

## **Women's Organizations and the Changing State/Society Relationship: Resistance, Co-option by the State, or Partnership?<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the post-war development of the women's movement in Taiwan in terms of the changing relationship between the state and civil society. I will begin with an analysis of the shift in the nature of the state from a centralized and unified entity to policy networks including non-state actors. Concepts of governance and governmentality are presented to further explain the changing relationship between women's organizations and the state. Gender mainstreaming policy developed in recent years is examined in this paper, in order to discuss the current state of the state-society relationship.*

### **Introduction**

This paper attempts to explore the changing relationship between the state and civil society in Taiwan by using the women's movement as a case study. My major empirical interest is in analyzing the apparent shift of feminist advocacy organizations from being a social movement into NGOs that form partnerships with the state to deliver services. This phenomenon will be described in terms of the relationship between civil society and the state, as well as in terms of governance. Literature around these two topics comes mainly from studies of management, public policy, political sciences, international relations, and sociology (Scharpf 1978; Rhodes 1997; Morgan et. al. 1999; Anheirer and Themundo 2002; Arts 2003). The phenomenon will then be interpreted through Foucault's theoretical perspectives on governmentality and post-structural theories of the state. Foucauldian and post-structural perspectives emphasize the

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processes of the operation and proliferation of power rather than the intention and agency of actors. At the empirical level, this paper shows the clear objectives of feminist groups to change the state. Does this contradict post-structural views? To what extent can agency be attributed to either citizens or to state representatives? I will deal with this question in the following sections, particularly the section on gender-mainstreaming policy and public-private partnership.

I begin with a discussion of the changing nature of the state. Conventionally, the state was regarded as a centralized, unified entity with constitutional sovereignty over a designated territory and with a core executive responsible for various aspects of administration. In recent decades, however, the state has come to be described as networks of policy comprised of various actors across different sectors. The increasing participation of civil society actors in public policy has been lauded as an enhancement of democracy. On the other hand, the diminution of direct state influence is described as a 'hollowing out' of the state, while the state as networks of multifarious actors is described as a 'fragmentation of the state'. In this paper, I echo the concept of the state as networks among various sectors. However, I will argue that while policy networks proliferate, the state has the ability to set up the rules and environment under which these networks operate. Parallel to the so-called fragmentation of the state, various strands of civil society have segmented and professionalized, each of them being sutured into particular network sets.

Readers of this paper may notice that women disappear in this paper, and even civil society barely exists. That is exactly the empirical and theoretical point I want to raise. When gender mainstreaming policy was introduced, administrative and procedural issues such as accountability format, performance indicators, budget analysis, and statistics dominated the terrain of policy-making regarding women's rights. In the meantime, coalitions which were active in the 1980s and 1990s among different social movements – such as gender, environmentalism, labor, and human rights – disappeared. This is a paradox: as partnership between civil society and government were advocated and put into practice, the proliferation and expansion of policy networks absorbed social forces, with the result that coalitions of social movements seemed to decrease in public visibility (Hsiao 2006). In the section below I will start with a theoretical introduction of the changing nature of the state and its relationship with civil society. The section following will present an outline of the relationship between the state and women's organizations in different historical phases. The final part will discuss the gender mainstreaming policy that is the current framework of gender policy in Taiwan.

### **Governance, Governmentality and Civil Society**

Before defining civil society, we need to keep in mind that civil society is often defined in a negative way by what it is not. Civil society is also defined in terms of the activities of non-governmental organizations. However, while defining civil society in distinction from government and business sectors does not do justice to the intrinsic importance of civil society, it should be noted that the logic of the same contemporary social and political theories means that the state can no longer exist on its own, either. The state has lost its monopoly on power to control

and regulate. The state has been conceptualized as a self-organized network of policy (governance), or as being constituted by an ensemble of institutions, discourses, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of diffused power (governmentality). The state and civil society thus define each other and complement each other.

### *Civil Society*

In his book *Civil Society* (2004), Michael Edwards approaches civil society through three layers: first as associational life; second as good society; and finally as the public sphere. Civil society means voluntary associations of people for common interests and goals. However, there is a diversity of associations which may espouse contradictory assertions on the very same issue, for example, pro-life and pro-choice regarding women's reproductive rights and abortion. Edwards goes on to raise the principle of good society. Civil society exists to promote good society, on equal terms with the state and market. But what is 'good' society? How do various parts of society collaborate and pursue 'good' ends? Here we need the public sphere, a space for the emergence and expression of a diversity of opinions to engage with each other, to debate and disagree, and in the process citizens learn to concede to reach consensus.

