ROUTLEDGE PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT

THIRD EDITION

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

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ROUTLEDGE

1 Introduction

Gender is a development issue

Learning objectives

When you have finished reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand flexible gender identities and roles
- appreciate the gender impact of sudden economic change
- be aware of different approaches to gender and development
- be familiar with the basic spatial patterns of gender and development.

This book is concerned with the changing impact of development on women and men. Since the first edition was published in 2004 new problems including climate change, terrorism, economic shocks, civil wars and increasing rates of migration have led to a reorientation of development policies. Yet the development process continues to affect women and men in different ways. The after-effects of colonialism, and the peripheral position of poor countries of the South and those with economies in transition, exacerbate the effects of gender discrimination. The modern sector takes over subsistence activities formerly undertaken by women. Often a majority of the better-paid jobs involving new technology go to men, but male income is less likely to be spent on the family. However, new low-paid and low-skilled jobs for young women are also created in factories producing goods for export (Box 1.1).

Modernization of agriculture has altered the division of labour between the sexes, increasing women's dependent status as well as workload. Women often lose control over resources such as land and are generally excluded from access to improved agricultural methods. They may also suffer more than men from the impact of climate change largely because male mobility is higher than female, both between places and between jobs, and more women are being left alone to support children. In some countries, especially in the Middle

East, South Asia and Latin America, women often cannot do paid work or travel without a male guardian's written permission. Women may carry a double or even triple burden of work as they cope with housework, childcare and subsistence food production, in addition to an expanding involvement in paid employment. Everywhere women work longer hours than men. The pressure on gender relations of the changing status of women, particularly of young women, combined with growing impoverishment at the household level, is crucial to the success or failure of development policies.

Plate 1.1 ***Bangladesh: young women working in a garment factory in Dhaka. They are doing finishing work on garments***

Source: author

Gender (the socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity by which women and men are identified) is a widely used and often misunderstood term. It is sometimes mistakenly conflated with sex or used to refer only to women. Gender identities, because they are socially acquired, are flexible and not simple binary constructions. Women and girls with non-conforming sexual identities including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered and inter-sex (LBGTI) persons may be especially vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV). In societies everywhere heterosexuality is considered to be the norm and is socially regulated. Today there is greater awareness of multiple sexualities and transgender individuals in poor countries of the South, but 72 countries in 2018 still criminalized same-sex practices, based in many cases on unchanged colonial laws. International development has itself harmed individuals with non-conforming sexual identities through conquest, migration and globalization as well as colonialism (Oosterhoff and Sweetman 2018).

In Polynesia, in families without daughters, one son may be selected when very young to be raised as a girl to fulfil the family's needs for someone to undertake a daughter's roles, such as care of siblings and housework. As adults, these individuals usually continue to live and dress as women, and occupy female roles with jobs as waitresses or maids in the rapidly growing tourist industry, or even as transvestite prostitutes. Today the *faafafine* (trying to be like a lady) are also found in Melanesia and are becoming more open and in some forms more aggressive (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2002; Ardener and Shaw 2005). *Bacha posh*, literally meaning 'dressed up as a boy', is a cultural practice in parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan, in which some families without sons will pick a daughter to live and behave like a boy. She will dress like a boy, have her hair cut short and take a male name. This enables the child to behave more freely, attend school, play sports and find work, and allows the family to avoid the stigma associated with not having male children. Unlike the *faafafine*, the *bacha posh* usually switch back to being women when they reach marriageable age in their late teens. Many women find this difficult because they have not been socialized in women's roles and miss the freedom they had as a boy (Worcholak 2012). Such traditional patterns of gender flexibility also occur in other parts of the Global South.

Gender relations (the socially constructed form of relations between women and men) have been interrogated in terms of the way development policies change the balance of power between women and men. Gender roles (the household tasks and types of employment

socially assigned to women and men) are not fixed and globally consistent and indeed become more flexible with the changes brought about by economic development. Everywhere gender is crosscut by differences in class, race, ethnicity, religion, age and disability. The much-criticized binary division between 'Western' women and the 'Other', between white and non-white and between colonizer and colonized is both patronizing and simplistic (Mohanty 1984). Feminists have often seen women as socially constituted as a homogeneous group on the basis of shared oppression. But in order to understand these gender relations we must interpret them within specific societies and on the basis of historical and political practice, not a priori on gender terms alone. Different places and societies have different practices and it is necessary to be cognisant of this heterogeneity within a certain global homogeneity of gender roles. At the same time we need to be aware of different voices and to give them agency. The subaltern voice is hard to hear but by presenting experiences from fieldwork, I have tried to incorporate it. The voices of educated women and men of the South can interpret postcoloniality, but because they write in the colonizers' languages, their voices have to be listened to on several levels. By combining an appreciation of different places and different voices we can arrive at an understanding of how the process of economic change in the South and in the post-communist countries is impacting people and communities (Kinnaird and Momsen 1993).

