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CONFRONTING GENDER EQUALITY

How gender equality is perceived in UN documents:
a comparison of poverty reduction and post-conflict security

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality is a problem that is interlinked with many other development issues. The UN have for long time been in the forefront when it comes to addressing gender equality and development, but has also been criticized for lacking an adequate understanding of gender. With the theoretical departure in gender mainstreaming as strategy for institutional policy-making, discourse analysis as my methodological approach and the UN gender discourse as my research focus, the intention of this paper is to analyze how the understanding of gender and gender equality can be interpreted in UN policies and documents on poverty reduction and post-conflict security. The purpose is also to compare the understanding of gender equality within the two separate issues in order to see if the same underlying values and norms can be found.

The result of the study revealed that although the overall understanding of gender did not differ as much between the two issues as was initially expected, other shortcomings could be found which insinuates a clash between a will to have a modern approach to gender equality in policies and commitments and a more traditional notion that often appeared in the suggested efforts. In the conclusion, I discuss the positive and negative aspects of the findings, and reflects on the need for a more consistent and coherent understanding of gender equality in the UN gender discourse, which I believe would lead to improved and more efficient efforts when it comes to eliminating gender inequalities.

Key words: gender equality, gender mainstreaming, United Nations (UN), poverty reduction, post-conflict security, discourse analysis.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research purpose and questions

Despite the fact that women represent half of the world's population, women have been subjected to discrimination and inequalities for centuries. Gender inequalities and the discrimination and exclusion of women in development are a universal development problem as it is interlinked with a range of other development issues - from education, health, and poverty to environmental degradation, violence and international security. The United Nations (UN) has been in the forefront of the promotion of women's rights and empowerment, and in the UN Millennium Development Goals there is a special goal dedicated to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, promote gender equality and empower women. The UN has also adopted different means and strategies in order to better integrate a gender perspective in all its work areas, as well as to mainstream gender awareness on all levels within the organization. However, as gender inequalities yet exists within development programs, the UN has been subjected to critique for failing to address the complexity of gender in policies and programs, and for shortcomings regarding the understanding of what gender equality actually means.

How gender can and should be understood is one of the central questions within feminist analysis (Kronsell 2012:7), and to clarify the content and meaning of a specific concept, as well as to what it refers to, is crucial when analyzing the political message in a text (Beckman 2005:31). With this in mind, questions arise on how gender equality actually is understood within the UN, and what kind of values and norms the UN does in fact embed in the concept of gender equality.

The topic for this paper is thus to research the gender discourse of the UN. My main research question is how gender equality is perceived in UN documents, and I am going to analyze this by comparing the perception of gender equality within the two development issues of poverty reduction and post-conflict security. What I am interested to explore is what constitutes the understanding of gender in UN documents, and if the theoretical underpinnings of gender discourses varies depending on the context of the issue it is applied on. By comparing how the concept of gender equality is perceived within the field of poverty reduction vis-à-vis how it is understood in the post-conflict security discourse, I want to reveal the underlying nuances of what is embedded in the idea of gender equality as development ideal. Further on, I am interested in investigating the theoretical standpoints of the UN's perception of gender within these two issues and by a

comparison see if they are consistent. The underlying aim is to reflect on how discourses forms knowledge and values.

My intention with the study is to contribute to the discussion on how to make the integration and mainstreaming of gender awareness in the field of international development more efficient and coherent.

Research questions:

- What values and norms can be interpreted in the UN's perception of gender equality in the analyzed material?
- When comparing the development issues of poverty reduction and post-conflict security, is the perception of gender equality the same? If not, how do they differ?

1.2 Definitions and terms

1.2.1 Definition of research focus

Discourse, as will be discussed in the upcoming methodological part of this paper, is a difficult subject to study as it relates to a diffuse and multidimensional set of aspects. With this in mind, I have found it necessary to narrow down the research area and specify which aspect of the UN gender discourse I will look at. I have chosen to focus on how the gender discourse within the UN can be interpreted by analyzing how gender and gender equality is defined and expressed in UN policies and documents. I will thus not go further into how the theoretical dimension of the perception of gender equality is transferred into practical implementation. I will also only focus on the official view and positionality of the UN on gender equality, which means that I have excluded the views of individual member countries. These choices have been crucial to make due to both time and space constraints and to maintain a consistent research focus throughout the paper.

My choice to focus on the UN is based on the fact that it is the largest international institution in the world today. The standard for human rights that is set within the UN has implications for the global contemporary development on local as well as international level. The UN is thus an important actor when it comes to the construction of interest, meaning and values that constitutes the foundation for international norms on development. The content of the UN policies thus have an important function in influencing political effects in the international society (Kronsell & Svedberg 2012:3). As already mentioned, the UN has taken a leading initiative in promoting gender equality, but my intention is to go beyond the stated policies and instead explore the values and presumption of gender equality that sets the structures for the gender discourse within the UN. Regarding my choice to focus on and compare the two development issues of poverty reduction and post-conflict security, an explanation of my intention might

be necessary to make. With my background in the field of International Relations, I have previously studied the presence of “hard” power and “soft” power within the international politics of states and institutions. The concepts of hard and soft powers are used within International Relations when talking about power conducted through direct or indirect means. The components that are included in the different concepts of hard and soft powers can be connected to masculine and feminine dichotomies. For example, hard power refers to traditional masculine attributes such as militarism, arms race and aggression, while soft power includes negotiation, communication and passivity, which are considered as typical feminine qualities (Anderson 2010:32-33). It may here be added that the structures of states and institutions also can be analyzed in relation to masculine and feminine dichotomies. When deciding on which two development issues I wanted to compare in my analysis, my first thought was that I wanted to use two issues where I suspected that different masculine-feminine dichotomies could be possible to trace. My initial perception of these two specific development issues is that while gender equality and the role of women have been more acknowledged within the field of poverty reduction, where “soft” values have gained a more prominent position in international poverty reduction programs, is the field of post-conflict security on the other hand still rooted in traditional “hard” values, where the masculine hegemonic norm for a long time have neglected the importance of a gender perspective. At the same time have the elimination of gender inequalities been highlighted as an international development goal through the declaration of the UN Millennium Development Goals, and increased gender equality has thus emerged as a primary target within both poverty reduction and post-conflict security. My choice to focus on these two specific issues derives thus also from the fact that an increased gender perspective have gained attention in the development discussion within both fields in recent years. These are the two main reasons for why I believe that a comparison of the UN gender discourse between poverty reduction and post-conflict security would be interesting to do.

1.2.2 Definition of method and material

To study ideas within different political contexts means to identify which question is of interest to answer and with what analytical tools the research purpose should be addressed with (Beckman 2005:11). My interest with the chosen research purpose is to look beyond the chosen words and terms used in the UN policies, and try to connect this to how the concept of gender equality is understood within the UN. Due to this, I believe a discourse analysis is the most appropriate method to use. To do a discourse analysis means to relate and interpret the underlying meaning and content of a text, and to connect it to language and context in order to be able to extract underlying values and meaning (Taylor 2001a:23). As with all scientific methodology, it is important to take consideration to the core criteria for academic research, which is reliability and validity (Taylor 2001b:318). With this in mind, I will strive to be as consistent and accurate as possible in my

analysis. A discussion on discourse analysis, as well as the outlines of the method, will be presented in a separate methodology section.

My theoretical point of departure will be the implementation of the concept of gender mainstreaming, which has been the primary theory and strategy in recent years for integrating gender awareness in UN policies and development programs. The concept of gender mainstreaming has contributed to a greater awareness of the importance to include a gender perspective in issues and discussions that in the past has been separated from gender context. However, in recent years, the concept of gender mainstreaming has been subject for extensive criticism for not fulfilling the expected purpose as was hoped for. I will present a more comprehensive and thorough analysis of the theoretical framework and the concept of gender mainstreaming in one of the following sections. In addition to gender mainstreaming as theoretical scope, I will also look into what kind of feminist theoretical standpoints on gender equality and gender mainstreaming that can be extracted from the discussion on gender mainstreaming as institutional strategy. These will later be used in the analysis as an analytical tool for identifying potential feminist influences in the contemporary gender discourse of the UN.

In terms of the material that the sections on context, literature review, theory and methodology are based upon, it consists of previous course literature as well as articles and texts related to each part of the paper. The empirical material which the analysis are based on consists of UN reports, action plans, official policy documents and different guidelines on gender mainstreaming and gender equality plans related to my two chosen focus areas: poverty reduction and post-conflict security. Due to the extensive amount of texts that have been published on the subject within my two chosen fields, I have found it necessary to delimit my selection of data. As a first precondition, I have tried to select the most relevant and newly published documents. The purpose behind this choice is that I want to analyze the contemporary gender discourse of the UN, rather than reflect over the potential historical development over the years. The main requirement in the selection of material was that the documents had to be representative for the two specific issues, as well as consistent and relevant. As my aim is to investigate the official opinion of the UN, I have chosen not to include reports written by individual authors, or reports prepared in cooperation with other international institutions.

In order to be able to analyze the material on a deeper level, which is a precondition when doing discourse analysis, I had to make further restrictions when defining my material. Even though, as we will see further on in this paper, both poverty reduction and post-conflict security are interlinked with many other development issues and gender related problems, I have found it necessary to be relatively strict towards this in my analysis. An example of such an issue is sexual- and gender based violence (SGBV), which is a problem highly related to gender equality within both poverty reduction and post-conflict security, and which often are brought up in the analyzed material. Despite this I have chosen to exclude SGBV from my analysis due to the complexity of the issue and in order to maintain my research focus. When doing discourse analysis the ideal is to have

a small but qualitative selection of material, which is the reason for why I have tried to minimize the amount of material as much as possible. The result is ten documents in total, five on each issue, of various lengths and sizes.

1.2.3 Definition of gender equality as concept

Gender is discursive, which means that it is built on a set of discourses implying that the concept of gender can be studied and analyzed differently depending on context and theoretical perspectives. The concept of gender equality is complex and fluid, and may thus be understood in different ways (Sjoberg & Via 2010:4; Kronsell 2012:7). Due to this, I find it important to say something about how I view and define gender equality, since the concept constitutes a crucial part of my research purpose. The definition of gender equality that I refer to in this paper is of a quite general kind, as it applies to a feminist definition of gender equality and the structures of society. The core of this definition is that men and women should have equal rights and equal opportunities in life without being valued differently (Wodak 2005:520). This fundamental definition of gender equality is shared by most feminist positions, although the meaning of rights and opportunities as well as the strategies for eliminating gender inequalities may vary. Gender is understood as socially constructed norms and values based on assumptions of masculinity and femininity. The assumptions of femininities and masculinities are co-constituted and mutually defined, meaning that gender roles and male and female stereotypes as we know them are results of deeply rooted social presumptions and constructions of typically male and female attributes (Peterson 2010:20). Characteristics such as strength, protection, aggression, rationality and leadership have traditionally been associated with masculinity, while weakness, vulnerability, emotions, passivity and submission are considered as traditional feminine characteristics (Sjoberg & Via 2010:3). The problem is that we value these characteristics different, which creates an asymmetrical power relation between the masculine and feminine. Today's society is dominated by patriarchal structures where masculine values and ideas are privileged over feminine. This domination is within feminist and gender studies sometimes referred to as the hegemonic masculinity (Peterson 2010:18). As feminine values and ideals are subordinated to masculine, women as subjects of discrimination are often in focus in feminist and gender studies. A common misconception is therefore that gender is about women. However, the privileging of masculinity does not mean that all men automatically are privileged in a patriarchal society, but rather what is considered as "manly" or masculine characteristics and ideals (Peterson 2010:18). The asymmetrical power relations are thus something that affects both women and men. The primary purpose of feminist and gender studies is to illuminate these asymmetrical power structures, how they are preserved and maintained in society as well as how they form the foundation for gendered discrimination (Wodak 2005:520).