In the pre-modern period, production, consumption, and human activities took place mostly in the family and the community. The roles of both the state and the market were limited. With the growth of industrial capitalist society, the state and the market expanded, and many of the traditional functions of the family were replaced by the state or market. Theories of civil society have gained ascendancy in recent decades due to several factors. First, ordinary citizens and academic researchers alike see the importance of enhancing the role of civil society to counter-balance overexpansion of the state and market; second, changes at the macro-level have led the very nature of the state to shift from being a top-down vertical authority into a series of horizontal networks of policy making and resource allocation (Marinetto 2007).

The women's movement and other social movements such as labor, environmentalism, and consumer rights have played an important role in steering civil society towards an integration of associational life, ideals of good society, and practices of the public sphere by debates, discussion, and advocacy. Civil society includes religious organizations, charitable and philanthropic organizations, and self-help groups, the majority of which operate without explicitly seeking to influence public policy. The social movement aspects of civil society, on the contrary, contain a strong sense of mission for social reform and policy advocacy. Civil society as manifested and instantiated by social movements is independent from the state, and at the same time strongly wishes to participate in the process of policy-making and implementation. In the example of the women's movement in Taiwan, it initially challenged the state from a marginal position; since the 1990s, mechanisms for coordinating women's affairs across the public sector and the voluntary sector were set up. As these mechanisms grew larger in terms of budget, numbers of organizations involved, and stated objectives, the state as interface and ensemble of networks has absorbed and appropriated more and more energies from civil society.

Although the state seems to have power over society, the state is not the source or foundation of power. If the state has dominant power, this is the effect of technologies of government. Foucault raises the concept of govern-mentality, which is meant to be the link between politics and the state on the one hand, and the formation of identity and subjectivity on the other hand.<sup>2</sup> As Foucault has put it, technologies of government (or governmentality) provide the linkage between the state and the construction of subjectivity. Technologies of government refer to a wide range of apparatuses, mechanisms, procedures, and pedagogic methods for the management of the body, health, spiritual life, as well as the collective social body (Foucault 1991; Rose 1992; Lemke 2000).

Here we can reformulate Foucault's idea about governmentality as linkages and articulations. We can note a linkage between the state and civil society, as well as between the state and the self. Disciplinary, pedagogic, and managerial technologies of power can be initiated and deployed by civil society. At the same time, civil society provides a forum for public dialogue and advocacy; this function is similar to what Rose and Miller (1990) describe as 'political rationality'. Civil society is the privileged and trusted site for articulating moral visions and inspiring dreams. If the balance between political rationality and technologies of governmentality is tilted towards the latter, civil society, and in particular the social movement aspect of civil society, will be co-opted by the state via technologies of government, even though these technologies were first developed by social movements. I shall return to this with more empirical data in the section on gender-mainstreaming.

#### *The Changing Nature of the State: Governance and Governmentality*

While governance scholars stress horizontal networks of procedures, actors in the networks do not receive attention. The presumption that power is a centralized force, used intentionally to oppress and proscribe, is challenged by Foucault and post-structural scholars. Traditionally the state is regarded as a unified and centralized authority, but this kind of notion has been displaced by a more diffuse, random, and unintentional view of political power. As noted above, Foucault raises the concept of govern-mentality, which is meant to be the link between politics and the state on the one hand, and the formation of identity and subjectivity on the other hand. Foucault argues that the power apparatus of the state may be all-present but it is unable to dominate all power relations. The authority of the state is dependent on existing relations of power, forms of power that do not necessarily originate in the state.

In post-structural theories, government activity is multifarious and located throughout the state and society. The concept of governmentality embraces the idea of power as a multidimensional entity, infiltrating even the *minutiae* of everyday life, which is just as much able to be productive as to constrain. In Foucault's words (1991: 102), governmentality is 'the ensemble formed by the

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<sup>2</sup> Foucault did not write a book entirely devoted to the issue of government and politics. He developed the idea of government rationality, or governmentality, in lectures and interviews. These ideas were published posthumously. Many scholars follow his ideas and explore them further. See Graham Burchell et.al. (1991), *The Foucault Effect*.

institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power'. Governmentality also implies the notion of the decentered, fractured, disjointed state.

Foucault indicated that in political theories we need to 'cut off the King's head' (1980: 121). The origins, forms, and exercise of power are multifarious and diffused to both large and small aspects of everyday life. The concept of governmentality serves as a link to connect government and politics on the one hand, and on the other hand the formation of self, identity, and subjectivity (Lemke 2000; Marinetto 2007). To govern, power begins with the individual level of self-governing, through pedagogical instruction of children, and finally, the conventional perception of governing as related to the activities of government is explored by Foucault through detailed analyses of surveillance, penal and medical institutions, and the production of knowledge.