Clearly, the roles of men and women in different places show great variation: most clerks in Martinique are women but this is not so in Madras, just as women make up the vast majority of domestic servants in Lima but not in Lagos. Nearly 90 per cent of sales workers in Accra are women but in Algeria they are almost all men (Plates 1.2 and 7.2). In every country the jobs done predominantly by women are the least well paid and have the lowest status. In the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, Russia and China, where most jobs were open to men and women under communism, the transition to capitalism has led to increased unemployment, especially for women. Dentistry in Hungary had long been largely a female occupation because it had lower status than medicine, but after 1989 dentists were able to earn more from foreign patients than physicians and suddenly dental schools had a majority of male students. In most parts of the world the gender gap in political representation has become smaller, but in the former USSR and its satellite countries in Eastern and Central Europe there has been a rapid decline in average female representation in parliament, from

27 per cent in 1987 under communism to 7 per cent in 1994 (United Nations 1995b). The relationship between development and the spatial patterns of the gender gap provides the main theme of this book.

In the third millennium most of the world's population is living more comfortably than it was a century ago and life expectancy has increased. Birth rates are rapidly falling and population growth rates peaked in South America in 1961, Africa in 1981, Asia in 1985 and Oceania in 2005, as women gain more rights and have access to contraception. Absolute decline in population numbers takes longer, but as health care improves, women are becoming in the majority as they live longer than men (Dorling 2013). Women as a group now have a greater voice in both their public and private lives. The spread of education and literacy has opened up new opportunities for many people and the time–space compression associated with globalization is making possible the increasingly rapid and widespread distribution of information and scientific knowledge. Improvements in

Plate 1.2 ***Burkina Faso: women vegetable growers accompanied by small children, selling their produce in the town of Ouahigouya in northern Burkina Faso. Buyers, generally men, come from as far away as Togo***

Source: Vincent Dao, University of California, Davis

communications, however, also make us aware that economic development is not always unidirectional and benefits are not equally available.

Women's organizations, and the various United Nations international women's conferences in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing over the last three decades, have put gender issues firmly on the development agenda but economic growth and modernization is not gender neutral. The experiences of different states and regions show that economic prosperity helps gender equality but some gender gaps are resistant to change. Rapid growth, as in the East Asian countries, has led to a narrowing of the gender differences in wages and education but inequality in political representation remains.

Sudden changes, such as new kinds of industrialization or the post-Cold War transition in Eastern Europe, create new gender differences in which women are generally the losers (Box 1.1).

Box 1.1 Bangladesh: gendered progress in development

Bangladesh has the seventh largest population and is the eighth most densely populated country in the world. Shortly after independence in 1971 Bangladesh was infamously dubbed an economic basket case (Paprocki 2018: 959). The country is seen as a successful example of neoliberal development and has recently been upgraded from a low-income country (LDC) to a lower-middle-income country (LMIC) according to the World Bank's classification. The government now aspires to graduate to middle-income status by 2021 and Bangladesh is considered as one of 11 emerging economies (Alamgir 2017). The Human Development Index for the country has improved from 36 in 1995 to 50 in 2013. Much of this change has been brought about through the activities of domestic and international NGOs and the inflow of remittances from Bangladeshi male migrants working overseas.

There are clear gender aspects of this change. In 2002 Bangladesh had 106 men per 100 women but by 2014 this had fallen to 102. In 2002 life expectancy for both men and women was the same at 60.8 years but just 12 years later male life expectancy had risen to 68.5 but female life expectancy was 70.2 years. This greater improvement in life expectancy for women reflects in part the fall in the fertility rate over the same period from 3.8 children per woman to 2.2, with an increasing number of pregnancies and births benefiting from modern birth control and medical services. This was helped by the largest total and per capita funding for population control of any country in the world during the 1980s which improved access to reproductive health care for poor women, but was accompanied by reports of forced sterilizations and other problems (Paprocki 2018).

Then in 1976 Bangladesh, through the Grameen Bank, led the way in another major development trend, becoming the first site of microcredit aimed at reducing rural poverty through providing small loans to rural women (Yunus 1997). Other agencies also provided loans and the Grameen Bank diversified and began working with other lenders such as foreign telephone companies. By 2000 the Grameen Bank was lending money to 2.36 million borrowers in more than 40,000 Bangladeshi villages. Over 60 per cent of rural households are now members of microfinance agencies but the results are mixed, with rural indebtedness increasing and the empowerment of women limited.

