the issue that women will be one of the ‘‘losers’’ of the UK Government (2010 to present) reforms. In particular, that women face the triple pressures of benefit cuts, job losses and the care gap (Fawcett Society, 2011).

How is this book different?

To address the aims of the book, the author will use three novel argumentative-turns to hold the politics of mainstreaming in critical perspective. First is the challenge related to conceptual confusion. It is important to clarify that this book does not intend to investigate and define the issue of gender inequality in organisations per se, something that is beyond the scope of this book and deserves attention in its own right. Instead, this work focuses on the specific *processes* of mainstreaming; that is, the political strategies designed to tackle gender inequality as will be

defined in chapter one. The research is based on making a distinction between the normative concerns of GM, which tend to dominate the literature, and understanding GM as a process of change, however incremental it may be. In this sense, the research will approach GM in a novel way by focusing on the process of change (mainstreaming) as opposed to the issue being mainstreamed in this case (gender). As will be demonstrated later in the book, focusing on the typologies of the processes *and* the outcomes of change is a unique way to approach the politics of GM (see, for example, Woodward 2008, 251; Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2009).

The second focus of this book, the practice element, is also approached in an inimitable way by looking at local government in the UK. The local level in England has a long history with the gender equality program and is often seen as a leading sector and therefore instructive to analyse. However, there has latterly been a dearth of books on GM in UK local government, with recent works on GM focusing on the context of international development (Porter and Sweetman 2005; Subrahmanian 2007; Parpart 2009), British central government (Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2002;2004), the structures of UK devolution (see McKay and Gillespie 2007) and, discreet policy sectors such as spatial planning (Greed 2005).

Finally, the practice element will be tackled using a long time horizon. As will be shown in chapter two, a longitudinal view of local government includes previously excluded evidence for consideration. Given the pessimism regarding the history of stability rather than change, new thinking and approaches are paramount in contributing to the debate on progressive organisations and the pursuit of gender equality.

What are the main conclusions?

What are the implications of the novel approaches used in this book in focusing on processes of change (rather than the content), using a diachronic analysis (rather than a snapshot) and a focus on the local level (rather than central or international domains)? There are four sets of knowledge claims that flow from these three approaches which rotate around definition, evaluation, practice and theory, and stem from the empirical evidence that will be presented in this book:

- a clear definition of the unit of analysis, mainstreaming, is put forth as a political process entailing Voice, Agenda Setting and Implementation

- three different types of political outcomes are mapped out in local government and were identified as (i) the ideal type—GM, (ii) a more limited from of change—inclusion and (iii) and absence of change—non-interventionist
- there are four key variables that provide exemplary insight into the cases and are referred to as the Crucial Cs[3]: contrasting outcomes, cognitive processes, the cross-fertilisation of ideas and, critical junctures and endogenous processes
- Finally, it is argued that the work of Hall (1993) and the subsequent Social Learning (SL) literature of political science can explain the empirical claims (the Crucial Cs) with the greatest utility. However, some findings are not adequately dealt with from within the policy learning perspective. The insights and 'blind spots' together provide an interesting argumentative turn—specifically, "nine lessons" emerged from this process of investigation.

The structure of the book

In order to ensure clarity of purpose, the book is divided into three parts with six subsequent chapters and a conclusion. Part one contains two chapters which focus on conceptual and contextual issues. Part two presents the case studies, and finally a political science analysis of the findings is put forward in part three and, is then followed by the conclusion.

Part one begins with chapter one, which traces the derivation, deployment and distribution of the concept of mainstreaming from its original application in the field of education to subsequent typologies of use. In this chapter, the conceptual problems associated with GM, and mainstreaming more generally, are investigated. The chapter also addresses the implications of conceptual vagueness for academic research. This is then followed by a brief outline of the methodology to be deployed in the conceptual analysis, which is then applied to mainstreaming. Finally, the chapter concludes with a refined definition of mainstreaming and a defence of the reasoning behind it. Chapter two also traces the deployment of the concept of mainstreaming, but the discussion here focuses on one variant: the practice of GM in English local government organisations. The chapter provides an historical overview of GM at the local tier of government, thus providing important contextual information on the national politics of GM which will aid understanding of the case studies. A typology of GM outcomes in local government is also presented. This is

also used to structure the findings of the case studies in order to provide rich comparisons. The chapter therefore begins to build a (preliminary) classificatory and explanatory model of the different patterns involved in efforts to achieve GM, and this provides a tool to help in the complex task of identifying the processes and outcomes in the case studies.