These concepts of governmentality and the decentered state are relevant to the analysis of women's organizations for the following reasons. First, the relations between feminist theory and Foucault have been ambiguous and provocative, and I would like to take advantage of this provocativeness to think about feminist identity and subjectivity. If the state is decentered, does this mean more opportunities for women's participation? If the technologies of government manifest themselves through a wide range of programmes and activities, how is it possible to construct non-disciplinary and emancipatory identities and subjectivities? Second, with regard to the recent development of public-private partnership, does this mean the increased influence of women's organizations, or rather that feminists are absorbed into the state machinery and that the cultural and discursive field is consequently be evacuated?

Rose and Miller (1990) elaborate Foucault's idea of governmentality, stressing that political theory should also include political rationality. They define political rationality thus:

Political discourse is a domain for the formulation and justification of idealised schemata for representing reality, analyzing it and rectifying it. Whilst it does not have the systematic and closed character of disciplined bodies of theoretical discourse it is, nonetheless, possible to discern regularities that we term political rationalities. First, political rationalities have a characteristically *moral* form. They elaborate upon the fitting powers and duties for authorities. They address the proper distribution of tasks and actions between authorities of different types - political, spiritual, military, pedagogic, familial. They consider the ideals or principles to which government should be directed - freedom, justice, equality, mutual responsibility, citizenship, common sense, economic efficiency, prosperity, growth, fairness, rationality and the like. (Rose and Miller 1990:175)

Political rationality refers to moral claims regarding visions, missions, intentions, and purposes. It contains the discursive power of evoking citizens' dreams, passions and ideals. Without political rationality, technologies of government would find no site of application. This highlights an important aspect that has been neglected by Foucault. Through the lens of Rose and Miller, we are able to adopt a Foucauldian concept of proliferation of power with no centers, no

foundations and sources, and at the same time we can admit that people's stated purposes and plans of action sometimes do get noticed and achieved. As we shall see in the following section, feminists in the 1990s claimed they wanted to change the state and society, and they indeed changed them partially. Here I assign agency and authorial power to feminists, and by adopting Rose and Miller's concept of political rationality, this does not contradict the use of Foucault's ideas. Rose and Miller further explain that, the application of technologies may or may not solve the problems they are intended to deal with, and they also generate new problems that require new technologies. In addition, objectives may be achieved or not achieved; there will be convergence, or lack of it, between moral claims, intentions, technologies used, and results achieved. By adopting Foucault's theory, I am not thereby obliged to say women have no agency according to the post-structural theory of the state. By following post-structural perspectives, my paper seeks to explain under what kind of circumstances there will be convergence, or lack of convergence, among political rationality, technologies of government, and social actors' intentions and goals.

Before we consider the gender mainstreaming policy developed in recent years, we need an overview of the changing relationship between the state and society in the case of women's organizations. The following section will present the different phases of the state-society relationship. It should be re-emphasized that these changes can be seen as resulting from the varying composition of political rationality *vis-à-vis* technologies of government exercised with varying degree of success by the state and also by civil society. Thus, I will admit the role of intention and agency on the part of women's organizations. However, whether or not their agency and intentions are achieved is another issue.

In recent decades, the state has faced challenges to its monopoly of power from two sides: on the one hand, the increasing salience of the global economy, and on the other, crises in electoral democracy which have led to increasing demands from grass-roots organizations and civil society for more participation. In this process, theorists of the state began to use the term 'governance' to describe new governmental functions.

Governance is often confused with government; these two terms are closely related, but governance as a process-oriented aspect can be applied also to business corporations, to non-profit organizations, to communities, or even to a single project (Arts 2003; 2007). There had been a traditional distinction between politics and governance: the former is about reaching a consensus from divergent opinions to reach common goals, and the latter is the administrative and process-oriented methods of management. However, contemporary theorists began to question this distinction and point out that both involve the exercise of power.

There are three approaches to the exercise of power: (1) top-down, hierarchical methods; (2) market mechanism, constituted by supply and demand, using the principle of competition; and (3) public-private partnership (PPP), focusing on collaboration of government, business, and civil society. It is to the third approach that contemporary scholars turn to use the term 'governance'.

According to Marinetto (2007: 58) and Rhodes (1997: 15), governance means self-organized networks. These inter-organizational networks enjoy a certain degree of autonomy from the state. Networks which used to be located around functional departments of the centralized state have expanded, with the

incorporation of new policy actors from the private and voluntary sectors. This has resulted in a decentered government, where the central state's ability to steer and control policy has been weakened due to the growth, complexity, and relative autonomy of inter-organizational networks. New actors and agencies beyond government, rather than central departments, are integral to the policy network.

