Original Article

Contending Logics of Action in Development Cooperation: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Work on Gender Equality

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Abstract   Development cooperation has always been exposed to changing regimes of ideas that have shaped thought and action, directed policy agendas and the distribution of resources. Some of these have become higher-order logics of action that guide and drive particular forms of institutional and organizational change. This article builds an analytical framework for empirically exploring logics of action in development cooperation and then explores a case of how two strong logics, those of 'cost-effectiveness' and 'gender equality and women's empowerment', respectively, contend in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Drawing on contemporary sociological institutionalist theorization, the article thus contributes to discussions of ideas and logics of action in development cooperation by presenting how these can be approached analytically as they are at play in exactly that—action.

La coopération au développement a toujours été exposée aux idées des régimes changeants qui ont formé la pensée et l'action, les politiques éducatives dirigées et la distribution des ressources. Certaines de ces dernières sont devenues des logiques d'action de haut niveau qui guident et conduisent les formes particulières de changement institutionnel et organisationnel. Cet article établit un cadre analytique pour des logiques d'action empiriquement exploratrices dans la coopération au développement, et qui explore un cas qui consiste à savoir comment deux logiques fortes, la «rentabilité» et la responsabilisation de l'égalité des genres et des femmes, luttent dans la fondation Bill et Melinda Gates. S'appuyant sur la théorisation sociologique contemporaine institutionnaliste, l'article contribue ainsi aux discussions des idées et des logiques d'action dans la coopération au développement en présentant la manière dont celles-ci peuvent être approchées analytiquement car elles sont en jeu dans l'action, plus précisément.

Introduction

There is an almost incomprehensible strength to the nature of ideas. Ideas shape thought and action and may become higher-order logics that guide and drive particular forms of institutional and organizational change. The field of international development cooperation has always been exposed to changing regimes of ideas that have decided the latest fashionable practices and discourses, directing policy agendas and distributing resources in predictable ways. Drawing on sociological institutionalist insights, this article contributes to discussions of norms, ideas and logics of action in development cooperation, by showing how what transpires as different logics meet and potentially contend in a development organization. In institutional theory, regimes of ideas have widely been theorized with the notion of *institutional logics*, a concept that has

received massive attention in the last years, but has not yet reached much academic work on international issues. Institutional logics are essentially patterns of ideas and practices that provide organizing principles and criteria for legitimacy, influencing behaviour by constituting *vocabularies of action and discourse* (Thornton *et al*, 2012).

Institutional logics do not always peacefully co-exist or complement each other. What are the consequences as potentially conflicting logics encounter in and among international actors? This article engages with two strong (but also contentious) logics of development cooperation to explore this question. The logics are those of 'cost-effectiveness' and 'gender equality and women's empowerment'. The institutional logic of 'cost-effectiveness' is part of a wider trend, in which positivist logics from the scientific and methodological core of the natural sciences have increasingly entered different areas of public policy in the last decades. Here, they have furthered evidence-based policy paradigms with special attention to notions of 'objective evidence' and 'knowledge hierarchies', aiming to shift development policy-making towards objective and rational problem solving with an emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness.

Contrary to the more novel logic of cost-effectiveness (albeit parts of it can be traced back many decades), the logic of gender equality and women's empowerment has seen prominence since the 1970s in development cooperation, and decades earlier in a more general form in the UN. The logic is a complex interweaving of different norms concerning gender-balanced decision making, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and the social transformation of feminism (Krook and True, 2012; Zwingel, 2012), and one that has continuously shifted over time in response to new ideas on 'gender'. A fairly large literature concerns itself with how gender norms and accompanying arguments have been instrumentalized and turned into forms of 'smart economics' or 'business cases' made for a gender focus (see Perrons, 2005; Chant and Sweetman, 2012; Liebowitz and Zwingel, 2014). This paper stands on the shoulders of such empirical inquiries, but also takes a further step by approaching the question from the outset of an institutional logics perspective, attempting to identify and discuss the specific logic that facilitates such forms of instrumentalizing.

One of the strongest proponents for evidence-based policy and project regimes, and cost-effectiveness lines of thought in development cooperation, is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (see Fejerskov, 2015). Since its inception, the foundation has been a beacon for the natural sciences, investing in vaccines, crops or new toilets and condoms. Interestingly, the Gates Foundation is currently emerging as a strong proponent for gender equality and especially women's empowerment, having pursued this concern with increasing tenacity since it launched its first gender policy for agricultural projects in 2008. Because of its simultaneous strong commitment to both of these concerns, the foundation forms an interesting case for exploring what happens as these different (and potentially contradictory) logics clash in an international actor.