1.3 Structure of the paper

The paper will be structured in the following way: this initial section that has introduced the purpose and scope of the paper will be followed by a chapter where the context of the research problem will be described. In this section I will present a brief historical and contextual background of poverty reduction and post-conflict security as development issues, as well as their relation to gender. I will then move on to the theoretical framework which starts with an introduction to the concept of gender mainstreaming and how it has been used within the UN as the primary strategy for implementing and mainstreaming gender awareness. I will then continue by summarizing how gender mainstreaming has been theorized in feminist literature, and present an outline of the critique that the contemporary use of gender mainstreaming has met by feminist scholars. Following this is an overview of the different feminist positions that can be found in the feminist debate on gender mainstreaming as institutional strategy. The intention of this overview is that the different feminist approaches to gender equality and gender mainstreaming are to be used as elements of an analytical tool in my analysis, in purpose to investigate if any feminist arguments can be interpreted in the UN policy documents. The next section describes my chosen methodology – discourse analysis – as well as an account for how I plan to operationalize this method. The following section is the analysis where I will present my findings from the study of UN documents on poverty reduction and post-conflict security. I will discuss the interpretation of values and norms, the presence of gender roles and stereotypes, and whether any feminist ideals are possible to extract from the text. Finally, in my concluding remarks I will discuss the result of the analysis in connection to the research questions and other parts of the paper.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Gender and poverty reduction

Placed in development context, poverty is perhaps one of the most multidimensional and complex issues to study since it inevitably leads you into other aspects of development. The discourse of poverty is also often permeated by political interests, which makes it controversial in the international development debate. Due to the complexity of poverty, it may therefore be problematic to define and conceptualize it in relation to development (Chant 2006:93). Throughout the years, focus have shifted from merely defining poverty in relation to earned income and assets to a more nuanced perspective, which involves what poverty is linked to and how it is signified. Today, the common perception of poverty is that it is not just about the lack of money, but rather about the lack of ability to change and affect the individual living situation. This changed focus has also affected the methods for how to measure poverty (Chant 2006:87). As the general notion of poverty has widened, it has become evident that to only measure poverty in terms of income, assets and consumption will not provide an adequate image of global poverty. The different ways of measuring poverty throughout the years has thus developed from methods that were only focusing on income per capita, to the Human Development Index (HDI), which additionally to income included other factors related to poverty and wealth, such as rates of literacy and life expectancy (Chant 2006:95). Today there are even methods for measuring the gender dimensions of poverty, such as the Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), including elements on disparities in income between men and women (Chant 2006:95).

When going through the international debate on women's role in global poverty, it is revealed that the connection between poverty and gender was acknowledged relatively early in the international development field compared to other development issues. The Danish economist Ester Boserup was one of the first to illuminate women's role in global development and poverty and to contribute to the previous lack of data on female poverty. In her work *Woman's role in economic development*, published in 1970, she presented her research on the gendered division of labor, which marked a crucial point for the integration of the perspective on women's role in development and world poverty in international development debate (Tinker 2006:272). During the UN Decade for Women 1975-1985, efforts were made in purpose to reveal and highlight the effects of development on women in comparison to men. The initiative brought

new perspectives on poverty and its implications for women to the international development discussion, and thus threw light on the gendered dimensions of the causes and effects of global poverty. The outcome showed that when comparing the impacts of poverty between women and men, women emerged as consistently more affected by poverty than men. Later research has showed that women and men are also unequally affected by global economic hardship, such as financial crisis and international economic recession (Chant 2006:88).

Today, despite the increased focus on gender and poverty in the international development field, women still constitutes the majority (around 70%) of the poorest population in the world, and women in general bear a disproportionate burden of global poverty (Chant 2007:35). In the process of seeking for answers for this “feminization of poverty”, it has become evident that it is not low income that is the main problem, but rather the lack of assets, rights and capabilities (Chant 2006:98). The underlying reasons for why women generally suffer more from global poverty can be divided in three categories. For the first, women are many times disadvantaged in terms of access to entitlements and capabilities which makes them particularly vulnerable to poverty (Chant 2007:36). Access to education, skills and resources are examples of poverty-reducing entitlements and capabilities where women often are neglected or discriminated against. Without entitlements, women are particularly vulnerable to additional forms of exploitation. Poverty is not only about material well-being but has a psychological dimension to it in terms of agency. In this regard, due to different kinds of discrimination, women often lack agency as the means to influence and change (Chant 2006:88,94). Secondly, women are subjected to heavier work burdens in combination with low income. The economic contribution of women is generally unnoticed when measuring economic development, due to the fact that women are primarily engaged in un-paid labor within the private domestic sphere (Chant 2006:89). Even women who are engaged in income-generating activities outside the home are indulged with greater responsibility for domestic work. A consequence of this unequal distribution of domestic labor is therefore that women are generally subjected to multiple workloads (Tinker 2006:274). Another consequence is that women working in the domestic sphere ends up in a subordinated position as they are held isolated from the public sphere, which invokes on their agency and ability to political influence (Chant 2006:88). Thirdly, women are disadvantaged by the restrictions of socio-cultural barriers and traditions that generate various types of discrimination. Female poverty has always been connected to independence since one of the primary causes for female poverty is the lack of access to basic rights. Due to discriminatory legislation, the perception of gender roles and other socio-cultural traditions, the opportunities for poor women are constrained. An example of this is how different law systems only acknowledge men to control and distribute a woman’s income. Another example is how women in some places are prohibited from buying land or inherit property (Chant 2006:99). Women are also many times subordinated to men due to socio-cultural traditions, which for instance can make it difficult for a woman to divorce her husband since she is economically dependent of him (Peterson 2010:22; Chant 2006:94).

Women's movements have throughout the years tried to convince development agencies and international institutions that poverty reduction programs have to pay attention to women's concerns in a larger scale in order to effectively challenge global poverty. They have also stressed that poverty reduction programs need to take consideration to the impact the programs have on poor women on local level (Tinker 2006:281). In order to challenge societal factors that causes and maintains female poverty, poor women themselves must be allowed to participate in the creation of the frames and content of poverty reduction programs. Today, "investing in women" has become somewhat of a slogan for poverty reduction initiatives (Chant 2007:41). But when it comes to the feminist contribution in the debate on global poverty and women, the discussion has not solely been about how to address and acknowledge the situation of women in global poverty. There have also been examples of internal conflicts, influenced by postcolonial arguments, on how poor women in the global South are perceived by feminists in the North. This discussion revealed a clash between feminists in the North, who has emphasized the individual as the primary unit and blamed the patriarchal structures of society for female poverty and gender inequalities, and feminists in the South, who on the other hand did not want individualism at the expense of the community or family entity, and who argued that female poverty and the discrimination of women depended as much on the economic exploitation of the South by the North as on patriarchy (Tinker 2006:280).

One of the primary buzzwords that has emerged in recent years as crucial for addressing female poverty, and which has been emphasized by both feminist scholars and international institutions such as the UN and the World Bank, is empowerment (Chant 2006:102). Empowerment can be seen as the possibility and capacity to make choices, and feminists and gender studies has contributed to highlight these aspects by emphasizing the connection between poverty, power and agency (Chant 2006:94,101). When it comes to how to empower poor women, microcredit programs has for long been among the popular international poverty reducing initiatives. Microcredit programs increased rapidly as strategy for poverty reduction programs in the 1980's and 90's. The underlying idea of microcredit loans is to provide access to financial credit to poor people who otherwise would have hard to obtain traditional bank loans. By adapting the concept of "help-to-self-help", the intention is that the loan is to be invested in microenterprises or other income-generating activities (Tinker 2006:293). To specifically target women in microcredit programs has proved to be efficient, as women often are more likely to invest the loan in activities that are more beneficial for the entire family, as opposed to what research has showed that men generally would do. Evaluations have revealed that in many places, the status of women have improved when women become more economically self-dependent, which also embeds for a general increase in participation and empowerment of women in the community (Tinker 2006:294). However, microcredit programs have also been criticized for failing to address female poverty and empowerment. One of the primary criticisms is that some women get trapped in a spiral of increased indebteding as they face difficulties in paying back their loans. Feminists have argued that since the conditions of the loans are formed on patriarchal

structures of discrimination against women, it does little to challenge and eliminate the socio-cultural traditions that constitute the primary obstacle for empowering poor women (Tinker 2006:296).

International poverty reduction programs have also been subjected to criticism. Among the critique is that many programs are focusing too narrowly on the situation of women without including the responsibility of men, which undermines the primary purpose of a gendered perspective on poverty. Feminist scholars have argued that poverty reduction programs with the purpose to empower poor women will not be successful unless men are integrated in the process (Chant 2006:103). To solely focus on women risk to result in a static view on female poverty, which would neglect the complexity of the causes and effects as well as contribute in maintaining a stereotypical image of poor women in the South. It is therefore crucial to problematize the different components of female poverty, as well as take consideration to the individual context and the influence of patriarchal structures of society when deciding on the aim and content of poverty reducing initiatives (Chant 2007:41,45).

2.2 Gender and post-conflict security

The role of women has for long time been unacknowledged in war and post-conflict context. The traditional assumption was that men fought war and women stayed at home. But in recent years this attitude has emerged to transform, and with the increased representation of women in the military and other conflict related areas traditionally designated to men and male territory, the global security context has started to change (Sjoberg & Via 2010:5). At the same time has another pattern become more frequent in contemporary conflicts: how women are systematically targeted in conflicts as weapons of war. A new gender component has been added to the contemporary war and security discourse with the systematic violence that is almost exclusively directed towards women in terms of rape, sexual violence and assaults as part of war strategy. The outcome is that women are disproportionately affected by war itself, and are often additionally exposed to great risks and vulnerability in the aftermath of war (Sjoberg & Via 2010:10). When it comes to the situation for women in post-conflict context, women are also to a larger extent subjected to other forms of risks related to the objectification of women as sexual targets, such as trafficking and prostitution (Peterson 2010:24).

Traditionally, military and security have been associated with men and masculinity, and characterized by the absence of a gender perspective (Kronsell 2012:5). However, the security context has not been without feminized and masculinized ideals and stereotypes. Presumptions and values connected to gender has always been present in conflict throughout history, such as the image of the strong warrior protecting the innocent maid (Sjoberg & Via 2010:5). Gendered

dichotomies are also used both when it comes to legitimizing war, which for instance can be interpreted in how a masculine ideal of protecting the weaker one are appealed to in war propaganda, as well as how the enemy often are embedded with feminine and degrading characteristics in purpose to portray them as weak and subordinate.