In part two, analytical attention turns to the empirical project—five local government organisations. Local authorities have a long history of engagement with GM and are seen as instructive exemplars of practice (Mackay and Bilton 2003). The broad methodological approach influencing this research was inductive due to the ambiguity surrounding the unit of analysis. The empirical project was a case study design facilitated by a small *n* approach to provide rich detail. Data collection took place over three years in 2005, 2006 and 2007, driven primarily by qualitative methods which took the form of mapping the decision-making history of each case through a documentary based process tracing exercise. Process tracing is a "detailed narrative or story presented in the form of a chronicle that purports to throw light on how an event came about" (George and Bennett 2006, 210). The author held documents in critical perspective and undertook fifty-four semi-structured interviews to both triangulate the documentary evidence and garner off-the-record issues.[4] Due to the sensitivity of the research, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) guidance note Research Ethics Framework (2006) was used to guide the research. The findings of the case study investigations of the processes and outcomes of GM are charted as follows. Chapter three presents the only GM case, chapter four the inclusion cases and chapter five the non-intervention cases. In each chapter, the findings are presented in the format of what is termed the GM politics process/story, followed by an analysis of the findings.

Part Three offers a comparative assessment of the results derived from the case study investigations and assesses the implications for public policy analysis that flow from this. The comparative approach facilitated the identification and delineation of similarities and differences in the politics of mainstreaming, allowing for a determination of causal factors. The comparative approach also assisted in the cautious generalisation of knowledge claims from the case study sample. To this end, in chapter six a comparative assessment of the five cases is presented, which identifies common and divergent factors underpinning processes of GM. These findings are then examined using the SL framework to offer a rigorous explanation of policy change and stability. The theoretical concerns of this research largely focus on three areas of study:

- description—how GM policy is made
- explanation—why certain forms of GM are made
- prescription—how GM policy should be made.

The core claims of the political perspective will be presented,[5] in an inductive comparative assessment of the empirical evidence derived from the case study findings. The book is concerned with providing "knowledge of and knowledge in policy making," as Lasswell (1970) puts it. A detailed defence of the author's choice of framework is presented. Finally, chapter six is followed by the conclusion, with a summary of the key, conceptual, empirical and theoretical implications of the book's findings for mainstreaming. The conclusion chapter ends the book with the identification of a range of recommendations for practice, based around the practical application of the theoretically informed Crucial Cs methodology and, some suggestions for future avenues of research.

PART I

APPROACH

CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTUALISING MAINSTREAMING

It is universally acknowledged that most definitions of mainstreaming are in want of refinement. Current definitions are problematic and have led to conceptual and practical problems. This chapter tackles the conceptual puzzle of mainstreaming and is the first of the three aims of this book: to define the process(es) of mainstreaming. In response to this crucial question, the answer put forward is that the concept of mainstreaming can be defined as: (i) challenging the established political order (Voice); (ii) presenting an alternative policy vision and reaching a position of political salience on the political agenda (Agenda Setting); and (iii) incorporating the alternative vision into the mainstream of the organisation. By implication, the latter theme involves reaching every part of the organisation both vertically and horizontally (Implementation). The importance of these three processes suggests the need for a refinement of the concept of mainstreaming through specifying its specific constituent factors rather than rejecting the term completely.

The above definition of mainstreaming has been arrived at through a three stage analytical process. The first stage (and section) argues that while it is acknowledged that mainstreaming has been historically (and continually) poorly defined, the work of Gerring (1999) can provide a route out of this seemingly never ending cul-de-sac through, his conceptual analysis methodology. The second section applies the methodology to the concept of mainstreaming, with the aim of unpacking the concept across different academic and organisational literature, thus clarifying the concept analytically as well as its boundaries for practical and theoretical utility. Finally, the core themes from the etymology are distilled. It is concluded that mainstreaming is an inherently political process with three distinct features as delineated above: Voice, Agenda Setting and Implementation.