Studies informed by inter-organizational perspectives come to the conclusion that it is unlikely for policy to be strategically directed by a single agency located in a neat hierarchical system of authority. The processes involved in making and forming policy are inevitably the result of interactions among a plurality of separate actors with separate interests, goals, and strategies (Scharpf 1978: 347). This does not necessarily mean that modern political processes are an uncoordinated free-for-all. State actors and non-state actors interact with each other through multilateral coordination. Such coordination occurs without deliberate steering on the part of a central authority or overarching power (Marinetto 2007: 56).

One of the implications of this development is that central government has become increasingly dependent upon governance to provide policy implementation and service delivery. Now actors and agencies beyond the state, rather than the central government, are integral to the policy network. This phenomenon has been termed by some scholars as the 'hollowing out' of the state, which is seen as having been eaten away and fragmented. Smith (1999) studies the British polity and points out internal and external factors leading to this process. Internal forces include market orientation such as privatization, the contracting out of services, and the setting-up of quangos and quasi-markets (Quangos are quasi-nongovernmental organizations financed by the government to perform public functions but which act independently of government). External forces include globalization, such as the international free-flowing of production and finance.

While some scholars describe the state as being thus 'hollowed out', others argue that the central state has lost the power of direct intervention, but retained the ability to manipulate the conditions under which policy networks operate (Taylor 1997: 451-452). In other words, the state continues to exercise influential power by structuring the policy environment and defining the rules under which actors of the networks interact (Morgan et.al. 1999). In spite of the importance of networks – or precisely because these networks that deal with cross-cutting public issues cannot be confined to a specific department – scholars have argued that the state was strengthened, not weakened. More civil servants or out-sourced project personnel were recruited to meet the new demands and expectations from various sectors, including civil society.

### **Historical Developments Regarding State-Society Relationship**

Below, I summarize the state/society relationship in Taiwan across three historical periods. The first stage is from the 1940s to 1970s; this was the period characterized by the dominance of the KMT party, which adopted state corporatism to manage every walk of life, including women's organizations, in terms of party organizations. The emergence of the feminist movement in Taiwan began in the 1970s and came to a zenith in the late 1980s and the 1990s. The

second half of 1990s witnessed a new partnership between the state and civil society, which was further enhanced after 2000.

	<b>KMT party (1940s-1970s)</b>	<b>Civil society (1980s-1990s)</b>	<b>Partnership (since 1995)</b>
<b>State/society Relationship</b>	Top-down corporatism	Opposition	Network partnership
<b>Actors</b>	Elite women in the Party mechanism	Elite women in academic and cultural circles	NGO chief executives
<b>Objectives</b>	Chinese nationalism: help building the nation to overthrow communism	Gender equality	Gender mainstreaming
<b>Field of actions</b>	KMT women's unit	Social movement; street protests; media; the Legislative Yuan	Commission for the Promotion of Women's Rights
<b>Political attitudes</b>	Openly express party affiliation	Neutral; detached; critical	Collaborate with state machinery

Table 1: State-Society Relationship

We can see three major stages of the changing relationship between women's organizations and the state: (1) state domination; (2) civil society as manifested through oppositional social and political movements; and (3) partnership between the state and civil society. As the late 1990s is a period of overlapping trends, I will further focus on the women's movement in terms of four stages of changes in order to better understand the Janus-faced nature of the late 1990s. Women's movement activists used the rhetoric of resistance, criticizing patriarchal state/culture/society/family structures but at the same time they began to have initial contacts with the Legislative Yuan and the city government of Taipei.

The first of the four periods (1945-1970) was dominated by the ruling KMT party. At this time, under authoritarian rule and martial law, the ruling party and the state were equivalent, and the party developed extensive networks of women's organizations according to occupation and region. State and society worked closely during this period, with the former as the dominating and directive force. The second stage, 1970-1990, was the period of the feminist movement, which self-consciously attempted to develop autonomy and later developed a critical stance against the government. The third stage, in the 1990s, was the transitional stage, when the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the municipal election of Taipei city. The Taipei city government then established



a women's rights commission, inviting women's movement activists to be commissioners. The fourth stage begins in 2000, when the DPP obtained national power and announced new policies for promoting civil society and partnership between the state and civil society. To what extent this partnership can balance equally dialogue and policy deliberation is still to be observed. Since the 1990s, the women's movement in Taiwan has moved from resistance and protest to become part of the state machinery for policy-making and execution. The theoretical and practical implications of this transformation are surely critical.

The 1990s saw the convergence of different social, political, and economical forces which led to the high tide of various social movements, in particular the women's movement. These forces included the liberalization of previously chartered industries, from banking, insurance, telecommunication, to media industries. Within a few years, there appeared a great increase in the number of newspapers, magazines, cable TV news programs, and TV talk shows. The changed environment and increased competition forced the well-established old media organizations to adopt new issues and perspectives. Gender issues became a hot topic during the 1990s, and the activities of the women's movement, compared with 1980s and post-2000, received broad coverage.