Opportunities for female employment and urbanization have also brought many changes. Although Bangladesh has achieved gender parity at primary school level, adult literacy is higher for men at 62 per cent compared to 53 per cent for women. The rate of child marriage and early pregnancy is still one of the highest in the world and women's lives are dominated by a patrilineal and patrilocal system. As a predominantly Muslim country Bangladeshi women's lives are controlled by the system of *purdah* under which any kind of work for women outside the home is a violation of *purdah*. Yet the migration of men has enabled women to take leadership roles in their rural communities as hygiene promoters and community midwives, and by discouraging girls to marry before they are 18 (*Guardian Weekly* 9 October 2015). But when the garment industry started in Bangladesh in the 1970s, women workers were needed in the cities.

The garment industry

In 1974 Europe and the USA under the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) imposed quotas on the import of clothes from the newly industrialized countries, namely Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, in order to protect their own clothing industries. Bangladesh was quota free and had very low wages for women workers. The country first exported ready-made clothes to France in 1977. South Korea provided the necessary training and technology to Bangladesh to enable it to compete in the global market and by 1986 Bangladesh had 753 factories, increasing to 3,000 in 2000. Most of the factories are in the capital Dhaka with some in Chittagong. Today Bangladesh is the second largest exporter of garments, after China, in the world and the ready-made garment industry (RMG) sector accounts for 80 per cent of the country's annual exports and employs nearly four million women (Plate 1.1).

Factory work in the garment industry conflicts with cultural expectations, but poverty has driven a redefinition of *purdah* as *purdah* of the mind, thus making factory work more acceptable. The myth of nimble fingers and docility has been used by factory managers to recruit women and they often employ relatives to make the workplace seem more respectable. The labour participation rate of women reached 36 per cent in 2010 but fell in 2013 to 33.5 per cent. The decline was greatest among the youngest group (15- to 19-year-olds) probably because of increasing enrolment in secondary schools. Better-educated women can get higher-paying positions in the garment factories (Jahan 2018) as well as positions with NGOs and in teaching. So family opposition to educating girls has declined. Labour force participation among the 20- to 29-year-old group and

among those over 55 has increased. By 2017 female labour force participation had increased to 41 per cent (Alamgir 2017). Many of the younger workers are becoming consumers of clothes and developing a style which apes urban middle-class women's fashion (Jahan 2018).

Working conditions are poor and often dangerous. The women garment workers are no longer docile and they now take the lead in striking for better conditions and wages. After the terrible fire in the eight-floor Rana Plaza factory on 24 April 2013 killed 1,134 and injured a further 2,500 garment workers, many European and North American clothing retailers demanded improvements in factory conditions and worker safety (*The Economist* 13.7.13). This led to the Bangladesh Accord in May, a legally binding international agreement on fire and building safety, backed by 72 mainly European brands. Two months later 17 North American retail chains launched the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. In 2014 independent engineers carried out safety inspections, identified more than 80,000 safety issues and suspended production at 17 factories. The minimum wage for garment workers was increased by 77 per cent and unions were set up with the majority of members and 65 per cent of the officials being women. In 2017 the workers went on strike, demanding a tripling of the minimum wage from $67 a month, then the lowest minimum wage in the world (*Guardian* 13 January 2017). In 2018 the Bangladesh high court ordered the Dhaka office of the Accord to close as the government felt it should regain control of inspections (*Guardian* 1 December 2018), but observers feel that trade union activity is repressed and safety upgrades in factories are still needed.

In rural areas women are also important as workers in the shrimp and crab fisheries which provide the second most valuable export for Bangladesh. But here they are vulnerable to the dangers of typhoons which regularly cause wind damage to property and flooding in much of south-western Bangladesh (Rezwana 2017). Agricultural land is lost to salinization and is washed away into rivers, forcing farming families to migrate to cities such as Dhaka. In the Chittagong area around Cox's Bazar is a camp of 919,000 Rohingya refugees who have fled from persecution in Myanmar (17.11.2018). The local Chittagong dialect is similar to the Rohingya language so young Bangladeshi women have found a new role as interpreters between refugees and the various international aid agencies working in the camp. Such professional opportunities for young women encourage them to seek more education and reduce the need for them to flee to cities.

Both government and main opposition political parties are led by women and much of the growth rate, which has averaged over 6 per cent per annum since 2005, has been brought about through the work of women. More than 15 million people have moved out of poverty since 1992 with the proportion of people living in absolute poverty having fallen to 9.2 per cent in 2018, but 40 million still live below the national poverty line. The society is still very unequal and Bangladesh ranked 148 out of 157 countries in 2018 on the Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (DFI and Oxfam 2018).