Both of the logics analysed are not internally coherent and are continuously negotiated, reconfigured and blended with other logics to take on different forms, i.e. they are dynamic in a processual sense, rather than static. Their primeval state nonetheless has an ideational core, allowing us to identify and discuss a set of characteristics of both. This article attempts to identify the core characteristics of these two logics and then explore empirically what happens in an international non-state actor as they meet and potentially clash. It also allows me to draw out a set of consequences for not only the particular case, but for the more general notion of what transpires in international cooperation as different logics meet. After a few methodical considerations, the article turns to the theoretical notion of institutional logics and builds an analytical framework for exploring such logics. It then examines an empirical case of how these

two logics have contended in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in the organizational discourse and in practice on the organizational floors. Finally, it attempts to derive some more general field-level consequences for the clash of these two logics in particular and for logics in general.

Methods

The diffuse and intersubjective nature of both ideas in general and institutional logics in particular presents challenges for all engaging in the study of such. They do not exist independently (at a meta-level somewhere 'up there') from the individuals that constitute them, increasing the analytical difficulty, yet we can study institutional logics as they materialize in practice through discourse and action. This makes interviewing an important tool for capturing how and why individuals draw on different logics in their social interaction with colleagues, equally through discourses as practices. As such, the case study of institutional logics meeting in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation builds upon fieldwork in and around the organization done over a period of four months in the autumn of 2014 during my doctoral studies, including around 50 interviews. Although I did not practice it, participatory observation is another strong tool for understanding how organizational practices may be guided by certain logics.

The fieldwork was initially guided by the aim of trying to comprehend the history of institutionalization of ideas and practices on gender equality and women's empowerment. As interviewing progressed, the striking contention between the two logics dealt with here was explored more in depth. Interviews have been made with current and former employees at different levels of authority and across different departments to gain an impression of how these two regimes of ideas have both contended and reconciled. Focus on the contention of the two logics was not fully deliberately chosen a priori to submersion in fieldwork, but the organization in question, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, was selected because of its increasing focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in its public relations. This formed an interesting contrast to what appeared as its heavy interest in societal progress through technological innovations combined with a private sector mind-set, making it appear much more as a firm than an international non-state actor, on the surface.

Institutional Logics

Since Friedland and Alford's (1991) initial statements on 'institutional logics', research into this domain of institutional theory has seen tremendous growth (Lounsbury and Boxenbaum, 2013). Although forming part of Powell and DiMaggio's (1991) edited 'orange' volume, Friedland and Alford's purpose was to show how interests are institutionally shaped, openly criticizing DiMaggio and Powell's materialist–idealist dualism of seeing actors' interests as disconnected from their understandings. Despite being manifested in practice and discourse, institutional logics are abstract in nature, often understood as socially shared values and assumptions that provide a framework for reasoning and criteria for legitimacy, and are embodied in practices and ideas (Dunn and Jones, 2010; Thornton *et al*, 2012). They represent the organizing principles that frame action and guide behaviour, belief systems and related practices, thus linking institutions and action. Institutional logics create both opportunities and constraints for social actors, constituting social identities and 'vocabularies' of motives for

actors, and are as such stable constellations of practice and the subjects and objects connected to them.

An ensuing question is what happens when different institutional logics meet, whether more broadly in a field like international relations or more specifically in an organization? The first and most important point to make is that of plurality. All fields are characterized by a multitude of logics, even if one appears more dominant than others, just as it will be characterized by conflicting demands (Dunn and Jones, 2010). Some have shown how organizations may slowly adopt elements from different institutional logics into its practices without discarding existing ones, thereby gradually gaining legitimacy over time and with different constituencies (Lounsbury and Boxenbaum, 2013). Other similar studies have identified situations in which competing logics co-existed over periods of time (Reay and Hinnings, 2009; Lounsbury, 2007). Common explanations of managing rivalling institutional logics hold that either evident battles occur in which actors supporting the winning logics acquire dominance (Hoffmann, 1999); actors work through covert operations to gradually but slowly bring their supported logic to dominance (Reay *et al*, 2006); or collaborative relationships are made in which actors work together to achieve the desired outcome yet maintaining their independence (Reay and Hinnings, 2009).

Operationalizing Institutional Logics

Institutional logics, then, are understood as different sets of values, material practices and symbolic constructions, providing meaning to the social reality of actors, and that function both in a latent and an apparent sense: apparent as actors may intentionally draw on their properties and arguments as they engage in organizational or institutional work, and latent as their existence may unintentionally or unpredictably guide or shape actors' interpretations and actions. To further operationalize the institutional logics perspective, we need a set of analytical factors that can be used to identify and discuss the nature of the institutional logics at play in practice. In the following, I identify four such factors that will drive the empirical analysis.

The first factor refers to *diagnostic and prognostic framing*. Insights from the framing literature (Goffmann, 1974; Benford and Snow, 2000) can help us identify what should be given analytical attention in the attempt to discuss the two different logics and their potential contestation. Of greatest importance here are the two core framing tasks that Benford and Snow (2000) refer to: diagnostic and prognostic framing. *Diagnostic framing* is the construction of a collective identification of a specific problem or issue, and it thus helps us understand how the particular logic identifies the state of things and the problems of other logics. *Prognostic framing* regards the articulation of a solution to the problem identified in the diagnostic framing, letting us assess the logic's proposal of solutions or 'how things should be', while lastly 'motivation' explores the motives of the logic.