Conceptual Methodology

A review of most definitions of gender mainstreaming (GM) reveal that they are lengthy and over-complicated (Rees 2002b, 2). A classic example is that developed by the Council of Europe (1998, 8):

> Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.
>
> (Council of Europe 1998, 8)

Over ten years on and the above definition is common currency in practitioner handbooks (European Commission 2008) and academic literature (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2009) for example. Despite such long definitions, GM remains a "fuzzy" concept (Booth and Bennett 2002, 433), and many authors point to the confusion that has characterised the term (Beveridge et al. 2000). Further, mainstreaming defined in other branches of literature is equally problematic as will be demonstrated. Overall, the absence of commonality in the conceptualisation and practice of mainstreaming has caused significant confusion to both political theory and public practice. The concept of mainstreaming has been subject to "stretching." Stretching is a process observed by Sartori where a concept becomes increasingly "vague" and "amorphous." This ambiguity is important to note since clear concepts are crucial when conducting empirical research (Sartori 1970, 1039). Further:

> … [S]emantic confusion throws a wrench into the work of social science. Arguments employing such [loose] terms have a tendency to fly past each other; work on these subjects does not accumulate. Concepts seem to "get in the way" of a clear understanding of things.
>
> (Gerring 1990, 361)

Clearly, no concept remains uncontested. The central question addressed in this section is what makes a "good" concept? A variety of approaches have been designed that can be used to evaluate the utility of a concept, for example, the seminal work of Sartori (1974 and 1984). The approach adopted here, however, is to evaluate the utility of mainstreaming as a concept using the work of Gerring (1999). Gerring's approach is properly recognised within public policy research as being explicit and well developed (Buller and Gamble 2002). As such, it has greater clarity and parsimony, thus enabling a thorough and considered framework through

which to evaluate the concept of mainstreaming.[6] Gerring outlines eight criteria for assessing the utility of a concept, and these criteria are outlined next.

(i) Familiarity
Gerring begins by assessing the "familiarity" of a concept. Within specialised and everyday usage, does the new definition conform or clash with established usages? A new concept should incorporate as many of the standard meanings into the new definition and drop any peripheral detail that will incur a small loss in familiarity without jettisoning any core feature.

(ii) Resonance
Resonance refers to the "catchiness" of the term, in the sense of whether it is immediately recognised. For example, the author refers to the phrase "exit, voice and loyalty" in Hirschman's (1970) work to illustrate his point.

(iii) Parsimony
Parsimony refers to the degree to which a term is concise. A term becomes meaningless if all its attributes are listed. For example, "ideology" is preferred to the phrase "relatively coherent set of attitudes, values, and beliefs about politics" (Gerring 1999, 372).

(iv) Coherence
The fourth criterion focuses on how internally logical the concept is.[7] This criterion is considered central by the author. Are the observable facts covered by the concept (extension) and the properties of the concept (intention) logical? The author prefers definitions that have core attributes, such as Dahl's (1957) concept of power, and he argues that they have the greatest coherence.

(v) Differentiation
The fifth criterion refers to whether the semantic space or definitional borders are clear. Is there any confusion over what a concept is not?[8] In line with Gerring's motoring metaphor, wheels and engines do not differentiate cars and motorbikes, but the number of wheels these vehicles possess does.

(vi) Depth

Depth is an essential criterion within the author's scheme. For the greater the number of properties associated with a term, the more rigorous the concept. As Gerring (1999, 380) states: "[if] one considers the sheer number of things that can be said to differentiate humans from other animals, this must be considered a deep concept." For example, the author goes on to identify the concept of the "west" within the geography of the USA as shallow because the western US states share a minimum number of common features. However, the concept of the "south" is seen as deeper because the list of attributes shared by this concept is more than the term "west." Thus, deep concepts are considered superior to shallow concepts.