Sources: Alamgir 2017; *The Economist* 13.7.2013; Development Finance International (DFI) and Oxfam 2018; Huq-Hussain, Ullah Khan and Momsen 2006; Jahan 2018; Paprocki 2018; Rezwana 2017; Ridout and Tisdall 2015; Safi 2017

Authorial positionality

As a Western white woman feminist writing about women and men in the developing and transitional countries, there is clearly a huge gap between observer and observed. As a dual national (British and Canadian) who has lived and taught in the USA, the Caribbean, Costa Rica, Brazil and Nigeria, and carried out fieldwork in such disparate areas as the mountains of southern China among minority Yi people, with Mayans in Mexico and in Hungarian villages, over 40 years' experience has taught me a lot. I have also benefited enormously from working with wise colleagues and graduate students from developing countries including Bangladesh, Barbados, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria, Singapore, Sri Lanka, St Kitts-Nevis, Trinidad and Western Samoa, and with fellow members of the Board of the Association of Women and Human Rights in Development (AWID) and as a Trustee of the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC). Above all, the award of the position of an honorary Queen Mother, with the title of Nana Ama Sekiybea, by the Chief of an Akuapem village in southern Ghana was especially meaningful.

Development

After the Second World War, the United States and its allies recognized the need for a policy that would spread the benefits of scientific and industrial discoveries. Two-thirds of the world was defined as underdeveloped, foreign aid became an accepted but declining part of national budgets and development agencies began to proliferate. Gradually aid, including food and military aid, became a political tool used by the superpowers, mainly the USA and the USSR, in a Cold War competition to influence the ex-colonial and non-aligned nations of the so-called 'Third World'. With the collapse of the state socialist model in the USSR and Eastern Europe in 1989, the Western model of neoliberal capitalism became dominant. Although some countries such as Cuba, China and North Korea continued with centrally planned state socialism in some form, they gradually instituted some market-oriented reforms. Poverty was seen as contributing to the 'war on terrorism' and so poverty reduction, especially in areas seen as vulnerable to anti-Western ideas, became the new focus of development aid.

For many people the last few decades have brought better living conditions, health and well-being, although there are some exceptions. Today the focus is less on increasing gross domestic product and spreading modernization, and more on debt relief, reducing corruption and disease, recognizing the importance of social as well as human capital and the overall reduction of poverty. These development goals will be considered in terms of gender differences.

Gender equality does not necessarily mean equal numbers of men and women or girls and boys in all activities, nor does it mean treating them in the same way. It means equality of opportunity and a society in which women and men are able to lead equally fulfilling lives. The aim of gender equality recognizes that men and women often have different needs and priorities, face different constraints and have different aspirations. Above all, the absence of gender equality means a huge loss of human potential and has costs for both men and women and also for development.

Over half a century ago, in 1946, the United Nations set up the Commission on the Status of Women. It was to have two basic functions: to 'prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields'; and to make recommendations on 'urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights' (United Nations 1996: 13). The remit of the Commission remained essentially the same until 1987 when it was expanded to include advocacy for equality, development and peace plus monitoring of the implementation of measures for the advancement of women at regional, sectoral, national and global levels (United Nations 1996). Progress has been less than expected, but disparities between different countries are greater than those between women and men in any one country. Today the global average life expectancy at birth for girls born in 2012 is 73 and for men 68. This is six years longer than the average life expectancy for a child born in 1990. With lengthening lives come more years of disability and higher proportions of elderly in the population. The 'old-age dependency ratio' – the ratio of old people to those of working age – was 16 people aged 65 and over for every 100 adults between the ages of 15 and 64 in 2010. By 2035 the United Nations expects this ratio to have risen to 26 people. Over the same period in China the ratio will more than double from 15 to 36 and in Latin America from 14 to 27. Even within individual countries women are not a homogeneous group but can be differentiated by class, race, religion and life stage. The elite and the

young are more likely to be educated everywhere, increasing the generational gap. The range on most socio-economic measures is wider for women than for men and is greatest among the countries of the South.

There is a great deal of evidence drawn from comparisons at the national and sub-national scale that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay a price in more poverty, slower growth and a lower quality of life, while gender equality enhances development. Literate mothers have better-fed children who are more likely to attend school. Yet in no country in the developing world do women enjoy equality with men in terms of political, legal, social and economic rights. In general, women in Eastern Europe have the greatest equality of rights, but this has declined in the last two decades. The lowest equality of rights is found in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. There is some evidence that equality of rights has improved since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was established in 1979 and came into force in 1981 after it had been ratified by 20 countries (Elson 2000). By 2018, 189 countries had become party to the Convention. In 2018 the United States and Palau, though signatories, had still not ratified it. The Holy See, Iran, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga had not signed CEDAW. Unfortunately, ratification of CEDAW does not necessarily lead to an immediate reduction in gender discrimination, but it does enforce regular reporting on progress.