The second factor refers to the *change and temporality perceptions* of the logic at play. Being analytically mindful of this factor means identifying whether the logic considers the necessary induced change to be either leaning towards structural or functional ideals. Structural change is more focused on the long haul, which is also why it follows a specific perception of temporality that is long term in nature. Change is from this perspective perceived as something complex and protracted that is difficult to control and direct (i.e. non-linear), but also as eventually enduring. In contrast, functional change is more concerned with changes that are radical in the present moment, serving a purpose of changing something here and now without necessarily concerning itself with what comes later. By extension, this perspective perceives change far more linear and causal, i.e. systems comprise a set of identifiable parts that together

constitutes that whole, and that may be changed to produce a predicted outcome. It thus also follows a perception of temporality that is vastly more short term in nature.

The third factor revolves around perceptions of *perspectives of scale and knowledge* underpinning the logic. Perspectives of scale delve into how the logic ranks on a scale from empiricist contextuality to axiomatic beliefs. It is closely linked to change processes and targets the prescriptions and outcomes of such processes, upholding attitudes that may value at both extremes either the importance of contextuality or that of generalizability, i.e. can interventions easily be scaled across radically different contexts and likewise if similar outputs can be expected in such different contexts. Ontological attitudes to the core ideas of knowledge are also connected to this segmentation, either perceiving knowledge acquired and utilized as relative to individual contexts or as something that can be hierarchized.

Finally, the fourth factor takes into account the *mode of operation* of the logic. Are interventions perceived or recognized as intervening in a social context with potentially social, economic and not least political consequences, or are they instead seen as technical in nature not necessarily perceived to be carrying specific intrinsic values and ideas. Whereas the latter speaks of an approach that sees change processes as technical and depoliticized, perhaps based on knowledge with high levels of scientific rigour (as understood in a traditional positivist knowledge hierarchy), the former perceives of interventions as fundamentally loaded with values from the 'sender' that intervene in social and political contexts and with both material and ideational consequences. From the outset of the theoretical exploration and the four factors identified, the next part examines and analyses the two contending logics.

Institutional Logics of Gender Equality and Cost-Effectiveness

Institutional Logic of Gender Equality

Gender equality is in itself an immensely complex concept, consisting of two highly contested notions, 'gender' and 'equality'. Some argue that especially norms of gender equality in development cooperation have by now been reduced to an 'empty signifier' because of the many forms it may take (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007). Importantly, by institutional logic I do not refer to the complete norm-set that surrounds gender concerns in development, which is so broad and contradictory that it may not be considered a single logic, let alone any single norm (see Verloo and Lombardo, 2007). Rather, I try and find into a core logic that considers the importance of transformative societal change in gendered relations as well as in the role and lives of women, not least regarding their empowerment.

Long since its entry into development cooperation, however, this concern evolved and was struggled over in the international society, contested like most normative principles in international life. In the 19th century, the prevailing image of women was one of difference. Women were perceived as different from men and had to be protected from the long working hours and rugged job-forms that men took up. After WWII, universalistic individualism blossomed and women were now, slowly, perceived to hold the same capacities, needs and purposes as men. Differentiation was now opposed, protective legislation was abolished and the idea of equality was increasingly pursued.

In development cooperation, the 'public face' of this logic has been the world women's conferences from 1975 to 1995 and its ratification in several international treaties including the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* or CEDAW (ratified by 180 countries), strengthening its legitimacy and authority (Krook and True, 2012;

True and Mintrom, 2001). The UN provided the first international public space for debates on women's empowerment following its creation after World War II. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was created back in 1946, but it was not until the 1960s the issue gained momentum (Zwingel, 2012), with different nation states beginning to implement gender policies.

The core diagnosis of this logic is that the world largely continues to be in a state of structural gendered inequality in which men and women have unequal access to opportunity, and in a more specific sense health, education, employment and power and decision making. The main reason for this is a combination of cultural and social institutions and structures that reproduce and uphold inequality (from the family to the state) (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007). Gender equality and women's empowerment are both a private and public issue then. Without acknowledging the family, it is impossible to make any real progress, making the domestic sphere of great importance, including issues such as unpaid work typically not being considered as a productive activity (and thus invisible), unequal gender division of caring work, allocation of income and constraints to women's movements outside of households (Chant, 2007). The logic thus combines the structural relational aspects of gender with a call for the transformative needs of women.

The prognosis of the logic is around transformations on a societal scale, focused on structures that cannot easily be modified by way of policy change. It considers that gender equality cannot be achieved unless we consider the gender implications of all public policies, i.e. gender mainstreaming-type arguments; that women's standards of education and skills should be improved to make them more competitive with men; that women's access to employment and incomes should be increased; and that measurement and visibility of, e.g., domestic labour and unpaid care work should be enhanced, so that reproductive labour is not considered a 'naturalized' attribute of women, potentially undermining their rights to an equitable sharing of household resources (ibid.). It is the responsibility of governments to set in place instruments that alleviate women's inequality to men and to make policies that are sensitive to variations among women.