In terms of political development, the then-oppositional DPP won several election campaigns, the most important being Chen Shui-Bian's election as Mayor of Taipei City. As an opposition party, the DPP had aligned itself with various kinds of social movements and progressive agendas, including that of labor, the environment, and social welfare reform. The DPP was then supportive of the women's movement. However, the women's movement in Taiwan tended to remain neutral in terms of party affiliation. Many members personally supported the DDP, others favored the KMT or the New Party, which had split from the KMT in the 1990s and gained passionate support from the urban middle-class who were suspicious of the Taiwan nativist movement. In spite of the fact that many members had personal inclinations for a specific party, within women's organizations, gender was regarded as the priority. Explicit and open interaction with specific parties was subtly avoided at that time. According to Fan Yuan, a sociologist investigating social movements in Taiwan, between labor, environment, and women's organizations, women's organizations were least politicized. Their politics was gender, not party and election campaigns.

Thus we can say that the women's movement in the 1990s experienced a 'golden time' of mobilizing protests on issues such as sexual harassment, rape, and family violence, and that it enjoyed considerable media coverage. Gender issues were also widely debated in terms of culture, and in the academic world women's studies and gender studies also began to gain momentum.

Although members of women's organizations tended to be reserved in the open endorsement of specific parties and politicians, there was, though, a small number who chose to provide staunch support. During the Taipei City mayoral election campaign of 1994, a few activists, led by Professor Lio Yu Xio, were put in charge of drafting policy proposals regarding women's welfare. Lio advocated the 'Scandinavian Model', meaning partnership between civil society and the state. In particular, she advocated the establishment of a commission composed of both city government officials and representatives from women's organizations. After Chen's victory, Lio strongly advised him to initiate a commission as soon as

possible. It was established in 1995, under the name of the Commission for the Promotion of Women's Rights. This was the first time that women's organizations had access to policy-planning at the level of municipal government. This was indeed a historical landmark in the development of the women's movement.

So far we have seen the dual directions of the 1990s: protesting against gender bias among both the general public and government; and following the establishment of the Commission in 1995, collaboration between the city government and women's organizations.

In addition to this committee, which was under the control of the Taipei City Government, the central government also set up a commission of similar nature, in response to great pressure from women's organizations and the general public. In 1997, a nationally recognized body, also called the Commission for the Promotion of Women's Rights, was formally established under the Executive Yuan and convened by the prime minister. At that time the central government was under KMT control. For the first few years, this commission remained dormant; in contrast, the commission of the Taipei City government was active.

Having overviewed these three phases, we should now apply theoretical issues of governmentality. Do these changes correspond to different notions of the state and the exercise of power? Before I explain the reasons why, I would like to offer the conclusion first. Technologies of government are themselves neutral. They could be deployed by the state or by civil society (and of course by business, too). Women's organizations throughout different periods have been able to develop various kinds of technologies for different purposes: to conform with state expectations, to resist them, or to forge new partnerships.

In the first stage, the state had domination over society not simply because it adopted methods of coercion (such as Martial Law) but also because the state successfully deployed a delicate network of women's organizations. Women's organizations in this period used the resources given by the state to organize campaigns and activities to construct a model of the 'good woman': the combination of a good wife/mother/patriotic citizen. Women's bodies and the social body were integrated through policies of birth control and population planning, work/education programs, etc. Many researchers of this period would hesitate to call these women feminists. Feminist or not, women's organizations were indeed active in devising and exercising the technologies of government toward prostitutes, poor women, orphans, professional women, wives of high-echelon officials, as well as towards themselves as elite women having access to party/state resources.

The second stage was the oppositional stage. In this period, the state's technologies of government were increasingly losing their legitimacy, while newly-founded feminist groups had relatively strong political rationality and weak technologies of government. In the 1970s, there were many external environmental changes, such as Taiwan's expulsion from the UN, the termination of formal diplomatic relation between the USA and Taiwan, and the death of Chiang Kai Shek. The KMT regime was faced with challenges on many fronts. Political opposition movements developed both strong discursive power and mobilization tactics to resist the state. Western-style liberal feminism was introduced into Taiwan by both women feminists and male intellectuals. However, feminist groups communicated mainly through their own magazines, and their

ability to mobilize was relatively weak. In this sense, their technology of government was weak.