(vii) Theoretical Utility[9]

For Gerring, the theoretical utility of a concept is also axiomatic; concepts are the building blocks of theoretical structures. For example, the "mode of production" would have little meaning in the social sciences without a broader Marxist theoretical framework.

(viii) Field of Utility[10]

Finally, Gerring assesses the utility of the concept in contrast to usual concepts. He is concerned with whether a new concept will disrupt associated concepts. For example, redefining "democracy" will change our understanding of "authoritarianism." Therefore, new concepts or refinements of old ones are "better" if they are less disruptive to their associated concepts. Associated concepts should not be deprived of part of their meaning.

In the following section, the different features of Gerring's framework will be selected to explore the concept of mainstreaming. Four "different" conceptual typologies of mainstreaming are presented and evaluated regarding their strengths and weaknesses conceptually. In addition to this, the author adds another feature, which is an historical survey of mainstreaming (etymology analysis), with the aim of identifying the temporal "coherence" of the mainstreaming concept. This will allow for the discovery of observable facts that the concept covers. For example, are there certain recurring practices and politics and, will unpacking mainstreaming help us refine our understanding of the concept? These questions will be addressed next. Hence, each typology will begin with a brief historical review of the practices and politics associated with each concept, followed by an assessment of the concept itself.

Educational Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming, as a term, is originally found in policy discussion about special educational needs (SEN) in the 1960s. As the author will illustrate, one of the pre-requisites of mainstreaming in the field of SEN, and all other examples, is Voice. Voice originates from the work of Hirschman (1970) in the field of organisational theory. Hirschman starts from the position that a decline in the quality of an organisation's services and products can lead customers to stop buying them (exit), to express their discontent (Voice), or to continue purchasing them (loyalty).

Voice, as the articulation of discontent with the status quo, a core element of mainstreaming in education and has manifested itself in research. For example, at the turn of the nineteenth century, only the financially privileged were being educated. Those with special needs were schooled separately. By 1870, the Education Act dramatically increased the numbers of those being educated, and the special schools sector increased. By the early twentieth century in the UK, different education for different kinds of people became the norm (Frederickson and Cline 2002, 68).[11] By the 1960s, however, a growing body of research highlighted the lack of evidence to support segregation (Lipsky and Gartner 1987; Reynolds 1988; Anderson and Pellicer 1990; Baker and Gottlieb 1980; Thomas et al. 1998), and the "mainstreaming" movement was initiated. The mainstreaming movement interconnected with the civil rights movements through discourse on the rights of those segregated. Research originating at the same time showed that SEN schools disproportionately selected children from ethnic minorities and lower social economic groups (Dunn 1968; Birch et al. 1970; Mercer 1970; Thomas et al. 1998). This historical discussion is important because the use of Voice is a core feature of mainstreaming, not only in education but also in subsequent applications of the concept, as the author will demonstrate.

Formalisation

Another pre-requisite, standing alongside Voice, is the eventual formalisation of the challenge within the mainstreaming process into public policy; in other words, how it gets onto the policy agenda. For example, by 1970 in the UK, the Education Act (Handicapped Children) removed the legal division between SEN and mainstream schools. In the USA, it was the PL 94–142 Education of All Handicapped Act 1975 that established the "zero-reject policy" for all in public schools. Within the

UK, it was not until 2001, with The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001), that mainstream schools were prohibited from refusing a place to a child with SEN on the basis that the school could not meet the pupil's needs. These laws created a new set of customs regarding SEN and, therefore, the mainstreaming of challenging ideas was effective (Hopkins et al. 1996; Lispky and Gartner 1997; Sebba 1996). It must be noted that, as illustrated above, the mainstreaming process within education is reformist in its approach to change.

Mainstreaming defined

The idea behind mainstreaming was education for all, or in other words, to reverse the trend of segregating based on SEN status within the education system. Mainstreaming used as a term in education is commonly taken to describe the process of transferring children and young people from special to mainstream schools (Thomas et al. 1998, 10).

A good concept?