The expanded understanding of security is something that has been prominent in recent years and which also have affected the transformation of the security discourse (Kronsell 2012:4). An example of this is how the notion of human security has been recognized as part of the global security agenda. This can be traced in several of the UN Security Council resolutions that has been adopted and gained importance in recent years, such as the initiative on the responsibility to protect (R2P) (last applied in the UN resolution that legitimized the international military intervention in Libya in 2011) and particularly in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on gender and peacekeeping (Kronsell 2012:4). The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (hereinafter referred to as UNSCR 1325) in 2000 signaled a crucial change in the perspective on gender in security context. When the resolution was adopted it was applying to the human security concept and considered as a tool for mainstreaming gender into security discourse. The resolution did for the first time in official context connect gender to security and conflict, and was also the first to address gendered problems in conflict or post-conflict situations and called for the necessity to include women to participate in international peacebuilding. UNSCR 1325 has thus also been important for highlighting the connection between gender and other development issues (Kronsell 2012:6). But among feminist scholars the view on the resolutions capability to transform the security discourse is somewhat divided. While on one hand being referred to as a radical instrument for implementing gender and a gender perspective in international security discourse, UNSCR 1325 has on the other hand also been criticized for being too vague in its definitions and terms which affects its usefulness (McLeod 2012:135).

Despite the changing structures, women are however still in minority when it comes to female participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions, and women has in general limited influence in security issues on both local, national as well as international level (Anderson 2010:39). Feminist scholars have analyzed these patterns in contemporary conflicts and post-conflict situations on background of UNSCR 1325, and with the introduction of gender in security context started to question the extent of impact it has had in promoting gender equity within the security discourse. Hebert (2012) has studied the responses of the UN and NATO on sexual misconduct in peacekeeping operations, following up on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. She argues that the results pinpoint a shallow interpretation of gender that is mediated in policy documents and in practice (Hebert 2012:107). Instead of addressing the discursive problems of the gendered hierarchy in military context, Hebert argues that the main actions taken have rather been in terms of basic information on the outcomes and effects of sexual misconducts, which does little to mainstream gender on a deeper level (Hebert 2012:107). When gender is further addressed within peacekeeping operations, “gender” as concept is often merely referring to women, revealing a

flat interpretation of the content and meaning of a gender perspective. The solution presented is instead to simply add women, without really questioning the structures which constitutes gender inequality (Hebert 2012:115). Even though UN peacekeeping manuals acknowledge gender, Hebert means that the manuals and policies often replicate stereotypical images of the role and relations between men and women, and the expectations from them in post-conflict situations (Hebert 2012:109). Based on her conclusions, Hebert claims that the complexity in the understanding and mainstreaming of gender on the contrary has not reached the international security discourse (Hebert 2012:115).

Hebert's view can be regarded as supporting the feminist notion of a clash between women's increased participation in post-conflict situations and the failure of addressing women's needs in post-conflict security. Women have been integrated in international security context, but instead of contributing with a new dimension of security, their roles are yet defined and shaped by the interests and ideals of the masculine norm. As the security discourse still is dominated by masculine ideals, it is argued that women have to work harder than men in order to get accepted and gain authority (Wodak 2005:521). The result is that women within the contemporary security discourse are treated and valued in relation to the masculine norm (Sjoberg & Via 2010:6). From this argument we can read that the attempts to include women fail to take adequate consideration to the gendered nature of the structures within the security discourse, which are based on authoritative and discursively masculinized norms of the ideal behavior.

This line can be found in the work of many feminist scholars who have studied the conceptual relationship between gender and the international security discourse. Scholars who have studied gender and militarism argue that militarism requires and reproduces gender inequality, and women who participate in post-conflict interventions are not participating within the frames of gender-neutral structures. Instead, it is the masculinized ideals that goes unnoticed in security context due to the masculine norm (Sjoberg & Via 2010:6,10; Peterson 2010:21). The opinions are however somewhat divided when it comes to the implications the presence of women may have on the hypermasculine normativity within the international security discourse. Some argue that the presence of women humanizes and democratizes the military (Peterson 2010:24). Others are more skeptical and point to how women must work harder in order to display a masculine image of them, which is more or less intentionally demanded in order to prove themselves as worthy to the norm. Hebert argues that these efforts "will inevitably remain manifestations of changes *within* the gender hierarchy as opposed to changes *of* the gender hierarchy" (Hebert 2012:115). By integrating women into already existing structures that are by now defined by masculine norms creates a raised pressure on women to adapt their behavior to existing premises and expectations in order to be accepted.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The origin of gender mainstreaming

There is an extensive field of literature where gender and development are being theorized in different ways, but with my research purpose in mind I have chosen to focus on the concept of gender mainstreaming as strategy for gendered policy-making. When analyzing political ideas within a discourse it is crucial to consider the context in which the discourse or ideas are placed within (Beckman 2005:15). The academic discussion on gender mainstreaming is of relevance for my research purpose as it reflects and provides a background on the implementation of gender in development discourse on an institutional level.

The commitment to include gender in development, and to form policies and development goals to reach and improve gender equality worldwide, has in recent years become more and more acknowledged within international development theory. But the integration of gender in international development discourse has not been a process without problems. The relationship between gender and development has been subjected to both external criticisms from the international society as well as internal questioning of implementation strategies within the feminist academic field. When it comes to addressing the problems of gendered inequalities within development throughout the years, strategies have changed, new concepts and perspectives have emerged and focus has shifted. The previous focus on women in development (WID) has in recent year shifted to an emphasis on gender and development (GAD) (Prügl & Lustgarten 2006:55). An underlying cause for this shift was that feminists criticized international institutions for applying a too prominent focus on women in general instead of gender within the policy-making processes and practices of international institutions (Lombardo & Meier 2006:161).

When analyzing the academic debate on the integration of gender in development discourse, the literature consist of either texts on the general importance to include gender in all aspects of development; or texts debating the internal discussion among different feminist positions around which concepts, strategies and aspects to highlight. Throughout the years, there has been a range of different buzzwords which have been in focus for development programs addressing gender inequalities. Within the present doctrine of GAD, “gender mainstreaming” has emerged as one of the primary key concepts (Subrahmanian 2007:112). The background of gender mainstreaming as key strategy for implementing gender awareness in institutional policies derives from the World

Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, which resulted in a declaration made by prominent international institutions, such as the UN and the EU, proclaiming that a gender perspective should be included and mainstreamed throughout all policies and practices of the institution (Woodford-Berger 2007:122). Gender mainstreaming thus become the chosen strategy for highlighting and dealing with gender inequalities embedded in institutional policy-making (Subrahmanian 2007:112). With the proliferation of the concept of gender mainstreaming, feminists hoped that it would embed for the integration of a feminist agenda in international development discourse. The approach was believed to be useful in terms of integrating women as actors in development policies and practices (Cornwall et al 2007:3). But as the discursive focus has changed, gender mainstreaming as strategy have now instead been subjected to extensive criticism from many feminists.

3.2 Gender mainstreaming as concept and institutional strategy

The notion of gender mainstreaming is based on ideas of long-term systematic and procedural processes with the purpose to promote gender equality as a policy outcome and institutional approach (Woodford-Berger 2007:124). The underlying agenda is to improve implementation and open up for social transformation and a re-orientation of existing policy paradigms in order to broaden the scope and to question decision-making processes, which by tradition has neglected the inclusion of gender, in favor to prioritize and proliferate multidimensional gender awareness (Debusscher 2011:40). In short, the purpose is to “transform structures by integrating considerations of gender into all [...] projects, programs and actions” (Prügl 2009:175). This often involves targeted actions and activities aimed to favorably address the inclusion of women and a gendered perspective in issues where such a perspective previously was hard to find, with the overall aim to engage and benefit both women and men equally (Woodford-Berger 2007:124). Gender mainstreaming can thus be said to be a soft instrument for institutional normative change, in terms of evaluating and adapting policies to a gendered perspective (Jacquot 2010:131).

As gender mainstreaming was turned into a strategy for implementing a gender perspective among development agencies and international institutions, one of the first criticisms was that it often led to a misleading attempt to broaden the view on development issues (Subrahmanian 2007:113). Critical analysts have argued that it on the contrary have contributed to narrow the scope as a result of shortcomings in analyzing and relate the content of the policies to what the concept of gender actually means. Prügl and Lustgarten (2006) investigate what ideas gender mainstreaming in international organizations actually are built upon. They mean that depending on the context, gender mainstreaming is assigned

different values and meaning, which naturally provides different results and outcomes. As a top-down approach for addressing gender inequalities, gender mainstreaming as strategy therefore contains different limitations and possibilities depending on how it is addressed and applied (Prügl & Lustgarten 2006:54).

Skeptical scholars have claimed that gender mainstreaming has turned into a strategy for states and institutions to assign themselves a “gender alibi”. By adopting a gendered language into policies and practice, states and institutions are allowed to legitimize themselves as including a gender perspective but without really acknowledging the meaning or evaluate the outcome of what such a perspective entails (Woodford-Berger 2007:123). Examples have shown that this approach merely reduces the use of gender mainstreaming to a question of quotation of women or the mass production of institutional gender mainstreaming models, which on the contrary contributes to disconnect the concept of gender from the political content and outcome of the policies. When gender mainstreaming is reduced to checklists it risks to be separated from its gendered perspective. The result of this is that the policies that comes out of the un-reflexive approach to gender mainstreaming often exclude context and fails to notice the complexity of a gendered perspective, which reveals the problem of integrating gender into policies and practice when the understanding and definition of the target and concept is unclear (Standing 2007:104). Another problem seems to be an uncertainty within institutions of what the actual goal of gender mainstreaming is. Where there is believed to be a consensus on what the objective behind an increased gender awareness in policies are, the actual intentions remain unclear. Feminists argue that there is a necessity in clarifying the intended goals, whether it might be gender equality, equal opportunities, more women in higher positions, more attention for diversity etc. in order to avoid policy evaporation (Verloo 2005:16).

3.3 Feminist perspectives on gender mainstreaming: implementation and critique

From a feminist perspective, the primary purpose of gender mainstreaming is to address structural gender inequalities in the processes and outcomes of institutional policies, as well as acknowledge how these structural inequalities are created and preserved within international institutions (Prügl & Lustgarten 2006:69). Analyses on how the adoption and incorporation of gender mainstreaming are expressed in political discourse have raised the question whether the strategy of gender mainstreaming within international institutions is in fact in accordance with a feminist political agenda. Following this line, research have been made on if, and to what extent, gender mainstreaming has had any serious effects at all when it comes to challenging gender inequalities (Jacquot 2010:120). Policy studies within feminist research field on the concept of gender

mainstreaming focuses on issues such as the assumption of gender in specific context and what impact the content in these policies have on women (Bacchi 2005a: 184). A range of articles and texts analyzing gender mainstreaming in international institutions, such as the EU (e.g. Lombardo & Meier 2006; Jacquot 2010; Debusscher 2011) and the UN (e.g. Prügl & Lustgarten 2006; True 2009), have been made. One of the primary questions in these texts seems to be what gender mainstreaming exactly means and what the actual significance and function of a gender perspective is within policies.