But there are also more radical elements to the logic, holding that solutions are not only different policies and laws, but that we are essentially dealing with deeper social and cultural problems that need addressing. Those of a more transformative nature hold that it is not only women's conditions that are a problem, it is their position (in a patriarchal society reproducing gender inequalities), and the ensuing objective becomes to focus on the structures that uphold inequality, centring on the strategic and long-term transformative needs of women. To some then, gender equality as a relational issue and a matter of structural inequality is something that can be addressed by institutions, governments and wider society (Chant and Sweetman, 2012). To others, forms of gender justice and equality cannot be promoted or achieved by working through already unequal and patriarchal institutions that are themselves part of the problem, forming a system of gender inequality reproduction (Cornwall *et al*, 2007; Wilson, 2015).

In essence, it is a logic whose change perception is focused on mainly long-term, structural change, though complemented by more short-term engagements through policy instruments and projects, whose nature is by default political and social. It is widely based on recognition of the necessity to work from an understanding of different contexts, each with its inherent complexity, entailing how interventions must be individually fitted, and knowledge of best practices and effective measures is relative to circumstance. Interventions guided by this logic recognize the social, political and cultural implications of the change it attempts to instil (it will seek to utilize such deep-level interference). It is, however, also a logic that has been continuously challenged by other viewpoints, from the major quarrel between 'women in

development' (WID) and 'gender and development' (GAD) to recent trends treating gender equality as 'smart economics', rationalizing investments in women and girls from an efficiency point of view (see Krook and True, 2012). Likewise, though feminism and development share philosophies of transformation, the discursive contestation between the two has taken on a form of struggle for interpretive power (see Cornwall *et al*, 2007; Eisensten, 2009).

Institutional Logic of Cost-Effectiveness

Positivist logics from the scientific and methodological core of the natural sciences have increasingly entered different areas of public policy in the last decades (Archibald, 2015; Pawson, 2006; Hansen, 2014). Here, they have furthered evidence-based policy paradigms with special attention to notions of 'objective evidence' and 'knowledge hierarchies' while valuing quantitative evidence and research. The aim has been to shift policy-making towards objective and rational problem solving with an emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness. Being significantly related to the managerialist ideas emanating out of the neoliberal paradigms of New Public Management, the intention is to reduce messy and complex realities to a set of logical causal chains, treating problems as bounded (Lapsley, 2009). Evidence, in this line of thought, is a form of objective information that we have not yet acquired, but whose presence will fill the gap we need to address to have an impact in any given area, like the last material piece of a puzzle (Denzin, 2015). These lines of thought made their way into public policy during the 1960s and 70s (especially in the US under the name of Management by Objectives), where it was seen as a rational and technical break with 'old-fashioned' ideological policies and instruments (Sandersson, 2002).

The logic's diagnosis in essence considers policy and implementation as something to be driven by notions of scientific evidence and simplicity. International interventions are too dominated by notions of contextuality and politics, undermining the potential of policy to follow scientifically proven programmes and prescriptions. Truth is not relative, and it is possible to determine the outcomes of particular events as a linear cause–effect model (Eyben, 2010). The problem for international interventions then has been the inability or hesitance to carry out systematic reviews that generate overviews of what works and what does not work, establishing forms or axioms that may be applied across contexts and countries (scientific inquiry in pursuit of progress (Sandersson, 2002)).

A prognosis emerges then that incorporates different elements, central to all is the notion of control. Evidence as forms of control is needed to provide both *accountability* and *improvement*, the first concerned with how to prove that government or organizations are working effectively (basically as performance management), not wasting scarce resources, and the latter with what works under different circumstances (generating reliable knowledge that provides a sound basis for effective action). The solution becomes to construct a type of policy-making that is depoliticized and technical in nature, in which evidence collection represents a scientific progress towards a higher state of knowing what works and what does not work. International interventions such as those of development cooperation may be a complex system, but it is nonetheless a system in which we can understand the different mechanisms and their effects and consequences, allowing us to predict the necessary actions to bring about change in social systems – a post-ideological approach to policy and governance. The logic's prognosis means applying a set of evidence-based and result-orientated tools and artefacts that basically function as technologies of power including Randomized controlled trials; systematic reviews; cost-effectiveness analysis; option appraisals and impact evaluation; reporting, tracking and

disbursement mechanisms; progress reviews; performance measurement indicators; logical framework analysis; and payment by results.

Summarizing, the logic of cost-effectiveness builds on an understanding of change that pursues the highest possible return within the short possible time frame. It perceives of such change and its own role within it as being functionalist through a depoliticized and technical mode of operation. Basing itself on a foundation of reducing policy issues to questions of evidence (that can be acquired and measured in an objective sense), it has a hierarchical perception of knowledge (seeing quantitative above qualitative in a classic economistic evidence hierarchy) and a belief in the feasibility of generalization and scaling solutions across contexts.