The concept of mainstreaming, originating within education to depict a specific phenomenon, appears to match many of the criteria of a good concept as outlined above by Gerring (1999). It has resonance in the sense that it is immediately recognisable. The concept exhibits a high level of simplicity and internal coherence. This is because mainstreaming in education specifically refers to those with SEN, who had traditionally been schooled separately, being placed into mainstream schools. It can be concluded, therefore, that, on the surface at least, mainstreaming within education meets some of the criteria of a good concept.

However, there are a number of inherent problems with the concept. First, while the word "mainstreaming" is used predominately in the US and Canada, "integration" is the preferred term in the UK and Australia (Thomas et al. 1998, 12). Both terms refer to the same idea—children with and without SEN sharing space in an educational setting. The use of different words for the same phenomena can lead to confusion when trying to understand and utilise concepts, particularly for research. In the 1980s, the terms integration/mainstreaming were superseded by the term "inclusion." The main driver for the change in terminology was that it was suggested that the term integration and mainstreaming inferred a stigma. This is because it was considered that integration/mainstreaming emphasised the issue that children with SEN should be seen as more like those without SEN, rather than accepting their differences (Tilstone et al.

1998, 15). Despite discussion of the distinction in meaning between integration/mainstreaming and inclusion, all continued to be used interchangeably (Jupp 1992; Meijer et al. 1994). The ramifications of attempting to neutralise the power relations of the term mainstreaming in education, have led to some confusion. Therefore, the conceptual boundaries of mainstreaming, indicating what a concept is not (differentiation) as well as its internal properties (coherence) are blurred.

Environmental mainstreaming

In the 1960s, the idea of mainstreaming the environment in public policy arrived on the public agenda. In a similar vein to education, one of the key elements behind the origin of the concept in this field was a critique of orthodoxy. This is illustrated in the seminal work of Carson (1962), entitled *Silent Spring*, which helped draw attention to environmental issues. Her book highlighted the effects of chemical pesticides and insecticides, notably Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT), on wildlife and their habitat as well as the dangers to humans. The author did not merely present scientific evidence but challenged the idea that industries had the right to exploit nature (Carson 1962). The evidence itself was not necessarily "new" as similar arguments had been raised in the 1950s (McCormick 1989). However, her attack on current attitudes to progress occurred at a time when people were more receptive to these ideas (McCormick 1989). In the field of environmental policy (similarly to education), mainstreaming begins with a critique, as seen in Carson's (1960) research. It is evident that there is a pattern developing within the process associated with the term mainstreaming. However, as the author will demonstrate, this has not necessarily been acknowledged in the academic and practitioner mainstreaming literature, as such it is characterised on the whole by a disjointed discussion.

By the 1970s, a series of conferences concerning environmental problems were held. With advances in communication technology, media and air travel, international conferences became an important part of the public policy and therefore political landscape. International conferences on mainstreaming environmental concerns were utilised as a way to exert pressure to change current practices by drawing attention to an issue (Voice) and offering suggestions for solutions (alternative policy vision). For example, in 1972 in Stockholm, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) began holding international conferences, promoting detailed studies as part of a co-ordinated response to global environmental problems (Doyle and McEachern 2001). These conferences were followed

by the World Conservation Strategy (1980) and the Brundtland Report (1987) on sustainable development (Doyle and McEachern 2001).

Formalisation

In 1992, the Earth Summit, formally known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), was held in Rio de Janeiro. The summit launched Agenda 21—an action plan for sustainable development to be adopted at the national and local levels of nation states (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development 2005).

As a result of Agenda 21, environmental issues started to become central to public policy makers around the globe and were consequently put on the agenda of many states. Despite the later problems of getting nations to carry out Agenda 21, there was an expectation inherent in the program for nation states to implement a host of newly created practices (United Nations 2004). Overall, the strategy used to address the issue of sustainable development required a reformist attitude to encourage "big business" and industrial organisations, perceived as part of the problem, to become part of the solution. That is, big business was encouraged to move into the sustainable development sector, an arena where a plethora of competing interests exist. To achieve success, environmental campaigners, industry and big business would need to work together and, thus; all parties involved would need to reform attitudes. This latter point highlights a further pattern developing across the mainstreaming literature, that the process is reformist in nature.

