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"Institutionalism in international policy formation: the implications for gender mainstreaming and development in Rwanda and South." Africa

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ABSTRACT

Gender mainstreaming is defined as "[the] efforts to scrutinize and reinvent processes of policy formulation and implementation across all issue areas to address and rectify persistent and emerging disparities between men and women (True 2001)". This explanation serves to highlight the dynamic nature of the concept while recognizing the eternal presence of the relational aspect of female/male interaction within society. What strand of institutionalism is employed in the diffusion of gender mainstreaming in the process of development at the various levels of implementation; what are the consequences of improperly conceived institutions as they apply to gender mainstreaming and development; what are the implications for the future institution construction; What if anything is hindering the progress of gender mainstreaming and development; How was relatively similar gender mainstreaming progress achieved by two countries with such different economic capacities? This paper will further consider the answers to these questions as supplied by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, as shown through their development initiatives in Rwanda and South Africa.

Gender mainstreaming is the innovative inclusion and dramatic reshaping of power hierarchies through the manipulation of both formal and informal institutions. This paper will reveal the importance of contextual considerations in the creation and reform of institutions in developing states, as they strive to adhere to international standards of gender inclusive development.

KEYWORDS: Beijing Platform for Action; Development; Gender Mainstreaming; Institutionalism; Institutions; Transformation; Rwanda; South Africa.