By the turn of the century there had been three United Nations Development Decades. The Decade for Women (1976–1985) culminated in a conference in Nairobi in 1985. Despite decades of official development policy, by 1990 the extent of poverty, disease, illiteracy and unemployment in the South had increased. During the 1980s we witnessed unprecedented growth of developing country debt and acute famine in Africa. Similarly, the Decade for Women saw only very limited changes in patriarchal attitudes – that is, institutionalized male dominance – and few areas where modernization was associated with a reversal of the overwhelming subordination of women (Box 1.1).

Yet despite the apparent lack of change, the United Nations Decade for Women achieved a new awareness of the need to consider women when planning for development. In the United States the Percy Amendment of 1973 ensured that women had to be specifically

included in all projects of the Agency for International Development. The British Commonwealth established a Woman and Development programme in 1980 supported by all member countries. In many parts of the South, women's organizations and networks at the community and national level have come to play an increasingly important role in the initiation and implementation of development projects. Above all, the Decade for Women brought about a realization that data collection and research were needed in order to document the situation of women throughout the world. The consequent outpouring of information has made this book possible.

Women and development

Prior to 1970, when Ester Boserup published her landmark book on women and development, it was thought that the development process affected men and women in the same way. Productivity was equated with the cash economy and so most of women's work was ignored.

When it became apparent that economic development did not automatically eradicate poverty through trickle-down effects, the problems of distribution and equality of benefits to the various segments of the population became of major importance in development theory. Research on women in developing countries challenged the most fundamental assumptions of international development, added a gender dimension to the study of the development process and demanded a new theoretical approach.

The early 1970s' approach of 'integration', based on the belief that women could be brought into existing modes of benevolent development without a major restructuring of the process of development, has been the object of much feminist critique. The alternative vision, of development *with* women, demanded not just a bigger piece of someone else's pie, but a whole new dish, prepared, baked and distributed equally. It soon became clear that a focus on women alone was inadequate and that a gendered view was needed. Women and men are affected differently by economic change and development and thus an active public policy is needed to intervene in order to close gender gaps. In the mission statement of the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, it was said that '[a] transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is a condition for people-centred sustainable development' (United Nations 1996: 652).

The focus on gender in development policies emerged first from the major national and international aid agencies. Governments in the South quickly learned that they needed to build a gender aspect into their requests for assistance. Thus in the beginning it was the North that largely imposed the agenda. As non-governmental organizations (NGOs) began to play an increasingly important role in grassroots delivery of aid, their gender policies began to influence local action. In a Ghanaian village the men had had a reafforestation project for a decade at some distance from the village. The chief told me that he decided to set up a women's agroforestry project, under the leadership of his sister, because he knew, from radio reports of the current interests of NGOs, that it would be easier to get outside financial assistance for such a project than for one involving men. In this case the agenda set at the top was manipulated from the grassroots.

Approaches to women, gender and development

Development paradigms that influence the global gender and development framework change over time and are influenced by aid agency practices, donor fashions, think tanks, private sector norms and sometimes academic research. By the end of the twentieth century all approaches to development involving a focus on women had been amalgamated into a gender and development (GAD) approach. Kate Young argues that this bears little similarity to the original formulation of GAD and that the term gender is often used as a mere synonym for women/woman (Young 2002). The study of masculinities and of men as the missing half of GAD is now on the agenda, but is provoking much ambivalence since it has a number of important implications for GAD policies and practice, especially in terms of undermining efforts to help women, as gender equality is still far from being achieved (Cornwall and White 2000).

Chronology of approaches

1 *The welfare approach* Until the early 1970s development policies were directed at women only in the context of their roles as wives and mothers, with a focus on mother and child health and on reducing fertility. It was assumed that the benefits of macroeconomic strategies for growth would automatically trickle down to the poor, and that poor women would benefit as the economic position of their husbands

improved. Boserup (1970) challenged these assumptions, showing that women did not always benefit as the household head's income increased and that women were increasingly being associated with the backward and traditional and were losing status.

2 *The WID approach* The rise of the women's movement in Western Europe and North America, the 1975 UN International Year for Women and the International Women's Decade (1976–1985) led to the establishment of women's ministries in many countries and the institutionalization of Women in Development (WID) policies in governments, donor agencies and NGOs. The aim of WID was to integrate women into economic development by focusing on income generation projects for women.

This anti-poverty approach failed on its own terms as most of its income-generation projects were only marginally successful, often because they were set up on the basis of a belief that women of the South had spare time available to undertake these projects. It left women out of the mainstream of development and treated all women identically. It also ghettoized the WID group within development agencies. By the 1980s WID advocates shifted from exposing the negative effects of development on women to showing that development efforts were losing out by ignoring women's actual or potential contribution.