The third stage was the transitional stage of the late 1990s. Women's organizations had been active writing articles to the press and were also capable of mobilizing tens of thousands of women for street protests or for lobbying legislators. At the same time, on the university campus young student feminists had been thinking and debating issues such as make-up, body and sexuality, and lifestyle in general. They wondered whether a 'true' feminist would wear high-heels and make-up. Feminist groups developed arguments regarding the authenticity of being a feminist. In the Foucauldian sense, feminist groups in this period created 'technologies of government' not only to challenge and interact with the state, but also to administer their internal organizations and membership, and to examine constantly their own inner thinking, outward comportment, and conflicts among themselves. At the subjective level of feminists' self-perception, they wanted to emancipate themselves from the oppression of the patriarchal state and society. Their openly expressed intentions and purposes have been largely realized through a series of legal amendments and new laws.<sup>3</sup>

In the current stage – that is, after the year 2000 – both the state and women's organizations have consolidated technologies of governing gender issues. On the part of feminist organizations, as new political opportunities have opened up to them, they have been pre-occupied with learning about bureaucratic issues. Public feminist discourse remains the liberal view of equality and autonomy.<sup>4</sup> In the following section, I will examine gender mainstreaming policy to illustrate the point of strong technology and weak political rationality.

### **Gender Mainstreaming and the Growing Complexity of Policy Networks**

Gender mainstreaming is the policy approach adopted by the UN. In previous approaches regarding the advancement of women's status, women were the target group, and programs for training, education, and protection from violence were set up to deal with women's issues. In this approach, women became a problem that society and the state had to deal with. By contrast, gender mainstreaming advocates the idea that in all processes of policy formation, implementation, and assessment, gender perspectives should be integrated. Therefore gender mainstreaming does not target women as a specific group in

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<sup>3</sup> Civil Codes regarding marriage, divorce and children's custody had remained the same for decades. The women's movement in the 1990s was able to mobilize mass support to change or replace these outdated laws. From the 1990s to 2006, there were major amendments of Civil Codes and Criminal Codes (for example, the new definition of rape as sexual assault and violence). New legislation such as Prevention of Family Violence, Gender Equality in the Workplace, and Gender Equality in Education were also established during this period.

<sup>4</sup> This can be explained in part by the fact that women's movement has increased its professionalization since the late 1990s. In the 1980s and 1990s, the recruitment of feminists came from professors, writers, lawyers and intellectuals. In recent years, activists are paid full-time workers, and academics are under mounting pressure to produce publications at the expense of volunteer work and social engagement.

need of supplementary resources from the public sector. Instead, all major policy areas that were once regarded as neutral – such as economics and trade, science and technology, agriculture, transportation, health, and education and training – are examined at the initial stage of policy planning in terms of gender analysis, and the historical and social conditions that contribute to gender inequality explored. The targets of gender mainstreaming policy are civil servants and workers in international development organizations.

Gender mainstreaming was first adopted by UN in the Third World Conference on Women, in Nairobi, 1985, and it developed into detailed guidelines and a Declaration at the following conference, held in Beijing in 1995. Women's organizations in Taiwan attended these conferences, but did not bring what they had learned into the domestic lobbying efforts to pressure the government. In the 1990s, Taiwanese feminists were preoccupied with consciousness-raising and the reform and amendment of old laws. The Commission on Women's Rights Promotion, advocated by pro-DPP feminists and first established at the level of the Taipei city government in 1995,<sup>5</sup> can be said to be the first body in Taiwan to have been guided by the principle of gender mainstreaming practice. However, at that time, feminists used the terminology of 'participatory democracy' and 'corporatism of state and society' – or, to use one buzz word popular in the 1990s in Taiwan, 'the Scandinavian Model'.

After the DPP won the presidential election in 2000, an increase in the number of female ministerial-level officials was evident, as a 'one-quarter system', in which women should occupy at least one-fourth of the high level positions, had been the DPP's official party policy since 1997. Women's movement activists served in a variety of positions, including as heads of ministerial-level organizations, and on various commissions, such as those set up to look at welfare policy (as well, of course, as serving on the Commission on Women's Rights Promotion). Some of these activists began to introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming. However, this increase in scale with regard to gender mainstreaming reinforced and accelerated the very phenomena that the previous section of this paper has highlighted: governmentality and governance, and the segmentation and fragmentation of women's interests – the 'evaporation' of women.

### *Gender Mainstreaming*

As mentioned above, gender mainstreaming was formally adopted into a Declaration at the 1995 Beijing Conference. Responsibility for implementing the mainstreaming strategy is system-wide, and rests at the highest levels within each nation. There are several basic principles of mainstreaming which include the following points:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Taipei city government took the lead in establishing CWRP; CWRP at the level of the central government was established in 1997.

<sup>6</sup> See the website of UN/CSW: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/index.html>, (Accessed on 2 February 2009).

- Adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress.
- The initial identification of issues and problems across all area(s) of activity should be such that gender differences and disparities can be diagnosed in the initial stage of policy planning.
- Assumptions that issues or problems are gender neutral should never be made.
- Clear political will and allocation of adequate resources for mainstreaming, including additional financial and human resources if necessary, are important for translation of the concept into practice.
- Gender mainstreaming requires that efforts be made to broaden women's equitable participation at all levels of decision-making.
- Mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies and positive legislation.