The concept of gender mainstreaming in institutional policy-making has in recent years been subject to extensive critique from many gender and feminist scholars (Jacquot 2010; Standing 2007; Cornwall et al 2007 etc). The critique is primarily aimed at international institutions and development agencies, who are accused of using gender mainstreaming as a quick-fix solution which in the longer run does little to promote gender equality. International institutions and development organizations have also been criticized for applying vague definitions of gender equality in their policies which fails to pay adequate attention to the complexity and different nuances of the relationship between gender and development (Cornwall et al 2007:6). The key issue is whether gender mainstreaming really has had any positive impact on promoting gender equality, and if it at all has contributed in changing or questioning gendered power relations (Jacquot 2010:120).

When analyzing the feminist critique of gender mainstreaming, literature can roughly be categorized in those who are consistently critical towards gender mainstreaming as strategy, and instead argue for better alternatives; and those who are critical of the shortcomings but despite this yet acknowledges the positive aspects in terms of progress and prospects for future development that gender mainstreaming has opened up for. One of the underlying causes for criticism seems to be the accusation of institutions for having adopted and implemented gender mainstreaming without applying a feminist perspective. There seems to be a widespread annoyance with the fact that the concept of gender mainstreaming, which from the beginning was a feminist notion, has been disconnected from its political origin and feminist meaning. Feminist rhetoric is said to be used in wrong purpose and in order to support the political agenda of states and institutions (Prügl 2009:175). The critics argue that gender mainstreaming is rooted in feminist theoretical frameworks, and with this has a strategic purpose in terms of promoting feminist political ends. When implementing gender mainstreaming as strategy for increased gender awareness on institutional level, it needs to be conducted with a consistent and multidimensional understanding of gender and gender equality in order for it to function in its intended purpose (Woodford-Berger 2007:123). Lombardo and Meier (2006) underlines this in their article, where they argue that gender mainstreaming has been implemented in the institutional policies of the EU without clarifying what it means by understanding something from a gender equality perspective (Lombardo & Meier 2006:152). The discussion on “doing gender” within development discourse have thus been separated from a feminist agenda. Critical feminists argue that when concepts are separated from context, unequal power relations prevail and contribute to

maintain asymmetrical power dynamics (Cornwall et al 2007:9; Woodford-Berger 2007:123).

Another problem noted by critical feminists is that the new gender mainstreamed policies are many times too vague and diffuse in its content, which embeds for the possibility to reinterpret or overlook important aspects in the substance of the policies. Standing (2007) is one scholar who discusses the problems related to this, which she calls “policy evaporation”, and which may result in the loss of the core essence of a gender perspective to bureaucracy when they are supposed to be mainstreamed into policies of institutions (2007:101). When the links between gender equality and different aspects of development are unclear within policies, there is a risk that the intended agenda is neglected in the end. Despite a true underlying commitment for gender transformation, it then fails to provide any of the intended outcomes as the substance has evaporated when transferred through bureaucratic processes. Subrahmanian (2007) emphasizes this as she discusses how the discourse of gender mainstreaming has become counter-productive in its simplification and overlooking of complex issues related to gender and development. Feminist questions have been taken over by states and international institutions without contemplation or consideration of the discursive complexity this invokes upon. Subrahmanian argues that this in fact constitutes a problem instead of an asset for feminist political influence (2007:112-114), and with this she reveals one of the dilemmas that contemporary feminists struggle with: the necessity of states and institutions to integrate feminist issues in development discourse vis-à-vis the outcome of an evaporated and depoliticized gender agenda with the efforts of mainstreaming gender into policies and guidelines.

In both the theoretical and practical parts of the feminist approach to gender mainstreaming, accountability emerges as an essential factor. Accountability of the institutional use of gender mainstreaming as strategy is needed in order to avoid policy evaporation and the risk of a stagnated dialogue on gender (Woodford-Berger 2007:131). When talking about institutional concepts and targets on policy-level, clarity is an additional element of significance, which is something that many feminist scholars underline in their criticism. Clarity is fundamental when it comes to challenging and transforming development discourse and for the integration of increased gender awareness. It is therefore important to incorporate nuances of what it means to have a gender perspective, in order to avoid simplifications that risk generalizing and homogenizing the concept of gender within institutional policy-making (Woodford-Berger 2007:132).

One issue that is revealed when studying the feminist discussion on gender mainstreaming is the problem of linking gender and development to policy and implementation on institutional level, where some feminist scholars points to a gap between research and follow-up. When it comes to how gender instead should be implemented in development discourse without resulting in gender evaporation, opinions are somewhat divided. Some argue that as long as we continue to have a discursive hegemonic economic norm for how we relate to the international system and development discourse, gender will never be fully understood or incorporated in contextual and institutional understandings of

development. Others emphasize the risk that comes with a top-down gender mainstreaming approach, as a concept such as gender equality are not encapsulated in the values or translated into practice in a consistent way. With this kind of unintended but yet limited understanding of gender equality, the impact of traditional gender roles and gendered power relations are also limited within the development discourse. All in all there is a general call among feminists for a constructive use of gender mainstreaming as strategy for policy-making (Woodford-Berger 2007:131).

3.4 Feminist approaches to gender equality and gender mainstreaming

Among the primary aspirations of feminist thought is to question and challenge existing social and political norms which constitutes the foundation for most political thinking and acting, as well as to question co-existing political frameworks and institutional notions of power related to the relationship between the masculine and feminine (McLaughlin 2003:1). Although sharing many of the essential values and goals, the means and strategies for achieving them differs between different feminist schools of thought. Different feminist political-theoretical positions have diverse perceptions of the definition and content of gender equality as concept, as well as of how gender equality is to be achieved within development context on an institutional level. They also have different ideas on what the primary purpose of structural programs addressing gender inequalities, such as gender mainstreaming programs, should consist of. One of the primary issues that have been discussed within the feminist field in recent years is how gender equality should be achieved, and who actually have the right to identify the needs and interests of women which are used as fundamental ideas for constituting and conducting gender mainstreaming as institutional strategy (Pettman 2005:674).

In order to better reflect on the potential feminist ideas that may invoke on the content and structure of the contemporary UN gender discourse, I will in this section briefly present the theoretical standpoints on gender equality and gender mainstreaming of some of the major feminist positions that can be traced in the feminist debate on gender mainstreaming as institutional strategy. This section will be used as framework for the upcoming construction of the typology of gender equality ideals that will be used as an analytical tool in the analysis. Regarding the number of different feminist perspectives, I find it important to start by explaining that the selection of positions I present in this section are the ones that I have been able to extract and derive from the debate on gender mainstreaming after having reviewed the literature. The different perspectives have been selected with the purpose to reflect the diverse feminist perceptions of the ideal of gender equality and gender mainstreaming as concept and strategy

that can be identified in the contemporary debate on gender mainstreaming, as well as in the separate contexts of poverty-reduction and post-conflict security.

Liberal feminism: The liberal feminist definition of gender equality is the equal status and division of opportunities between men and women, and the primary purpose of gender mainstreaming as strategy is thus to embed for this. Liberal feminism questions the marginalization of women in world politics, and focus on how women are excluded from power and ignored in international politics and development discussion (Smith & Owens 2005:281). An example of liberal feminist arguments is the call for equal participation of women in military and peacekeeping operations, as women's dependency on the "protection" of men is perceived as among the underlying causes for gender inequality and the subordination of women (Pettman 2005:673). At the same time, liberal feminism have been criticized for privileging masculine norms and require women to socialize and adapt into masculine ways of being (McLaughlin 2003:25). Another critique related to this is that liberal feminists are often favoring equality in terms of opportunities rather than outcomes, as well as the individual perspective over the collective (McLaughlin 2003:31).

Cultural feminism: Cultural feminists argue that women and men are in fact different as they possess different characteristics and interests. They argue that the primary reason for why gender equality is important is that "female values", such as negotiation, passivity, caring and softness, are needed in international development politics. These female values are not necessarily perceived to be biologically inherited, but are more interpreted as learned skills and adapted attributes which are rooted in the cultural ideas of gender roles formed by masculine and feminine norms and ideals (Pettman 2005:673). The purpose of gender mainstreaming is interpreted as focusing on promoting participation of women through different programs specifically focusing on women's perspectives and interests.

Marxist/socialist feminism: Marxist and socialist feminists view patriarchy and the international capitalist system as root causes for gender inequalities. Focus in Marxist/socialist feminism is on the complexity of diversity and the material aspect of diversity between men and women. Women are considered as systematically disadvantaged due to the dominance of patriarchal power structures and the global hegemonic economic norm (Smith & Owens 2005:282). Marxist/socialist feminist argue that the causes to violence against women, the discrimination of women within labor market etc. can be found in the patriarchal economic structures of the international society (Pettman 2005:673). In the debate on gender mainstreaming as institutional strategy for implementing gender equality, the Marxist/socialist feminist standpoint would be that the main purpose of gender mainstreaming is to provide women with agency and the means to change and overcome oppression and discriminating structures. Marxist/socialist feminists are thus skeptical to the capacity of gender mainstreaming programs as they function within institutional patriarchal structures. As long as these structures are preserved, gender equality will be problematic to achieve through institutional means (McLaughlin 2003:48).

Post-colonial feminism: Post-colonial feminism wants to highlight the differences in gender inequalities between the global North and South, as well as add a dimension of race, ethnicity and class to the discussion on gender discrimination (Smith & Owens 2005:284). Post-colonial feminists are critical to what they perceive as the hegemony of Western liberal feminism within the feminist discussion on development, which they mean are presuming an identity and perspective shared by all women in development context which in fact ignores the multiple forms of discrimination and subordination that women in the South are subjected to (McLaughlin 2003:9). An example of this is how the individual perspective and civil and political rights traditionally have been valued higher by Western feminists than the collective perspective and socio-economic rights. Gender mainstreaming programs should acknowledge not only the differences between men and women, but the differences between women in the North and women in the South as well. When talking about gender equality and development, post-colonial feminists calls for an approach with greater consideration taken to the needs and interests of women in the South (McLaughlin 2003:10).

Feminist constructivism: The core of feminist constructivism is focused on the construction of power, social relations and discourses. Power is manifested in the construction of interests and identities that benefit some to the disadvantage of others. The gender order is situated on asymmetrical power relations who are reflected in the normative discrimination of women (Kronsell 2012:8). However, gender is complex and can be understood and experienced in different ways. Due to this is discourse analysis of crucial interest to feminist constructivists. Discourse is defined as the rules and boundaries that authorize the correct form of action, speech and meaning (McLaughlin 2003:116). When it comes to the role of international institutions such as the UN, the discursive power is expressed in communication and texts, which forms the structures for the practical expression through behavior and procedures. Regarding the promotion of gender equality in international development discourse, the role of international institutions is therefore crucial when it comes to influencing the discursive settings of formally or informally expressed international norms and values. Gender norms can thus be said to be both challenged and reproduced within institutions (Kronsell 2012:9-10). When it comes to gender subjectivities and gender mainstreaming as strategy, feminist constructivists are of the opinion that it should be possible to add gender awareness to institutional discourse, where gender could be a mean to construct a form of centralized power in terms of promoting the status of women and gender equality. The primary purpose of such strategy would be to move beyond the power relations of the institutionalized masculine hegemony through the resistance and constant questioning of gendered power hierarchies (McLaughlin 2003:122).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Defining discourse

Defining discourse can be problematic, which is something that is emphasized by many discourse theorists (e.g. Taylor 2001a:8; Jørgensen/Phillips 2002:1). In short, discourse analysis is a matter of studying text and language in order to investigate how it is used and to connect it to social context and underlying values. The conceptualization of discourse emerges from locating patterns in texts and language and discourse analysis is thus to analyze how texts convey meaning through words, phrases and terms that can be connected to a certain perception (Taylor 2001a:6). The overall purpose is to reveal the meaning of a text, and to study the values and relations that are connected to the specific culture or context of a defined group.