3 *Gender and Development (GAD)* This approach originated in academic criticism starting in the mid-1970s in the UK (Young 2002: 322). Based on the concept of gender (the socially acquired ideas of masculinity and femininity) and gender relations (the socially constructed pattern of relations between men and women), it analysed how development reshapes these power relations. Drawing on feminist political activism, gender analysts explicitly see women as agents of change. They also criticize the WID approach for treating women as a homogeneous category and emphasize the important influence of differences of class, age, marital status, religion and ethnicity or race on development outcomes.

Proponents distinguished between 'practical' gender interests – that is, items that would improve women's lives within their existing roles – and 'strategic' gender interests that help to increase women's ability to take on new roles and to empower them (Molyneux 1985; Moser 1993). Gender analysts demanded a commitment to change in the structures of power in national and international agencies through gender mainstreaming (Derbyshire 2002).

4 *Women and Development (WAD)* At the 1975 UN Women's World Conference in Mexico City the feminist approaches of predominantly white women from the North aimed at gender equality were rejected by many women in the South who argued that the development model itself lacked the perspective of developing countries. They saw overcoming poverty and the effects of colonialism as more important than equality. Out of this grew the DAWN Network, based in the South, which aimed to make the view of developing countries more widely known and influential (Sen and Grown 1987).

By 1990 WID, GAD and WAD views had largely converged (Rathgeber 1990) but different approaches to gender and development continued to evolve.

5 *The efficiency approach* The strategy under this approach was to argue that, in the context of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), gender analysis made good economic sense. It was recognized that understanding men's and women's roles and responsibilities as part of the planning of development interventions improved project effectiveness. The efficiency approach was criticized for focusing on what women could do for development rather than on what development could do for women.

6 *The empowerment approach* In the 1980s, empowerment was regarded as a weapon for the weak, best wielded through grassroots and participatory activities (Parpart 2002). However, empowerment has many meanings and by the mid-1990s some mainstream development agencies had begun to adopt the term. For the most part these institutions see empowerment as a means for enhancing efficiency and productivity without changing the status quo. The alternative development literature, on the other hand, looks to empowerment as a method of social transformation and achieving gender equality. Jo Rowlands (1997) saw empowerment as a broad development process that enables people to gain self-confidence and self-esteem, so allowing both men and women to actively participate in development decision-making. The empowerment approach was also linked to the rise of participatory approaches to development and often meant working with women at the community level building organizational skills.

7 *Gender and the Environment (GED)* This approach was initially based on ecofeminist views, especially those of Vandana Shiva (1989), which made an essentialist link between women and the

environment and encouraged environmental programmes to focus on women's roles. Others take a materialist or feminist political ecology approach (see Chapter 5).

8 *Mainstreaming gender equality* The term 'gender mainstreaming' came into widespread use with the adoption of the Platform for Action at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The 189 governments represented in Beijing unanimously affirmed that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality with men are matters of fundamental human rights and therefore a prerequisite for social justice. Gender mainstreaming attempts to combine the strengths of the efficiency and empowerment approaches within the context of mainstream development (Sweetman 2015). Mainstreaming gender equality tries to ensure that women's as well as men's concerns and experiences are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects so that gender inequality is not perpetuated. It also helps to overcome the problems of male backlash against women when women-only projects are successful (Momsen 2001). In the late 1990s donor-supported development shifted away from discrete project interventions to general poverty elimination, which potentially provides an ideal context for gender mainstreaming. Attention is only just beginning to be paid to the gender dimensions of poverty alleviation (Narayan and Petesch 2002).

9 *Human rights* This approach has become dominant in the last two decades. It underlies the Sustainable Development Goals and considers social justice for all as well as economic development. An aspect of this has been a surge in young feminisms as the development sector becomes more interested in young people as a result of

> *peak youth populations in the global South; a vibrant fourth wave of feminism, often focusing on sexual violence, pioneering online forms of collective action, and feminist ways of working that reject hierarchy and domination; and the emergence of young women activists mobilizing around the world in response to current onslaughts on women's rights.*
>
> (Davies and Sweetman 2018)

The United Nations first acknowledged young people as a constituency as early as 1965 and more recently proclaimed 2010 as the International Year of Youth. Development agencies have published their first youth agendas. The current youth bulge in many

populations has helped governments to see the potential of young women for economic development by increasing the agency and choices they face if their rights and social justice issues are met. The concept of intersectionality – the idea that different types of oppression interact – is central to young feminist organizing. The use of digital activism and social media is enabling increasing numbers of young women to participate in development.