Mainstreaming defined in terms of the environment

A "typical" definition of mainstreaming the environment is provided by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP):

> Environmental mainstreaming is the integration of environmental considerations into UNDP's policies, programming and operations to ensure the coherence and sustainability of our mission and practices.
>
> (United Nations Development Program 2004, 9)

A good concept?

In a similar vein to education, there is an absence of a common idiom in the field of environmental mainstreaming. Therefore, differentiation, in

terms of establishing what mainstreaming is not, is unclear. Where mainstreaming the environment refers to embedding an environmental perspective across an organisation's policies, structures and operations, leading to new ways of working, many terms are used to refer to the same process. It is not clear why different terms are used. For example, the term "environmental governance" is used by Carter to outline policy elites rethinking perception (2001, 258). Lenschow (2002, 6) refers to a similar process as "environmental protection integration" in reference to institutionalising new ideas. While Park (2007), in a more recent work, defines mainstreaming the environment at the World Bank as the process of "integrating the environment" (Park 2007). The environmentally specific terms used by Carter (2001) and Lenschow (2002), as well as the UNDP (2004) and Park (2007), in broad terms, refer to the same process of including a new perspective on the environment across an organisation leading to new working practises. Despite the similarities, the use of different words for the same process remains a norm within the study and practice of environmental politics.

However, one of the benefits of recent uses of the term mainstreaming in the context of the environment is that it creates connections to its application in gender politics. This allows for the accumulation of knowledge and understanding surrounding the term mainstreaming and, thus, familiarity. The latter prevents clashes with established usage. For example, the UNDP goes on to argue that:

> The mainstreaming of gender issues within UNDP (as well as in the wider UN system) faces challenges that are in many ways similar to those encountered in environmental mainstreaming. In consequence, lessons may be learned from experiences in that field.
>
> (United Nations Development Program 2004, 12)

What is interesting here is that explicit links are being made between the mainstreaming process in the environment and that in gender politics. However, some inherent problems exist in the use of mainstreaming within the environment policy area. The main problem is that the word mainstreaming in environmental matters was not linked to its use in education despite the observation that one could argue they are similar processes of political change. Therefore, while the field of utility is maintained between GM and environmental mainstreaming, the same cannot be said of mainstreaming in education. Further to this, if links between education, the environment and gender processes of mainstreaming are not made, true familiarity cannot be achieved.

Gender mainstreaming

In the 1970s, the development literature assumed the absence of "gender differentials" in development policy. This meant that it was assumed that men and women benefited equally from development programs (Jahan 1995, 92). Boserup's (1970) seminal work highlighted that not including differences between women and men in development policy fundamentally misled the development process. In the United States, numerous women's groups lobbied Congress on these issues, which resulted in the 1973 Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act (Kardam 1997a, 137).[12] Boserup (1970) provided the analytical and empirical bases for the Women In Development (WID) movement (Razzavi and Miller 1995a, 5) which, provided a critique of development policy on the basis that there was an absence of a gender lens for development policy and practice (Voice).

A host of international UN conferences on women and development were then held. Similar to the educational and environmental politics described above, the WID movement and notable individuals drew attention to the public policy problem and sought to find a reformist solution to those issues. In 1985, the Third UN Conference for Women was held in Nairobi, Kenya, where "mainstreaming" was presented as a way of including women in development (both bringing women into the policy-making arena and ensuring public policy took account of the differential effects it may have on women), as outlined in the document produced by the Nairobi conference entitled "Forward Looking Strategies for Women" (FLSfW) (United Nations 1985). By 1995, a fourth UN Conference on Women was held in China at Beijing. The Beijing conference focused on the review of progress achieved since the conference in Nairobi and launched the Platform for Action (PfA) (United Nations 1995).

Formalisation

The PfA raised the profile of the concept of GM widely by presenting it not solely as a development issue but, as a new way of governing within organisations (and as a means of organising the state)[13]; thus, it was representing a clear and alternative policy vision. Similarities can be drawn between the codification of new laws in SEN, such as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) and Agenda 21 document within the environment agenda, because as a result of the Beijing conference, many states adopted national plans for GM. The PfA was