Discourse analysis is a field of scientific practice rather than a single methodology and can thus be interpreted and applied differently depending on theoretical context (Taylor 2001a:6). Empiricist and positivists understands discourse more as “frames” which constitute mutual understandings of the surroundings by a certain group of people (Howarth 2000:3). This shared understanding of the world facilitates the legitimacy of collective actions, values and ideas. Through this perspective, discourses can be viewed as instruments that constitute certain specific perceptions and understanding of purposes. Discourse analysis then measures the efficiency and outcomes of these understandings (Howarth 200:3).

One definition of discourse analysis is that it is a process of interpretation. However, it also contains a crucial element of evaluation, which categorize it not only as a type of methodology but as a type of theory as well (Taylor 2001b:319). By evaluating the result from discourse analysis, the evaluation connects back to the posed research questions, which allows for it to appeal to theoretical standpoints. Another more abstract definition of discourse, introduced in Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, is that discourse is formed by its fixation of meaning on specific social phenomena and orders. Further on, discourse establish itself in relation to what it excludes. A discourse is by this never something that can be considered as fixed or static, as the social phenomena of which it relates to is changeable (Jørgensen/Phillips 2002:24,26).

Language plays a central part in most types of discourse analysis as words, phrases and expressions that are spoken or used in texts are connected to various types of perceptions and values. The words chosen to describe or explain

something may thus be connected to specific perceptions, and with this reveals the discursive structure of norms and values behind the language that is being used. At the same time it would however be to simplify the conceptualization of discourse analysis by claiming that it only studies language. Discourse analysis does also evaluate language by connecting language to social structures, and thus provides an efficient means of analyzing social and political power relations (Howarth 2000:13). As the meaning of language can change, and with this affect the connection to discursive values and norms, discourse should be regarded as something fluid and shifting (Taylor 2001a:9).

Some scholars (e.g. Bacchi 2005b) make a distinction between discourse analysis and analysis of discourse, meaning that the first one is primarily focusing on the patterns of speech and language from a psychological perspective, whilst the second one engages in a theoretical (and often politically attached) focus on how certain things are given particular meaning within a specific social context. The meaning of discourse is somewhat different in these two categories. In the first case, discourse is interlinked with language and how language constructs meaning and structure. In the second case, discourse is understood as the production of values and norms, which are often influenced or supported by institutions or culture (Bacchi 2005b:199). Given these two categories, I would place my research in the second one, as my intention is to analyze the specific gender discourse within the UN. In the analysis of discourse tradition, the material consists mostly of texts, and the aim is to identify and analyze discourses within these texts (Bacchi 2005b:199). However, patterns of expressions and commonly used phrases is many times also taken into consideration, which reveals how these two traditions often overlap each other when it comes to methodology and theoretical scope.

As mentioned, one crucial part of discourse analysis is to look for patterns, but it is important to not have a too narrow idea of what these patterns may look like, or what impact they may have within the discourse (Taylor 2001a:38). In the same way is it important to stress that the interpreted results from discourse analysis provides the base for a subjective understanding and interpretation of the meaning and values the discourse may reveal. In this sense, discourse analysis is not an unproblematic methodology when it comes to social and political analysis. The epistemological purpose of discourse analysis is to analyze meaning and significance rather than provide “true” and universal answers to the posed research questions (Taylor 2001a:13). Instead of being regarded as a means to provide facts and scientifically clear results, discourse analysis should rather be viewed as a method for highlighting unrevealed perceptions and the relations between values, norms and power.

4.2 Why discourse analysis?

Discourse analysis has been a prominent method within contemporary feminist academic field in terms of revealing socially constructed and gendered power relations on different levels in international society. The method has also been used in order to analyze how different concepts, such as gender mainstreaming, are gendered and the consequences it invokes on men and women (Smith & Owens 2005:281). Discourse analysis can be seen as a method for both identifying and explain problems (Howarth 2000:1). By analyzing the context and discourse of which a certain issue or problem functions within, we can critically scrutinize the structures, norms and values which e.g. constitutes certain cultural perceptions and embeds for specific political actions.

However, there are certain issues within discourse analysis that needs to be discussed. First of all, discourse analysis is not a research method which can be used for extracting objective data. The indicators collected from doing discourse analysis requires to be placed in a context and interpreted in relation to that context (Taylor 2001a:24). This involves a thorough understanding of the theoretical background, a thoughtful planning and an awareness by the researcher of the subjectivity of interpretations. The role of the researcher is central within discourse analysis. To make the discourse analysis reliable and valid, which are the core criteria in all academic research, it is crucial to take consideration to the role of the researcher, and to keep in mind how the experiences and personal opinions of the researcher may affect how the outcomes of the discourse analysis is interpreted (Taylor 2001b:318). Subjects within a discourse are considered as situated and culturally and socially positioned, and due to this, discourse theorists claims that there is no such thing as a neutral perception of the world (Jørgensen/Phillips 2002:1). This claim applies to the researcher as well. As a researcher, my interpretation of the results will be subjective. In other words, this study is situated on me as researcher and my previous experiences and knowledge, and the results of my study will thus be contingent on my interpretation of it. However, this does not necessarily mean something negative since the primary purpose of discourse analysis is to investigate meaning rather than provide objectively true results (Taylor 2001a:13). When conducting discourse analysis, truth is on the other hand considered to be discursively constituted rather than a transparent image of reality (Jørgensen/Phillips 2002:175). The situated perspective and positionality of the researcher may therefore provide a new view and dimension to the interpretation of the results, particularly when it comes to identifying hidden or invisible structures, which thus can be used to challenge more traditional perspectives on the same issue.

Within discourse analysis there are different ways of approaching data, and also different ways in which the same data can be analyzed and interpreted. Due to this, there are different theories and approaches of analyzing discourse. The approach that I have found appropriate to use for my research purpose is inspired from Stephanie Taylors (2001a) chapter in *Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis* (edited by Wetherell, Taylor & Yates). As Taylor discusses different

approaches to discourse analysis, she refers to four specific examples, of which one is of relevance and interest for my research aim. This approach, known in Taylor's text as approach number three, focuses more on seeking patterns in texts associated with a specific theme or topic. Certain terms and values that can be extracted from a text are through this approach connected to the understanding of a specific topic. Taylor mentions here how language is constitutive, as it "creates what it refers to" (2001a:8). In this way, meanings can be created and changed depending on time and context and the purpose is to highlight invisible structures that can be extracted from the discourse, which constitutes the foundation for norms and values.

Since my purpose is to investigate how the UN's view on gender equality can be interpreted in different issues, I found this approach suitable. The categorization of language, that is the primary methodological aim in the first approach, will here be based on the underlying values, associated theories or assumptions of consequences and social effects that can be traced in the discourse of poverty reduction respectively post-conflict security (Taylor 2001a:7). Some feminist scholars argue that gender inequality is above all situated in language. The structure of language is reflected in the structure of society, and language can thus be connected to social power as a form of discursive control. Language thus contributes to both construct and legitimize discourses of social power. An example of this is the construction of gender stereotypes, where men and women are placed in different dichotomies based on constructed images of ideals and normative behavior (Wodak 2005:520).

When language is the primary focus for research, certain problems emerges in the methodological process. Within the field of discourse theory there is a constant debate on what language is about and who has the right to define the content of language (Taylor 2001a:15). One issue is that language, in similarity with many other things, are historically situated, meaning that language have different meaning depending on time and context. When studying language, it is therefore important to take the context of the past into consideration (Taylor 2001a:7). The context of the past in my research will be the introduction of gender mainstreaming as primary policy for addressing increased gender awareness within the UN. However, since my focus is contemporary I doubt this will cause any problems when it comes to the understanding or interpretation of the results, but it will still be something I will keep in mind when analyzing my results.

An additional problem connected to analyzing language is when language is suspected to be false or consciously constructed in order to fit into a certain frame or context. This particularly involves the analysis of official documents, such as UN policies, where words and phrases might be deliberately vague with the intention of using appropriate expressions due to an awareness of what is considered as politically correct language. Deliberately chosen words can make it difficult to interpret underlying views and opinions (Taylor 2001a:9). However, how something is described, regardless a potential hidden agenda, influence the interpretation of that subject, which in turn affects the larger discursive context (Taylor 2001a:9). The consciously chosen formulations may thus anyway reveal

unconscious values. For instance, by looking into how men and women are categorized and defined may expose underlying presumptions of gender roles.

A final problem with discourse analysis is the generalization of patterns. As with most qualitative research, the generalization of interpretations and outcomes found in the result may be problematic for the reliability and validity of the study. The interpretation of outcomes eventually falls back on the subjective position of the researcher (Taylor 2001a:13). This is particularly of relevance for the research approach that I have chosen, and is by this naturally something that I will discuss in my concluding remarks.

4.3 Gender and discourse: Bacchi and methodological dilemmas

When it comes to gender studies and discourse analysis, discourse analysis has had a central position within feminist scholarship in recent years (Bacchi 2005b:198). Within feminist theory, the subject position of women in discourse have been in focus, and discourse analysis have particularly been used in purpose to reveal unequal power relations between men and women, and the different ways in which women through discourse are being excluded from the political arena (Bacchi 2005b:201). One of the primary motives of discourse analysis within the frames of gender studies have thus been to identify gender diversities, to interpret the meaning and outcome of these as well as how they are upheld and manifested in society. Another main research focus is the analysis of how gender is constructed through context (Wodak 2005:523). One way of conducting discourse analysis from a gender perspective is to look into whose interests are best served through the analysis of discursive formulations, which may reveal the relationship between discursive ideas of power (Edley 2001:190). The emerging of the field of masculinity and femininity studies can be seen as an example of this as the study of the masculine and feminine focuses on investigating dominant and hegemonic discourses (Bacchi 2005b:201). This field highlights the capacity to construct, preserve or change discourse, as discourse is considered as something changeable (Edley 2001:191).