The ruling party adopted the terms and concepts of gender mainstreaming in the 2004 Presidential campaign and then formally moved towards implementation in 2005. Every ministry of the Executive Yuan was required to submit a plan.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, women's organizations devoted their energies to substantive areas such as violence against women, education, etc., without using the buzz word 'gender mainstreaming'. After the advocacy of women's organizations and formal adoption by the central government in recent years (Lin and Cai 2003; Lin 2008), great efforts have been put into the infrastructure of administrative coordination networks, such as collecting sex-dissegregated data and statistics of budget growth. For the technical part of initiating gender mainstreaming policy, there are three administrative components: gender analysis, sex-dissegregated data, and budget-analysis. We can see the statistical dimension is the prerequisite without which gender mainstreaming can proceed only very slowly, if at all.

These details show us the increasing significance of horizontal, network development of government and public policies. Substantive issues such as women and health, or violence against women, remain important, and programs about them are implemented with specific reference to gender mainstreaming – I raise this point here not as a criticism, as recipients and beneficiaries do not have to know the terminology. What I want to emphasize is that in the policy-advocacy area, when the term and concept of gender mainstreaming is used at the central executive level, it is largely related to bureaucratic procedures, accountability structure, performance criteria, assessment tools, and formats.

As we will see in the following discussion about the CSW and advocacy for a new governmental agency called the Gender Equality Council, power does not always originate from the state. The UN and international affairs can become cultural capital to be valorized by women's organizations, with the result that women's organizations take the lead, with the state as the follower.

### *CSW and CEDAW*

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the UN mechanism for policy-making regarding women's rights in the course of national development. The

CSW consists of 45 commissioners, appointed on a four-year term. There is an annual meeting in the first two weeks of March, during which there are official conferences, and formal delegations from member countries present country reports on the status of gender equality. UN officials and experts present the results of regional and country reviews, and drafts of declarations are discussed during the sessions. All sessions are open to NGO representatives who have applied in advance to attend. However, these NGOs are observers only, with no right to speak during the formal sessions.

In the meantime, there are a great number of parallel events and mini-conferences organized by International NGOs (INGOs), and this has been a great opportunity for NGOs from all over the world to get to know each other and start networking for common concerns.

As Taiwan is not a UN member, women's organizations in Taiwan were not fully aware of the importance of the UN until recent years. In the case of attending the CSW, there has been a rapid increase in the number of participants: from six in 2002, to 29 in 2005, and further to 37 in 2006. However, attendance at the annual meetings of the CSW has now become a platform for collective learning at the inter-organizational and inter-sectoral levels for Taiwanese delegates. The very nature of the Taiwan delegation facilitates and speeds up group learning about international affairs; it is not just that they physically will enter the headquarters of the UN building in New York and be overwhelmed by the diversity of issues. From 2003, civil servants from different ministries of the central government and from bureaus of local government joined the delegation upon request from the Commission on the Promotion of Women's Rights. Women's organizations take the lead in forming the delegation, and various government agencies follow. This is a rare case in which the government is passive but compliant in meeting demands from NGOs.

Post-structural theory of the state emphasizes the fragmentation of state power. It seems logical to assert that under this principle, state sovereignty will be diminished. However, I will argue that post-structural theory also encourages us to pay attention to configurations of power. In the case of Taiwan women's organizations attending UN conferences, they propose to the state their intention to attend UN events, and they get a prompt response. In the actual process of participating in the events, delegates are harassed by Chinese delegation members regarding the use of the word 'Taiwan'. Taiwan feminists now have first-hand experience of encountering the national sovereignty issue. However, they continue their original purpose of prioritizing gender issues, sidelining this issue. This has been their purpose as well as a survival tactic – i.e. the means by which they can assure continuing participation at UN events. Of course, Taiwan sovereignty remains a symbolic issue for the DPP government's internal domestic campaign, yet what matters here is that, through the process of attending the UN and other international conferences, feminists form transnational networks of information-sharing and mutual learning that have global, national, and local reverberations. Weng and Fell's claim (2006) that the Taiwan women's movement is rootless can be understood in the context of these transnational networks which partially de-territorialize women's movements, but at the same time the effects of the transnational networks are mainly manifested in domestic policy-making. I will conclude that transnational networking is de-territorializing, but the

process and final result of allocating resources for labour, health, education, and so on are within the limits of national boundaries.