Contending Institutional Logics in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

What does it look like in practice then, when these two different logics meet? Based on the above discussion of the two logics, the next part will explore a specific case of how these contend in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's work on gender equality. The Gates Foundation leads a contemporary re-emergence of private foundations in development cooperation (see Moran, 2014; Edwards, 2009; McGoey, 2015), currently positioned as one of the most powerful non-state actors of international life. Since the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation opened its doors in 1999, it has distributed more than $34 billion to national and international issues, with grantmaking amounting to $4 billion in 2015. From an initial focus on education in the US as well as international spending on vaccine development and delivery, the foundation has in the last 10 years ventured into the area of 'global development', where its main areas of intervention are agriculture, water and sanitation, and financial services for the poor. Today, the foundation is a titanic influence in these areas, ever-present in international discussions on development and fora such as the UN, OECD, WHO or the World Economic Forum. This process of increasingly entering into international development cooperation has entailed confrontation with dominant normative frameworks present here (see Fejerskov, 2015). One of those has been that of gender equality and women's empowerment, as already explained, bound to create an interesting dynamic with the foundation's strong existing logics of cost-effectiveness. In the following two sections, the article looks to both the organizational discourse of the foundation's gender equality-related policies and in practice on the organizational floors, to explore and explain this meeting between two different logics.

Encounter in Organizational Discourse

The first organizational strategy made to guide the foundation's work on gender equality and women's empowerment was the 2008 'Gender impact strategy for agricultural development'. As a gender strategy, its objective was to 'ensure that the practical needs and strategic interests of women and girls are considered in each proposal' from grantees, and furthermore that understanding the complexities of gender roles would help refine the foundation's project goals and design. Introducing gender equality as a specific requirement for all future grants provided by the Gates Foundation was not perceived in the organization as the promotion of a political agenda, but rather as a matter of effectiveness (Interview with BMGF staff).

At least three tools for strengthening the gender integration in the foundation's grantmaking were introduced with the new strategy: (1) *a Gender Checklist*, (2) *Proposal and Review Templates* and (3) *the Necessary Project Components List*. The last is of greatest interest to us

as it presented potential grantees with an overview of key components, based on the perception of change that 'addressing gender will improve the impact of all agricultural projects', on the basis of which proposals were to be reviewed to determine if they demonstrated an effective commitment to gender integration. First, the participation of women in each project should be 'at the optimum level' (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2008) to produce the greatest impact on the reduction of hunger and poverty. The foundation explains the inclusion of 'optimum level' with the rationale that 'past efforts to mainstream gender have often relied on notions of equality or quotas which do not always yield the greatest benefits' (ibid.) and, as such, gender inequality towards a majority of men or women may be found preferably so long as it leads to 'optimal project effectiveness' (ibid.). This provides grantees with quite substantial amounts of flexibility in deciding on the gender equality outcomes of specific activities, but it also embodies the viewpoint that sees gender mainstreaming serving as a tool for effectiveness through women's empowerment as opposed to advancement of the equity beliefs of gender *equality*, very much a functionalist or instrumentalist perception of change. Secondly, projects were expected to strive towards increasing opportunities for women in income-generating activities, learning and participation in decision-making processes. Interestingly, such a focus is more clearly aimed at transforming existing structures and institutions to increase women's participation, without an all-out attention to effectiveness, though it may be implicit that increasing the participation of women will automatically lead to an increase in effectiveness. Third, new projects should strive to increase understanding of the importance of gender dynamics within the community where they work, within the grantee itself and among the wider international community as evidenced by the inclusion of appropriate gender strategies throughout the project design, implementation and evaluation, furthering the importance of contextuality. This third component carries with it an explicit belief that 'increased understanding of gender dynamics will dramatically increase the impact and effectiveness of grantees' programs' (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2008), making gender policy not only a requirement for funding, but a critical element of success, and leveraging awareness of gender opportunities and constraints as a way to create high-impact delivery. Although vaguely formulated, this component is interestingly followed by the point of view that improvements in agriculture can reduce gender constraints. Such an inverted argument is noteworthy because it assumes that an increase in agricultural productivity will entail increased gender equality and empowerment of women. The last component of interest sets out the importance of hiring women inside the grantee itself and among its implementing partners, especially with a view to leadership roles, as including women at all levels of project implementation 'will likely improve successful implementation of projects, improve uptake of new technologies, generate innovative approaches and reduce the number of projects that fail on account of failure to address the needs of the vast majority of small holders farmers' (ibid.). Such considerations provide women with taken-for-granted, superhuman-like capabilities, while representing an almost Rostowian belief in the ability of technology to progress society and the lives of women. On the other hand, grantees are asked to 'consider the constraints on time many women have; child rearing, gathering water/firewood and the restrictions and difficulties they often have when traveling', and 'the labour and time implications of the proposed work of the project [needs to] have been considered from the perspective of women and girls', accentuating women as victims of their own lives (ibid.).