However, discourse analysis has been subject for discussion within the field of feminist theory. Carol Bacchi (2005b) claims that there has been an inflation of the term “discourse” within feminist study (2005b:198). Bacchi is critical towards how the general use of the concept of discourse may lead to an unreflexiveness which affects the credibility of feminist discourse analysis. By not defining discourse, or by overusing discourse as a general term, means a risk of overlooking discursive factors that may undermine the addressing of specific needs of diverse groups of women, as well as the awareness of how feminist scholars themselves are placed in discourse (Bacchi 2005b:202). An example is how Western feminism has been criticized for neglecting the voices and needs of

Southern women. Hegemonic discourses have an impact on the self-understanding, and Western feminist can here be viewed as members of the hegemonic Western discourse. To address the needs of one group of women that belongs to the hegemonic discourse is thus done on the expense of other women that are excluded. The lack of consideration of nuances in different discourses may thus imply a major problem for feminist discourse analysis (Bacchi 2005:199).

In similarity with other discourse theorists, Bacchi underlines that there is no clear or universal definition of discourse (2005b:198). One of the primary ideas within discourse analysis is that it is the function of the discourse that is the subject for investigation, rather than the definition of the term itself. Bacchi chooses to identify discourses as the internationally inclined and culturally sustained understanding of concepts and interpretations that invokes on how a certain issue is viewed or valued (Bacchi 2005b:202). Gender can for instance be viewed as a discourse, which constitutes a specific discursive structure and situated power relations. The same goes for feminism, and to identify oneself as feminist is thus also discursively constituted. However, there is an ambiguity within feminist theory when it comes to the use of discourse as a term, as it is being used both as applying to methodology and to address a certain way of talking about specific issues. The different contextual ways in which discourse are used embeds for confusion, especially when it comes to addressing the subject as shaping the discourse, or if the subject on the contrary are a product of the discourse (Bacchi 2005b:202). There is also a certain tension between different discourse analysis traditions when it comes to perceiving the subject either as “discourse users” or “constituted in discourse” (Bacchi 2005b:200; Jørgensen/Phillips 2002:1). The main issue in this discussion seems to be whether “people use discourse, or discourse uses people” (Bacchi 2005b:200), in purpose to examine in which way we are both producers and products of discourse, and how the outcome of this may affect the contemporary societal order.

Bacchi calls for greater awareness within the approach to discourse analysis by feminist scholars on the impact that hegemonic discourses may have on themselves as researchers, and particularly when it comes to how they identify and address discursive issues and problems. There is a need to be aware of this in order to be able to reflect on the positionality of the researcher, both within and in relation to the discourse (Bacchi 2005b:204). This argument can be applied on the discussion of gender equality and institutional policy-making as well. One solution suggested by Bacchi is a dual-focus research agenda, addressing both the way we are in discourse, and the way we do discourse. It is necessary to understand both perspectives as it will provide insight in the limits and possibilities of the positioning of the researcher (Bacchi 2005b:207). I believe this is important to keep in mind both when developing policies with a gender mainstreaming approach, as well as critically reflect over the content and impact of gender discourses.

4.4 Operationalization and analytical tools

As already mentioned, it can be problematic to define discourse, since discourse is a fluid and changeable concept. Due to this, I find it important to present my view and definition of discourse. My understanding of discourse in this paper is the culture of understanding of a specific concept, and how one connects this understanding with values and normative thinking, which constitutes the basis of how to culturally relate and socially position oneself and other subjects to this concept.

Discourse analysis can be both qualitative as well as quantitative and may either focus on content or process (Taylor 2001a:15). In my analysis I will focus more on content, and due to my research aim, it will have a qualitative purpose. Due to the expected quantity of data and limited frames of this paper, I will try to present an overview or summary of the findings in the material, and try to illustrate my interpretations and conclusion with suitable examples extracted from the texts. In this way I will have a good strategy for explaining my interpretations, in order for my analysis to be as transparent as possible. The arguments for my findings will then be easy to extract from the texts.

When operationalizing my research questions and theoretical framework, I will analyze the material in purpose to map out the gender discourse and perception of gender equality within the UN's policies and reports on poverty reduction respectively post-conflict security. Within discourse theory, this is known as investigating the institutional "lived ideology", which is the composition of beliefs, values and practices, and which constitute the foundation for norms of a defined society or culture (or in this case an international institution) (Edley 2001:203). Culture could be another understanding of lived ideology as it applies to what is considered as the norm within a defined group or institution. The norm is thus what is regarded as "common sense", and everything that does not fit into the norm is perceived as excluded from the lived ideology. However, lived ideologies is many times characterized by a contradiction between ideals and behavior as it often collides with the intellectual ideology, which may cause ambivalence in terms of shifting positions on a specific issue (Edley 2001:203). Based on this context, I will try to map out situations where the lived ideology of the UN texts seems to collide with the intellectual ideology of the ideal of gender equality.

In order to be able to study the gender discourse of the UN I have to find a method to extract terms and values from the material and make them useful for an analysis. With my chosen approach of applying method, inspired from the method Petra Debusscher uses in her article "Mainstreaming gender in European Commission development policy: Conservative Europeanness?" (2011:42), this would mean to look into a set of indicators that reveals the perception of gender equality and the relation between lived ideology and intellectual ideology of the UN. The indicators I will look for in when analyzing the material are:

- How men and women are defined in the texts;
- Which words, characteristics and attributes they are described with;

- If gender stereotypes or traditional gender roles are reproduced or challenged;
- What kind of gender issues are identified as problems;
- What kind of solutions are suggested, and are women and men portrayed as agents or victims in these solutions;
- Is the focus mainly on men or women when mapping out problems or solutions?

In order to facilitate the analytical process, as well as to avoid the analysis ending up with a merely descriptive scope, I have also decided to apply a component of ideal type analysis by adding a typology of comparison to the analysis. This typology is based on the different perspectives and idealized images of gender equality of the different feminist positions that were presented in the theoretical framework. In more detail, the typology has been constructed from feminist ideas of gender equality together with feminist standpoints extracted from the context of poverty-reduction and post-conflict security. The idea is to categorize different feminist standpoints in a typology based on how they perceive gender equality and the idealized function of gender mainstreaming as strategy for gendered policy-making. I am aware, as I have already explained in the theoretical framework, that there are other aspects that separate these different feminist perspectives from each other, but my choice is to particularly look at the approach to gender equality and gender mainstreaming as indicators for categorization.

As discourse analysis is still my main methodology, the ideal type analysis will rather function as a filter or analytical tool in purpose to facilitate the main analysis. In an analysis where ideal types have a more prominent role in the theory and methodology, there is often a deeper connection between the typology and the theoretic ideals of different political or philosophical theories. As the methodology and theoretical scope of this paper is already established, my intention of using this type of analytical tool is both to relate the theoretical framework to the methodology, as well as to facilitate the process of the main analysis. A typology like this can be used to methodically reconstruct systems of ideas, norms and values around a certain issue or subject, such as gender discourse. Another advantage with ideal types as analytical tool is the fact that it can bring some order to an extensive material and make it easier to categorize and structure (Bergström & Boréus 2005:171).

I have decided to group the different feminisms together in a typology based on how they perceive the ideal function of gender mainstreaming as strategy and how gender equality is defined and approached. This typology contains both visions of gender equality and the perception of gender mainstreaming as strategy for achieving it. These ideals of gender equality have been compressed into three categories, which have been borrowed from Sylvia Walby's article titled "Gender Mainstreaming: Productive Tensions in Theory and Practice" (2005). In her article, Walby distinguishes three categories of gender equality models which she calls *Sameness*, *Differences* and *Transformation* (Walby 2005:325). With *Sameness*, Walby refers to theories which define gender equality mainly in terms of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women (Walby 2005:325). In this category, I have placed liberal feminism. The ideal of *Sameness* thus refers

to gender equality as a matter of equity between men and women, where women and men should have the same access to opportunities and be valued equally. The second category, Differences, applies to cultural feminism as it acknowledges a fundamental difference in the values and interests of men and women. The vision of gender equality is to promote female interests as they are believed to be necessary in terms of compensate masculine norms of political power. The primary purpose of gender mainstreaming strategies is thus to favor the position of women, as well as female interests and values, in international politics and global development through special programs specifically targeting women. In the third category, Transformation, have I placed the remaining feminist perspectives (Marxist/socialist feminism, post-colonial feminism and feminist constructivism), whom all share a scope of wanting to change and transform gender mainstreaming strategies into something new. The primary focus within this group of feminist perspectives is to strive towards a transformation of the frames of the discourse itself, rather than trying to adapt and integrate a gender perspective into already existing structures and systems. To summarize the main idea behind this categorization, the primary conceptualization of the idealized relation between gender equality and gender mainstreaming strategies in each of these three categories can be reviewed as primarily characterized by an equal treatment perspective (Sameness), a women's perspective (Differences) and a gender perspective (Transformation) (Walby 2005:326).

The fundamental idea of an ideal type is not that the ideal have to correspond to the reality in the texts, but rather that it should be seen as a tool for revealing underlying idealistic values and perceptions of how a certain idea should function in reality. In other words, the purpose is to interpret the relation between an ideal and an actor or institution (Bergström & Boréus 2005:159,177). When conducting an ideal type analysis, the first step is to analyze the text. The second step is to analyze the underlying structures of the text and what ideals of reality the text is referring to. The third and last step is to put the text into the context of the typology in purpose to define which ideal the material is leaning towards. (Bergström & Boréus 2005:167). After having observed by which frequency a specific ideal can be found in the material, the most distinctive ideal can be identified.

When doing a comparative study through analyzing discourse, the process of analysis can be somewhat problematic. Some discourse theorists claim that it is impossible to analyze and compare several separate discourses, since discourses cannot be interpreted in the same way and thus not enable the researcher to make any generalizations (Taylor 2001a:23). As a researcher you therefore have to keep in mind that the result you end up with is situated on the subjective interpretation of the researcher and thus cannot be claimed to be universal or general. But the interesting thing to discuss here is not whether generalizations can be made or not, but rather how the result reflect upon the discourse and/or contextual surroundings. It is irrelevant to discuss if the researcher affect the interpretation of the result. The question to ask is instead how the result should be treated, in what way the subjectivity of the researcher may affect the result, and the implications and consequences that this may invoke upon (Beckman 2005:22).

5 ANALYSIS

5.1 Poverty reduction

5.1.1 Values and norms

Concerning the approach to gender equality within poverty reduction policies, the analyzed documents provides several examples of how gender as concept is used applying to both men and women. An example is from International Fund for Agricultural Development Plan of Action 2003-2006 (IFAD/2003) who presents different gender equality- and mainstreaming programs where not only women are targeted, but where the importance to acknowledge men in the programs are pinpointed with reference to an example of educational programs targeting boys in Latin America, whose school attendance is significantly weaker compared to girls (IFAD/2003:V). This exposes a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of gender within poverty reduction and development. Further on, the UN Women Strategic Plan 2011-2013 (UNW/2011) also stresses the importance of highlighting the role and responsibility of men in the efforts to promote gender equality (UNW/2011:7). What is not mentioned in the texts, except the above example extracted from IFAD/2003, is yet exactly how men should be included and engaged in eliminating gender inequality. Some of the other analyzed documents are unfortunately not as good at including both men and women when addressing gender. In the proposed solutions on how to achieve the third Millennium Development Goal on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, the UN Development Programme Policy Brief on Employment Guarantee Policies concerning Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction (UNDP/EGP/2010), the following targeted areas are suggested: *Increased incomes for women; Reduced unpaid care work for women and girls; Enhanced labor force participation of women; Enhanced participation of women in decision-making* (UNDP/EGP/2010:7). As we can see, all of the propositions are directed towards women only and none of them applies to men. Putting it in the context of the statement that gender equality concerns both women and men (see e.g. IFAD/2003:V), this can be interpreted as a gap between ideal and implementation within the UN gender discourse on poverty reduction.