*The Commission on Gender Equality*

'Organizational restructuring and down-sizing' is an important issue that was vigorously planned soon after the DPP took control of central government. Restructuring includes both mergers which intend to down-size the central government, and establishing new organizations to meet the changing demands of public policies and management. Numerous meetings were convened by the prime minister, with a great number of further meetings following among different ministries and ministerial-level departments. News regarding the contents of these meetings was disseminated through the media. All this has been a long process, and even now the goal remains unrealized due to arguments in the Legislative Yuan. In spite of this lack of actual results, for civil society, the process itself opens up channels of thinking and debating about the role of the central government.

Women's organizations were not aware of the importance of government restructuring until they were invited by the Ministry of the Interior to attend a meeting regarding the possibility of setting up a 'bureau of children's and women's welfare'. They were infuriated with the familiar way that women and children had often been classified together by public policy and by the general public. After expressing their dissatisfaction, members of women's organizations soon realized that instead of simply criticizing the current draft, it was better to adopt a pro-active approach by advocating an independent organization to take charge of enhancing women's status. The 'Ministry of Women's Rights' was floated as the initial idea, but many quickly suggested that 'gender equality' was more appropriate than 'women's rights', and consensus was reached relatively quickly.

A diversity of opinions began to emerge regarding the position of the organization: is this a ministry – an organization which has full-fledged stipulated authority of policy making and implementation – or a commission, which is an organization at the ministerial level but in charge only of policy planning and inter-ministerial coordination? Within women's organizations this was hotly debated.

In terms of the case of government restructuring, what are the implications for the development of civil society in Taiwan? To begin with, this is the first time women's organizations have had a formal and open opportunity to actually get involved in planning the administrative machinery of the central executive government. In the past they were mainly engaged in advocating for specific pieces of legislation, and their interactions with the executive branches were mainly about tendering bids to deliver services. Therefore getting involved in government restructuring was a fresh learning experience. Second, there is no coalition of various sectors of civil society. Women's organizations were fully occupied with gender equality as a single issue. Third, civil society has not developed a solid discourse regarding the rationale of government restructuring. The government emphasizes 'down-sizing', indicating that a diminution of government size and the number of civil servants will enhance the efficiency of government. Few persons question the dilemma of the decreasing size of and the

increasing demands for public service. In the final draft of the restructuring bill, the central executive overall increased in size, budget, and personnel, while benefit packages for civil servants were cut, and contract workers were recruited. Whether we consider the central government or civil society, concerns with the political philosophy of the state have been minimal. Fourth, the existing Commission on the Promotion of Women's Rights has played an important role of providing an interface between women's organizations and bureaucrats to discuss details of establishing a new organization. This is a positive example where we see a partnership taking substantive shape through on-going and regular discussions.

### **Conclusion: Rethinking the State and Civil Society**

From the previous discussion of gender mainstreaming policy, we can see the increasing salience of policy networks that have multiple actors inside and outside the state. There is indeed a decrease in the direct power of the state. However, the state is not therefore weakened or 'hollowed out'. On the contrary, women's movement activists rely heavily on the policy networks activated by the state.

The nature of the state has gone through three phases of change: first as the center of power and authority, second as a 'hollowed out' space due to the decentering of networks and ensembles of institutions, and finally, as examined in this paper, as the nodal point of networks that reasserts its strategic importance by setting up the conditions of operations, absorbing power that originates from outside the state to feedback into mechanisms for re-establishing the political legitimacy of state institutions. In all three phases, political rationality and technologies of government are both necessary. Even in the first phase, when the state is the center of power, this is possible only through manipulation of effective technologies of government and ideology.

In this process of proliferation of policy networks, civil society has segmented into professional social service organizations and advocacy organizations. While the conventional notion of the state as a unified entity has to be modified, the notion of civil society as a whole is also under revision. Both fragmented into pieces and were then re-sutured into highly professionalized networks of task-forces or service-providers.

Governance, defined as the process of forming networks and leadership, is not only relevant to the government but also applicable to business, and to NGOs. In the case of the women's movement in Taiwan, while criticism of patriarchy dominated the feminist discourses of the 1980s and 1990s, in recent years the term 'patriarchy' appeared less often. Instead, activists often talked about what the government should do to secure gender equality, or how they themselves had interacted with the government to initiate reforms. The state is a gendered state, while the identity of feminists at the same time inserts itself into the state as part of the state mechanism. In this sense, we can say gender mainstreaming has forged a new governmentality that serves as a link between the practical techniques of state operation and feminist identity.

Is it possible to construct an identity and subjectivity that are non-disciplinary and emancipatory? If we define feminists as those who are involved with the advocacy and implementation of gender policies, then I will give an ambivalent



answer to this question. However, there are also feminists who reside in the space of grassroots communities, religious organizations, and self-help groups that are beyond the scope of this paper. However, they may give us inspiration about what a positive answer of the question might be. This will be left for future research.

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