Development goals

The Millennium Declaration signed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 set out the United Nations' goals for the next 15 years. These goals came from the resolutions of the various world conferences organized by the United Nations during the 1990s. The goals were seen as targets that could be monitored and achieved by 2015. There were eight main goals, among which were: halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015; enrol all children in primary school by 2015; reduce infant and child mortality rates by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015; implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005; and develop a global partnership for development. Goal three was the main one, to focus on gender issues, aiming to empower women and eliminate gender disparities in education.

By 2015 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had saved the lives of millions and improved conditions for many more (UN 2015). In 1981 52 per cent or over half the world's population lived on less than $1.25 per day, falling to 47 per cent in 1990 and to 14 per cent by 2015, with the number of people living in extreme poverty dropping from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. The decline was largely driven by economic growth among the large populations of India and China. Primary school net enrolment rose from 83 per cent in 2000 to 91 per cent in 2015 and the gender gap in education has been eliminated. Women now make up 41 per cent of workers outside agriculture, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990. The average proportion of women in parliament nearly doubled over the same period. Child and maternal mortality fell mainly since 2000. Deaths from HIV, malaria and tuberculosis were reduced by better diagnosis, prevention and treatment. This was helped by better access to improved drinking water for 91 per cent of the global population compared to 76 per cent in 1990. Official development assistance

increased and by 2015 95 per cent of the world's population was covered by a mobile-cellular signal. Remarkable progress was made in some of the world's poorest countries with 19 moving up and out of the lowest development category; Rwandans expect to live 32 years longer than they did in 1990; and sub-Saharan Africa achieved a 20 per cent rise in school enrolment. But elsewhere progress was stalled by disasters, conflict, environmental degradation or climate instability. Hunger continues to stunt the growth of about 160 million children a year and women in poor countries are 14 times more likely to die in childbirth than in rich countries.

Although significant achievements were made on many of the MDG targets worldwide, progress was uneven across regions and countries. Millions of people were left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location. The MDGs have been criticized for being too narrow and top-down. They were aimed at reducing poverty in developing countries. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) follow and build on the MDGs and commit to 'leaving no-one behind' and cover all nations. They are to be achieved by 2030 and focus on transforming economies while protecting the environment, ensuring peace and respecting human rights globally. They were drawn up following a very wide global consultation and include 17 goals encompassing a total of 169 targets and 232 indicators.

Sustainable development goals

1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3 Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10 Reduce inequality within and among countries
11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The SDGs seek to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs and respond to new challenges. Each government sets its own targets, taking into account national circumstances. By 2018 it was noted that women's rights were facing renewed resistance from different kinds of fundamentalisms and fascisms and women's human rights defenders were exposed to threats and persecution by both state and non-state actors. Furthermore, currently only 10 of the 54 gender-related indicators could reliably be monitored at the global level.

The principal themes

Three fundamental themes have emerged from the literature on gender and development. The first is the realization that all societies have established a clear-cut division of labour by sex, although what is considered a female or male task varies cross-culturally, implying that there is no natural and fixed gender division of labour. Second, research has shown that, in order to comprehend gender roles in production, we also need to understand gender roles within the household. The integration of women's reproductive and productive work within the private sphere of the home and in the public sphere outside must be considered if we are to appreciate the dynamics of women's role in development. The third fundamental finding is that economic development has been shown to have a differential impact

on men and women and the impact on women has, with few exceptions, generally been negative. These three themes will be examined in the chapters that follow.

Women have three roles in most parts of the world: reproduction, production and community management. Today women are choosing to undertake these roles in new ways, to opt out of some, to employ paid assistance or to seek help from husbands or other family members. Planners have often used a gender roles framework but this has been criticized for ignoring political and economic differences within a community and for assuming that any new resource will be good for all women (Porter and Judd 1999). Participatory and community development models are often gender-blind and may just reinforce local patriarchal and elite control. They often also assume a homogeneity of gender interests at the community level. To rely on such methods may well be to give official approval to the subordination of women's rights of access to a new project and to assume, unwisely, equal benefits for all community members (Momsen 2002c).

The overall framework of the book is provided by spatial patterns of gender (Seager 1997). Gender may be derived, to a greater or lesser degree, from the interaction of material culture with the biological differences between the sexes. Since gender is created by society, its meaning will vary from group to group and will change over time. Yet for all societies the common denominator of gender is female subordination, although relations of power between men and women may be experienced and expressed in quite different ways in different places and at different times. Spatial variations in the construction of gender are considered at several scales of analysis, from continental patterns, through national and regional variations, to the interplay of power between men and women at the household level.

On a continental scale, Latin America has high levels of female literacy but low levels of participation by women in the formal workforce. Women in Africa, south of the Sahara, have the highest fertility rates and the lowest life expectancy, now exacerbated by the rapid spread of AIDS and other diseases such as Ebola. In the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia currently in transition from socialism to capitalism, literacy rates and life expectancy are high, while fertility is low. South Asia is almost a mirror image of the transition countries as it is distinguished by the lowest proportion of women in the population and in the labour force, the lowest literacy levels and the highest levels of anaemia in pregnancy. The

interrelationships between these indicators will be examined in the following chapters.