In essence, the strategy targeted women because of the role they play as the majority of smallholder farmers in the south, rendering it as a form of 'smart economics' (see Roberts and Soederberg, 2012). To empower women, it valued the importance of not just women themselves, but their families, communities and also the men in their lives. Despite an emphasis

that a transformational and effective approach must also improve equity between men and women, the woman, 'she', was still at the forefront of the gender work proposed by the strategy. The perception of women, as we see above, moves incoherently from one extreme to another as the foundation draws heavily on victim/heroine dichotomies. Women are frail and vulnerable, yet at the same time they possess super-like powers to save not only their families from hunger and poverty, but also the communities and even the countries they live in, by way of increasing the agricultural production (thus cutting across private/public spheres).

As a follow-up to the 2008 Gender Impact Strategy, the foundation publicized an 'orientation document' in 2012 with the name 'Creating gender-responsive agricultural development programs'. Much like the 2008 gender strategy, the orientation document builds on the assumption that ignoring the role of women in agriculture will hamper the success of the foundation's work (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012). First, without the inclusion of women, the foundation considers *households to be less productive*, because women farmers are thought to miss out on critical knowledge, skills and assets all contributing to increased household productivity, do not have the same access to productive inputs as men, and if they had, household productivity would increase by 20 per cent. The orientation document consequently considers empowerment of women to entail a 2.5–4 per cent increase in agricultural output for developing countries. Second, *new approaches are not adopted* if women are not targeted and empowered, and without access to education or information, women cannot influence research agendas and in turn are less likely to adopt new practices and technologies, because men are understood as predominantly producing knowledge and technologies relevant for men. Third, *nutrition is not prioritized*, because men are considered less likely to reinvest income in the health of the family.

The orientation document occasionally refers to the role of women *and* men, but little attention is given to the role of men, other than their enclosing effect on women, family life and agricultural productivity. Interestingly, the document correspondingly appears as basically uninterested in gender *equality* per se, with a much stronger women-centric focus being evident. Women are, as we also saw it in the 2008 strategy, described as both victims and heroines. Restrained by their men, they do not have access to similar resources and decision-making processes and are victims of many other disempowering feats. Meanwhile, emancipatory actions would benefit not just the women, but also their families, and furthermore local and national agricultural productivity. Such beliefs interestingly cut across the public/private dichotomy targeting and aiming to transform, not just the role of women as farmers, but women as mothers and head of families. Men in this sense are not deemed much worth in neither of the spheres, whether unable to handle financial issues, or maximizing the yields from their land. In both strategies, women are widely considered a technical tool, with which it is possible to increase effectiveness of projects and thus impact. It employs some of the language of the logic of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Encounter in Practice on the Organizational Floors

When the Gates Foundation's new global development programme was introduced in 2006 (complementing work on global health and domestically in the US on mainly education) to increase its grantmaking and facilitate a move into new areas of intervention, gender equality and women's empowerment slowly emerged as one of several cross-cutting priorities in the new area of agricultural development. There was definite intellectual attention to the issue from inside, but it was not until a former WFP director was brought in to develop a foundation approach to the matter, it gained momentum. From then until today, it has gone through

different phases of institutionalization, falling in and out of strategies and leadership priorities, but generally increasing in prominence. Two periods in time are interesting for illustrative purposes of how the two logics encountered one another on the organizational floors of the foundation: initial efforts to develop a foundation approach to gender equality and women's empowerment, and more recent attempts at taking the issue foundation wide.

As the resource person was hired with the specific purpose of developing an approach to gender equality and women's empowerment that would resonate with existing dominant practices and ideas in the organization, processes began during which other employees in the agricultural team had to be convinced of the necessity to include such notions across their grantmaking portfolios. Alongside an assistant, the new gender responsible senior advisor began presenting the idea to colleagues, framing the concern as something 'right and smart' to do, not in a moral sense, but rather through the aim of increasing impact and results. The gender proponents were conscious that the gender equality notions should not be perceived by the other employees as a new requirement being imposed by leadership, but rather as a logical extension of the foundation's mission and nature of fiercely pursuing results, greatly shaped by the logic of cost-effectiveness. To frame the gender concern within this logic, they used a central component of it, namely that of evidence and data. Numbers and statistics play an essential role in all the foundation's endeavours, and by using World Bank and FAO data they could construe an obvious reason why a particular focus on gender equality and women's empowerment was a necessary component of any sound agricultural grant: you need it to create measurable results (Interview with BMGF staff), leading them to adopt a mantra of 'optimize, never equalize', largely drawing on the logic of cost-effectiveness, a strong use of evidence and evidence hierarchies and a change perception that is fundamentally functionalist. To programme officers navigating an organizational culture that largely judge individuals on the measurable results of their grants, this is sweet music. Measurable effects of projects are one of the central ways of gaining the attention of leadership, crucial in determining one's future in the foundation and your eventual potential for rising in the organizational hierarchies.