Many of the analyzed documents emphasizes the importance to mainstream gender within poverty reduction programs, and also stresses the need to assist

member countries and other UN instances in incorporating gender awareness in policies and actions (see e.g. FAO/GAD-PoA/2007:1). Among the key objectives when it comes to gender mainstreaming strategies, the most prominent perspective on gender equality is the notion of gender equality as a matter of access, for example strategies with the purpose to transform or facilitate women's access and control over resources and rights (see e.g. UNW/2011:6). Another key objective is the notion of gender equality as a matter of equal opportunities, both when it comes to socio-economic aspects as well as increased political participation (e.g. FAO/GAD-PoA/2007:1).

In most of the analyzed material it is possible to trace an economic perspective on gender equality and poverty reduction. From this perspective, discrimination against women is primarily viewed as a national or regional economic disadvantage, for example in terms of how it affects women's productivity, which in turn diminishes the total population's contribution to the economic prosperity of a member state or region (see e.g. FAO/PGE/2011:2). The reasons behind the importance to eliminate gender inequalities are thus embedded in economic arguments. UNDP/EGP/2010 mentions for example that "gender disparities may be a reflection of entrenched and discriminatory labor practices that prevail in the rest of the economy" (UNDP/EGP/2010:8). Women's qualities are from this perspective emphasized as assets and capacities which are valuable for increased development and economic prosperity. Economic factors are also highlighted among the solutions and commitments provided by the UN to eliminate gender equality. This can be seen in UNDP/EGP/2010, where it is further on argued that the current economic climate should be perceived as a possibility to change the responses to gender equality policies in terms of equalize the opportunities and conditions for economic rights and contributions between men and women (UNDP/EGP/2010:2). The response of the international community to the global economic crisis is here imposed to be integrated with gender awareness in order to efficiently eliminate global poverty.

Another general line that can be traced in the analyzed material is a tendency to perceive gender equality within poverty reduction context from an efficiency perspective. The analyzed documents claims to have a human right based approach on gender and development in accordance with the UN common understanding of human rights, but the efficiency argument is more frequently applied than the human rights argument throughout the majority of the reports on gender equality and poverty reduction. Gender equality is argued to be efficient for the society in terms of increased development and economic prosperity, and the elimination of discrimination against women is connected to women's economic productivity. An example can be seen in UNW/2011 where the following extract can be found: "Where women have access to quality education, jobs, land and other assets, growth and stability are enhanced." (UNW/2011:5). Gender equality or women's rights are here primarily connected to the level of economic prosperity or development it can lead to. What is worth to note is that gender equality seems to be legitimized and defended in relation to the positive aspects it can lead to. Women's right to equality in terms of opportunities, rights

and freedom is not perceived as having a value in itself as simply being a matter of equal human rights.

At the same time, there are a few findings where gender equality is related to human rights, for instance in the Food and Agricultural Organization Policy on Gender Equality (FAO/PGE/2011) where it is stated that “gender equality is not only an essential means by which FAO can achieve its mandate; it is also a basic human right.” Most of the documents are also in the introductory part referring to gender equality as recognized and manifested in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (see e.g. FAO/PGE/2011:1). The general impression is however that there is an ambiguity in how to perceive gender equality, where the notion on one hand is embedded in ideas of the value of universal human rights, and on the other often is connected and defended in terms of efficiency.

5.1.2 Gender roles and stereotypes

When it comes to how men and women are portrayed in the analyzed material, the presence of stereotypes are generally low. UNDP/EGP/2010 states for example that women and men are alike when it comes to how to address participants in income guarantee programs, which is worth to note since income and employment traditionally have been associated with men as head-of-household (UNDP/EGP/2010:6). However, it is possible to outline some tendencies of a traditional view on gender roles in some of the texts. When women are mentioned or the roles of women are referred to, it is often done in a context of family and/or community, which in addition is connected to a specific responsibility for the family or the community (see e.g. IFAD/2003:13). When talking about different poverty reduction programs, such as microfinance programs, the potential of women is thus often associated with a responsibility to ensure the family or community with the most advantageous results (e.g. IFAD/2003:1). This could be interpreted as supporting a traditional image of women as primarily being care-takers of others. However, this would not be an entirely fair conclusion as women are assigned many different capabilities throughout the texts besides taking care of the family and household, and thus provides a versatile image of women in poverty (see e.g. FAO/PGE/2011:2). At the same time it is interesting to note that women’s capabilities and competences needs to be pinpointed and defined in a way that does not occur with men. None of the texts does for example define the capability of men to take care of children and the household.

An interesting aspect is that “women” as term is more frequently used than “gender”, even though most documents initially states that the aim is to use gender as a concept applying to both men and women. Propositions of gender-sensitive designs and gender mainstreaming programs are generally containing more aspects applying to women than men (see e.g. UNDP/EGP/2010:11-12). This can be interpreted as revealing a more traditional notion of gender as mainly concerning women. Where the outcomes of the programs are mentioned, the results of women seems to be lifted and presented in relation to men as a way of

defending the initial initiative. An example can be seen in UNDP/EGP/2010, where it in a comparative manner is stated that “[w]omen also undertook all maintenance activities and performed better than men in many activities” (UNDP/EGP/2010:8) regarding an initiative in purpose to increase women’s participation in decision-making roles and microenterprises.

5.1.3 Feminist ideals: Sameness, Difference, Transformation

Regarding the presence of feminist gender equality ideals, all of the three categories can be identified, but not without some difficulty. Neither is the dominating ideal easy to define. However, the ideal that in the end emerged as the most frequent is the Sameness ideal. The Sameness ideal is possible to extract in FAO/PGE/2011, which states that their gender equality strategy aim to systematically fulfill women’s as well as men’s needs and benefits equally, as well as highlight the experiences of both men and women in poverty reduction programs (FAO/PGE/2011:6). The same goes for the UNW/2011, which formulates their vision as aiming towards a world where women and men have equal opportunities, incorporated with social and economic values in terms of access to assets and resources (UNW/2011: 4). The Sameness ideal also appears in the UNDP/EGP/2010, where the importance of equal wages as terms for employment is highlighted (UNDP/EGP/2010:9). Further on, when defining the view on gender equity, IFAD/2003 points out that equity is about equal and fair treatment of both women and men in relation to their respective needs, and that this may include targeted actions in terms of favoring or compensating for “historical and social disadvantages of women” (IFAD/2003:V). In addition to the Sameness ideal, the Difference ideal is possible to extract from this phrase as it suggests the favoring of women in poverty reduction programs. In FAO/PGE/2011, the gender equality objectives also tend to lean towards the Sameness ideal as it argues for equality in terms of equal access and equal participation of men and women (FAO/PGE/2011:4). At the same time, there is an element of the Transformation ideal in this argument as it aims to reduce women’s work burden. As an addendum to this it is however worth to note that the means to do this is through improved technologies and social services, rather than actually challenging the contemporary gender discourse.

5.2 Post-conflict security

5.2.1 Values and norms

In the material on gender and post-conflict security, gender equality is primarily defined as acknowledging the equal rights of women in terms of political, economic, civil and social rights and freedoms (DPKO/2006: 4). The general line in the analyzed documents is that gender equality should not be regarded as a women's issue but should concern and engage men as well (DPKO/2006:8). Gender mainstreaming is further on argued through the analyzed material as an efficient strategy in terms of promoting equal benefits and participation in peacebuilding programs between men and women. Besides mainstreaming programs, most of the texts also highlight targeted efforts in purpose to identify and eliminate gender inequalities. The majority of them are targeting women, but there are some examples of programs directed towards men as well (see e.g. SG/WPiP/2010:12). This can be interpreted as in support of the initial statement that gender equality concerns both women and men equally, and signifies the will of a more modern notion of gender by the UN. At the same time, in the rest of the texts there is however few examples on how men should be engaged. The same goes for how to overcome socio-cultural barriers, which are recognized as one of the fundamental causes for gender inequality but is rarely addressed in solutions or commitments.

Women's participation in peacebuilding is claimed as a precondition for sustainable peace in most of the analyzed documents. The UN Secretary-General report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (SG/WPiP/2010) is for instance stating that "[...] peacebuilding strategies cannot be fully 'owned' if half the nation is not actively involved in their design and implementation" (SG/WPiP/2010:5). What is interesting to note in this statement is that it is one of the rare occasions where women are actually referred to as constituting one half of the population. The common impression in the material, based on how women are addressed, is otherwise that women seem to be viewed as a minority. This is of course not the common belief of the UN, but the finding is yet an interesting reflection on the contemporary gender discourse. The same document further addresses the same problem by arguing that national anti-discrimination legislation may be problematic to adapt as women are not a minority population (SG/WPiP/2010:6). The reports also mentions previous studies of peace building programs which revealed the findings of how women as a group often were mentioned together with disabled, refugees or other underrepresented groups as if women were a minority population (SG/WPiP/2010:8). By referring to this it is possible to trace a will of the UN to detach the current gender and post-conflict security discourse from this view.

When it comes to the role of the international community, the responsibility for implementing gender equality policies and a general understanding of the

challenges this may invoke is stressed (SG/WPiP/2010:8). Interesting to note is that the concerned UN institution consider themselves in one of the documents as having adopted an adequate gender equality language in texts and policies, but acknowledges the shortcomings when transferring words into concrete actions (SG/WPiP/2010:10). The previous lack of gender awareness within post-conflict security is explained as a vicious circle, where the traditional exclusion of women in decision-making means that gender issues are ignored or down-prioritized, resulting in insufficient awareness and attention for women's need in post-conflict security. With the inclusion of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, a gender perspective is believed to be mainstreamed through the system and structures of both the UN operations as well as the post-conflict society (SG/WPiP/2010:4).

One of the most interesting discussions that emerge when analyzing the different documents is the sometimes ambiguous view on gender equality as either rooted in a rights perspective or in a perspective that above all highlights efficiency. This pattern was also possible to outline in the poverty reduction discourse. The most common explanation of the benefits of increased gender equality in post-conflict security are rooted in the efficiency argument, as it argues for the improved general efficiency and capacity that gender equality would lead to. The inclusion of women in decision-making is for example argued as efficient in terms of increasing and mobilizing the joint capacity of a post-conflict society (DPKO/2006: 3). Another example is how gender mainstreaming is argued as necessary in order to make peacekeeping operations responsive, relevant and effective to both men and women (DPKO/GPS/2005:1). Viewed from the efficiency perspective, the meaning and value of gender equality can here be interpreted as depending on the degree of efficiency it can lead to. The efficiency argument is in these two examples emphasized as the primary reason for the efforts to eliminate gender inequality and work towards a better and more consistent gender awareness within post-conflict security (SG/WPiP/2010:17). Even so, the rights perspective can be identified in some of the documents as well. The UN Secretary-General report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (SG/WPiP/2010) states that "[r]emoving barriers to all aspects of women's political participation is a matter of fundamental human rights" (SG/WPiP/2010:13), which signals a notion of gender equality as legitimized primarily through its connection to human rights and the principle of the equal rights and value of all human beings. This insinuates an understanding of gender equality as having a value in itself, and not only in relation to other aspects, as it is rooted in the universal understanding of basic human rights.