Overall the gender gap has decreased recently with more women staying in school and taking paid employment. This is especially noticeable in the Middle East, while in Africa more women are getting involved in politics. The time women and men can expect to spend in healthy living takes into account years lost to violence, disease and malnutrition. Only in Pakistan and Kuwait in 2006 did women have a lower healthy life expectancy than men. Trends over time show regional patterns. In Latin America and the Caribbean fertility and maternal mortality have declined but cities are growing rapidly, straining housing and infrastructure. At the secondary and tertiary levels of education girls outnumber boys, but women's labour force participation rate is lower in Latin America than in the Caribbean. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region where the women's labour force participation rate has fallen since the 1970s, fertility is still high, literacy is low and life expectancy has declined recently because of HIV/AIDS and civil strife. North Africa and West Asia have seen higher female literacy and increases in women in the labour force but both these measures are low relative to other parts of the world. In South Asia there is less gender equality in life expectancy and rates of early marriage and maternal mortality remain high.

While considering the context-specific issues of particular regions, we also need to move beyond the generalized patterns of gender and development over time and space to an understanding of the realities of lives embedded in distinct localities. Least developed countries, the land-locked and small island developing states, are particularly vulnerable to setbacks in development. Broad statistical generalizations are insufficient for constructive conceptualization but the addition of oral histories and empirical field data allows us to link the local and the global through the voices of individuals. An emphasis on location and position highlights a concern with the relationships between different identities and brings a new understanding to gender and development.

Learning outcomes

- Gender roles and identities vary widely in different cultures.
- Development policies have changed over time from a focus on women-only to one based on gender, sometimes including

environmental aspects, and most recently to an interest in masculinities.
- On many variables there are regional similarities in the position of women relative to that of men.

Discussion questions

1 To what extent has economic development tended to make the lives of the majority of women in the developing world more difficult?
2 Compare the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to gender inequalities.
3 Explain why the universal validity both of gender-neutral development theory and of feminist concepts that are derived from white, Western middle-class women's experience is being questioned.
4 Why do measures describing the gap in gender equality on various dimensions display distinct spatial patterns?

Further reading

Boserup, E. (1970) *Women's Role in Economic Development*, New York: St Martin's Press. This was the first book on the topic and was the stimulus for all the later work reported on here.

Dorling, Danny (2013) *Population 10 Billion: The Coming Demographic Crisis and How to Survive It.* London: Constable. Dorling charts the rise of the human race from its origins to its peak of 10 billion, how we can deal with scarcity of resources and how we need to be prepared for a decline in population coming earlier than expected.

Coles, Anne, Lesley Grey and Janet Momsen (eds) (2015) *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Development*, London and New York: Routledge. Provides 57 chapters by contributors from many countries on a wide range of topics.

Cornwall, Andrea and Sarah C. White (2000) 'Introduction: Men, masculinities and development – Politics, policies and practice', *IDS Bulletin* 31 (2): 1–6. Provides a review of the work done on development and masculinities.

Desai, Vandana and Robert B. Potter (eds) (2002) *The Companion to Development Studies*, London: Arnold. Contains several short articles on various aspects of gender and development by many of the leading protagonists.

Jaquette, Jane S. and Gale Summerfield (eds) (2006) *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press. A series of contributions focused on institutions, resources and empowerment.

Momsen, Janet H. (ed.) (2008) *Gender and Development: Critical Concepts in Development Studies*, London and New York: Routledge. This four-volume compendium includes the major papers on the topic.

Oosterhoff, Pauline and Caroline Sweetman (2018) 'Introduction: Sexualities', *Gender and Development* 26 (1): 1–14. This issue of the Oxfam journal contains 10 papers on sexualities and a list of related resources.

Seager, Joni (1997) *The State of Women in the World Atlas*, 2nd edition, London: Penguin Books. A very useful collection of coloured maps illustrating many aspects of gender inequality throughout the world. Includes statistics up to 1996.

UN Women (2018) *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, New York: United Nations. A 253-page report on gender-responsive strategies for action for the SDGs.

World Bank (2011) *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*, Washington, DC. The World Bank.

Websites and e-mail

www.genderstats.worldbank.org World Bank database with gender indicators and sex-disaggregated data for all countries in the world in five areas: basic demographic data, population dynamics, labour force structure, education and health. Since 2008 it includes frequently updated global maps in colour of gender statistics.

www.undp.org/hdr UNDP Human Development Report (various years).

www.un.org/depts/unsd Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wistat) produced by the United Nations Statistical Division.