The instrumental use of women as a tool to increase project effectiveness stands in contrast to different perspectives including that of perceiving women's empowerment and the pursuit of gender equality as a rights-based issue. Despite the egalitarian-influenced motto of the Gates Foundation seeing 'equal value in all lives', such an approach was never considered in the foundation. As the gender proponents explained it 'you will get nowhere running around talking about women's rights here – it's a far too political approach for this place' (Interview with BMGF staff), drawing on the depoliticized nature of the logic of cost-effectiveness. Instead of pursuing a women's rights approach that would probably not have lasted long, the gender proponents blended the different logics to create an approach that could be institutionalized in this particular organizational context. 'You have to add the Bill Gates mind-set, 'I don't want any of this political baloney', to make it work. It has to be about efficiency and effectiveness' (Interview with BMGF staff) a gender proponent framed it, explaining further the need to incorporate technological elements into the approach, illuminating the earlier discussed strategies heavily focus on women's use of crop and agricultural technology.

The second illustration of how the two logics encountered each other concerns a more contemporary situation in which the head of another team suddenly began asking questions about gender equality to his team: 'Are we doing anything on women's issues?' (Interview with BMGF staff). Discovering only minute work on the issue, he set out to audit all grants across several teams, eventually identifying a range of 'missed opportunities' to include a gender focus that might eventually have increased impact. Alongside a hired consultant, he began a

three-phased approach by making more than fifty interviews across twenty-eight teams to gain insights into whether and how people were thinking about gender equality. The second phase, then, was about studying the evidence, learning what was out there, and not only from the literature, but more importantly by visiting around sixteen peer organizations to discuss how they approached their work on gender equality. The conclusion to this endeavour was that 'data on gender has thus far been loosy goosy – too much jargon, anecdotal and generalized evidence. We need much more rigour and scientific evidence' as one of the involved explained it, describing how he thought the gender literature had a far too dominant qualitative focus, with too few studies employing multivariate or large-N methods allowing for generalizations across large populations. Most of all, what they felt was missing were Randomized Controlled Trials (Interview with BMGF staff).

Evidence through measurement is considered a key tool for setting goals and creating strategies in the foundation, and is lauded for its ability to identify best practices and effective interventions and approaches, by allowing 'government leaders to make comparison across countries, find who's doing well and then learn from the best' (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012). This follows key characteristics of the logic of cost-effectiveness, considering generalizations across contexts based on 'scientific evidence' a key purpose of international work. Gender proponents in the foundation were confronted with questions over the 'scientific evidence' as to whether a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment is necessary: 'there has always been suspicion that a gender focus is soft or fluffy, especially when we discuss it with lab rats. We need to thoroughly prove then, that 'No, it stands up to the same rules as other areas'. We always need to bring quantitative data along with the qualitative to convince people' (Interview with BMG staff). Gender equality has had a hard time when confronted with other interests in the foundation, and especially those of the hard natural sciences; seeming to miss the 'scientific rigour' of RCTs to determine whether a gender focus is truly 'necessary'. The complexity of tracing gender equality results quantitatively entails a different set of metrics and a different approach to monitoring and evaluation than for many other areas in the foundation.

The case clearly underlines how for different individuals the logics served as vocabularies of both action and discourse that they drew on, some consciously in a reflective way, and some not. The purpose for these organizational actors seems to have been to frame, and by doing so also blending, the logic of gender equality within the discursive boundaries of the otherwise dominant logic of cost-effectiveness. This meant aligning logics with fundamentally different perceptions of change, scale, knowledge, temporality and modes of operation, the consequences of which are not to be taken lightly, as will be discussed next. As for the tangible changes, a movement seems definitely to have been spurred beyond just discursive lip-service, but not one that truly reaches beyond those genuinely interested in the issue of gender equality. While many programme officers began including these concerns into their grantmaking, many would still attempt to have grants without any thoughts on gender equality brought past leadership, often successfully (Interview with BMGF staff).

Conceptual and Practical Consequences of Contending Institutional Logics

What can we derive from all this then, in terms of what happens as different institutional logics encounter one another in discourse and practice in international cooperation? Table 1 attempts to capture key characteristics of the two logics engaged with in this article, and through it, it quickly becomes apparent that they in their intrinsic or ideal-type nature share very few traits, from perceptions of temporality, over processes of change and mode of operation to that of

Table 1: Key characteristics of the two logics as derived from the factors introduced

	Institutional logic of gender equality and women's empowerment	*Institutional logic of cost-effectiveness*
Diagnosis	Structural gender equality; gendered unequal access to institutions and services	Interventions too dominated by contextuality and subjective value politics
Prognosis	Societal transformations; addressing social and cultural problems of gendered inequality	Policy and implementation to be driven by scientific evidence from which axiomatic solutions can be derived as implemented across contexts, allowing for added control
Change and temporality	Structural; non-linear; long term	Functional; linear; short term
Scale and knowledge	Contextuality; relative	Generalizability; hierarchy
Mode of operation	Social; political	Technical; depoliticized

evidence and knowledge. Such differences ought to render different forms of blending nearly impossible but as we have seen in the empirical part, this is certainly not the case.[1] What is impossible, however, is for these two different logics to blend without letting go of significant core characteristics of one or the other.

This is not necessarily problematic from a pragmatic point of view, but it means one cannot truly pursue the transformative nature of the gender logic if you couple it with the impact logic. The logic of cost-effectiveness' preference for, e.g., Randomised Controlled Trials and their inherent positivist logics to the study of gender norms and relations will necessarily entail a (methodical) shift towards large populations and quantifiable data that may be compared across other cases, increasing the generalizability of the intervention studied. But the reductionism of such approaches means that the end result cannot account for the complexity of how, e.g., cultural and institutional structures reproduce gender inequalities, undermining the potential for applying a transformative approach. Utilizing women as a category or technical tool for boosting agricultural production through empowerment cannot be done in depoliticized way or be released from the social realm a process of empowerment as it necessarily is a matter of redefining the relationship between men and women.

What this case displays is how what is of greatest interest is not necessarily whether one or the other logic is seemingly dominant at a field level, but rather how a multiplicity of logics meets in organizational discourses and practices (see, e.g., Zilber (2013) or Greenwood *et al* (2011) for a run-through of the scant attention this perspective has received in the literature). By studying a multiplicity of pressures from logics, we can direct attention towards understanding how individuals (and thus the organizations they are embedded in) actually *process* such complexity. In this analysis of the potential hybridization of logics on gender equality and cost-effectiveness, I argue how the core inconsistencies or discrepancies between these two logics entail that they cannot be pursued simultaneously or blended, without the loss of key characteristics of one or the other. Sure, they may be brought together and become a hybrid form, but in this form one logic will always dominate the other. The theoretical implication of this is essentially that some logics are more compatible than others, and that an unproblematic hybridization is not always possible, thus contrasting, e.g., Battilana and Dorado (2010). Organizational responses to institutional complexity (from contrasting logics) cannot always be forms of peaceful cohabitation, i.e. in an empirical sense, the Gates Foundation will

never be able to forward or advance an understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment that is equally informed by logics of cost-effectiveness. Core characteristics of either logic will be lost or 'sacrificed' in such a process of hybridization.

Conclusion

Institutional logics are different sets of values, material practices and symbolic constructions that provide meaning to the social reality of actors who may intentionally draw on their properties and arguments as they engage in organizational or institutional work or that may unintentionally or unpredictably guide or shape interpretations and actions. They help us deconstruct arguments and discover motives for particular actions and discourses in development cooperation. But such logics are also difficult to grasp analytically because of their immediate metatheoretical nature. This article has presented a set of factors that may be used to identify core characteristics of logics and that allows us to analytically trace and discuss how they are put to work in an empirical case, including (i) diagnostic and prognostic framing, (ii) change and temporality perceptions, (iii) perspectives of scale and knowledge and (iv) mode of operation.

On the basis of these, the article then identified and discussed the two different logics of *gender equality and women's empowerment*, and *cost-effectiveness*, following their encounter in both organizational discourse and practice in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in an attempt to unravel what the consequences are as two apparently opposing logics encounter or contend. It finds that these two logics have significant conceptual differences when it comes to matters such as perceptions of temporality, knowledge and evidence, change processes, modes of operation and political nature. In their practical manifestation, however, these logics are not necessarily incompatible. Yet, they cannot be soundly blended without betraying one or the others' core characteristics. As we saw in the organizational discourse of the Gates Foundation, elements of the logic of gender equality and women's empowerment may be framed through the logic of cost-effectiveness to instrumentalize a focus on gender. But doing so means a loss of key transformative elements of the first logic. It is nearly impossible to couple a targeting of cultural or institutional structures for the sake of increasing gender equality with a fast impact focus on increasing the agricultural productivity of women.

The institutional logics perspective is suitable for many corners of the study of development cooperation as it can help us understand what drives certain discourses and practices, and what happens when these meet or contend both at field level and in specific development organizations. This article has engaged in two particular logics whose encounter and contention have often been processed in the literature surrounding gender and development, but instead of producing another case of instrumentalized gender concerns in development discourse, I have tried to show that the opposition to gender equality concerns in organizations may very well come from conflicting logics. This makes us reconsider why and how certain individuals and organizations further specific, perhaps problematic, articulations and practices concerning women, and shows that as long as another dominant logic (such as that of cost-effectiveness here) is present, gender equality notions will always be seconded to those. Those individuals may argue otherwise, but as long as the ideational cores are contradictory to the level shown here, then no peaceful hybridization between them can occur; instead, a hierarchy is guaranteed in which one always takes the upper hand. Beyond gender equality and women's empowerment or cost-effectiveness, of course, international cooperation is exposed to many different logics

that shape policy agendas, determine resource flows and continually shape organizational discourses and practices, whose ideational nature is imperative to understand.

Acknowledgments

Note

1. As has also been proved repeatedly elsewhere, see Perrons (2005), Chant and Sweetman (2012) and Liebowitz and Zwingel (2014).

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