When it comes to how gender equality should be increased, what is primarily emphasized in the documents is how to better integrate women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, as well as how to improve the position of women in post-conflict societies. The efficiency argument is prominent here, and quotation is often presented as a key strategy among the proposed policies and solutions. Women's concerns in post-conflict security context is emphasized and identified generally through quantitative indicators, such as the underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes, as well as the low number of women in

professional roles as mediators (SG/WPiP/2010:2). The importance of incorporating more women in official positions and increasing women's political presence is stressed as crucial in order to encourage more women to engage in male dominated institutions (SG/WPiP/2010:7). The value of gender equality can here be interpreted as significant in terms of setting standards on institutional and national levels (DPKO/2006: 3). Quotation of women into political and juridical positions is highlighted as crucial for gaining political legitimacy, which is related to peacebuilding efforts and sustainable security as well (SG/WPiP/2010:14). Political legitimacy is also presented as a key reason for promoting gender equality, as results have shown that declining trust in political decisions and actions are directly interlinked with the level of gender inequality (SG/WPiP/2010:4). However, from this discussion gender equality emerges as something that needs to be explained and defended, and the value of gender equality is always related to the value of something else, such as political legitimacy or setting of standards.

5.2.2 Gender roles and stereotypes

Regarding the presence of gender roles and stereotypes, the general impression is that the UN tries to minimize the use of expressions and attributes that may reproduce traditional images of typical male and female roles. The language in the documents seems to avoid any kind of expressions or phrases that may be misinterpreted in the context. The security of women and girls is often pinpointed as something that deserves particular attention and needs to be prioritized, and whenever this is discussed women are not automatically depicted as victims (UNSCR/1889/2009:2). Neither is men portrayed as the natural or traditional protector. Another positive remark is that some of the documents stress the importance to acknowledge the differences between women, and that women should not be regarded as a homogenous group (see e.g. SG/WPiP/2010:5). Some of the texts contextualize the different aspects related to gender stereotypes and socio-cultural traditions as fundamental barriers for gender equality, such as how gender stereotypes are used against politically active women in post-conflict societies in order to negatively affect their respectability (SG/WPiP/2010:7). This can be interpreted as both an awareness of the problems related to the use of traditional gender roles in official documents and policies, as well as a will to avoid contributing to the reproduction of such stereotypes.

But despite the positive remarks, it is at the same time possible to extract other types of gendered roles and general characteristics in the documents. One example is that when women who are participating in peacebuilding or peacekeeping programs, or who have gained political recognition in a post-conflict society, are exemplified and discussed, they are often portrayed as role models who should be used as a positive example in order to encourage further gender mainstreaming efforts in other dimensions of the society (SG/WPiP/2010:3). This approach insinuates a notion of the participation of women as primarily important due to

their sex, and not necessarily the outcomes of the work women are performing. However, an interesting addendum to this is found in SG/WPiP/2010, where it is stressed that an increased number of women in decision-making processes does not automatically mean greater gender awareness in peacebuilding operations (SG/WPiP/2010:4). This comment detaches the quantitative measurements of women with the understanding of gender in post-conflict security and turns it into a more complex question, which signifies a consciousness of gender awareness as not merely being equal to simply adding more women.

A general line that can be traced in the analyzed material is that most of the texts highlights women and girls but rarely mentions the role and responsibilities of men and boys. This counts for e.g. both UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1889. This remark can be interpreted as it falls on women to alone challenge the hegemonic masculinity, as they alone are the ones that are disadvantaged and discriminated in the contemporary gender order. However, when it comes to these two resolutions it is crucial to remember that what makes these resolutions so important is that they were among the first resolutions to acknowledge women in post-conflict security context. These texts must therefore be analyzed with this in mind. UNSCR 1325 highlights the importance of the international community to understand the particular threats that women face in post-conflict societies, and calls for the international acknowledgment of women's need of special protection (UNSCR/1325/2000:2). UNSCR 1889 refers to the "key role women can play" in peacebuilding (UNSCR/1889/2009:1), and also emphasizes the importance to focus more on empowerment of women rather than protection in order to embed for increased gender equality (UNSCR/1889/2009:2).

One of the most interesting findings is a phrase from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Under-Secretary General Policy Statement on Gender Mainstreaming (DPKO/GPS/2005) where the aim of "addressing particular vulnerabilities of men and boys, as exists in peacekeeping operations" (DPKO/GPS/2005:2) is stated in one of the strategic goals. This is the only place found in the analyzed material where men and boys are not only addressed as important to engage and incorporate in gender equality programs, but where they also are mentioned in relation to vulnerability. This can be interpreted as signifying an awareness of the negative and problematic norms that gender hierarchies invokes on men as well.

5.2.3 Feminist ideals: Sameness, Difference, Transformation

When it comes to the presence of feminist ideals, all of the three categories of ideal types are possible to trace in the analyzed material. The Differences ideal is prominent in how women are specifically targeted in many of the proposed solutions and policy directives, as well as how quotation is stressed as a recommended strategy for increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. The quotation argument can also be connected to the Sameness ideal as it calls for the equal terms of participation between men and women measured in

quantitative results. The Sameness ideal can also be found in how most of the documents highlights the equal rights of men and women, and the importance of keeping this in mind throughout all planning, commitments and activities of peacekeeping and peacebuilding programs (see e.g. DPKO/2006: 3). In the DPKO Policy Directive on Gender Equality in UN Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO/2006) gender equality is defined as “the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men” (DPKO/2006: 8), which signifies a Sameness ideal. However, it is also stated that this does not mean that women and men will become the same, which can be connected to an influence of the Difference ideal.

The Transformation ideal emerges however as most prominent. One illustrating example is for instance found in the SG/WPiP/2010, where the key approach to peacebuilding is influenced by the slogan “build back better” (SG/WPiP/2010:4), with the intention to work towards a more gender balanced society with a strengthened status of women. By recognizing the capacity of women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping together with increased gender awareness, the result is hoped to lead to a better and improved society. The Transformation ideal is also possible to trace in how the importance of acknowledging differences between women is emphasized, and how it is stressed that women should not be treated as a homogenous group (SG/WPiP/2010:5), which is an argument that can be related to post-colonial feminism. A general line in the analyzed material is a desire to change the present post-conflict security context into something new, which embeds for the Transformation ideal.

5.3 Comparison of discourses

When comparing the gender discourse of poverty reduction and post-conflict security, the result reveals some commonalities and some diversities. To start with the shared findings, we can for instance see a joint notion of gender equality as a matter that should include and engage women in the same extent as men. This approach is initially claimed in the documents to influence all gender related work within each field, and insinuates a will of a more modern perspective on gender by the UN. However, what seems to be common as well is a gap between the ideal in this approach and the ideas of how it should be achieved, as the stated approach is not as evident when the different efforts and commitments to eliminate gender inequalities are later described in the texts. The general focus in the documents is on women without including the role and responsibilities of men, despite how the importance to engage men is initially stressed. This can be interpreted as supporting the accusation of the UN gender discourse for maintaining an outdated notion of gender as primarily being a women’s issue. Worth to note is however that it do exist examples where men are included within both contexts, but the majority of the solutions and commitments that are presented in the policy directives are mainly directed towards women.

Further on, what is embedded in the idea of gender equality as ideal within both contexts is connected to a perspective where more emphasis is put on efficiency rather than rights. When it comes to poverty reduction, the benefits of gender equality are for example primarily argued in terms of efficiency connected to increased development and economic prosperity. In the context of post-conflict security, the connection is instead to sustainable peace and political legitimacy. The same pattern can be traced in the key objectives of gender equality, which within poverty reduction is focused on economic advantages, while the promotion of sustainable peace is highlighted within post-conflict security. The elimination of the discrimination against women is thus often defined and defended in relation to efficiency and the common good, rather than basic human rights.

Considering the strategies for increasing gender equality, the key objectives are however somewhat divided. While quotation of women into decision-making positions is highlighted as a key strategy within post-conflict security, poverty reduction put more emphasis on equalized access to productive resources.

When it comes to the presence of gender roles and stereotypes, the general impression is that it is difficult to find any suggestions that may be interpreted as traditional stereotypes. It is clear that the UN is aware of the problems related to the use of traditional gender roles and wants to avoid contributing to maintaining any gender stereotypes in their policies on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The result is a language in the texts where any expressions and attributes that may reproduce traditional images of typical male and female roles are thoughtfully avoided or minimized. Despite this, it is still possible to find some examples of gender roles, as the analysis has shown.

Regarding the findings of feminist ideals, the analysis provided different conclusions within the two contexts. The Transformation ideal emerged as dominating within post-conflict security, primarily due to how the capacity of women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping were recognized, together with a general desire to change and transform the current situation and embed for new structures where gender is automatically included. The Transformation ideal was also possible to extract in how the importance to acknowledge differences between women was stressed. In the documents on poverty reduction, the conclusion was not as easy to determine due to how all of the three categories were possible to interpret in different parts of the texts but none distinctively stood out. In the end, the result seemed however to lean towards the Sameness ideal, primarily due to how equality in terms of equal access and distributions of resources and assets were emphasized throughout the majority of the analyzed documents, in addition to how the equal and fair treatment of women and men was highlighted as a key objective.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

My intention with this paper was to analyze how gender and gender equality is defined and expressed in UN policies and documents on poverty reduction and post-conflict security, in order to look into how the UN gender discourse can be interpreted. The purpose was also to compare the meaning of gender equality between the separate contexts of poverty reduction and post-conflict security in order to see if the same understanding of gender could be found and if the underlying values and norms of the texts were consistent. With the concept of gender mainstreaming as my theoretical point of departure, and with the historical context of poverty reduction and post-conflict security as background, my underlying aim was to reflect on how discourses forms knowledge and values on a concept such as gender equality.

The result of the analysis revealed a discourse with a more thorough understanding of gender equality than I initially expected, but were the overall image insinuated an ambiguity towards the combination of gender equality as ideal and gender mainstreaming as strategy. Among the findings were aspects pointing to a clash in the UN gender discourse, were the will to have a more modern approach to gender equality in policies and commitments stands in contrast to the more traditional notion that often appears in suggestions and program activities. The discursive lived ideology here collides with the outcome when the ideal of the policy directives are to be transferred into targeted program activities.

The analysis further on showed that even though most of the analyzed documents claimed to have a fundamental approach to gender equality embedded in the belief and respect of universal human rights, most of the texts had a tendency of defending gender equality in relation to something else, such as efficiency, economic prosperity etc. These findings insinuates that the individual value of gender equality and women's rights is not enough but needs to be connected to the value of something else, as well as what is embedded in the idea of gender equality as ideal within both contexts is connected to a perspective where more emphasis is put on efficiency rather than rights.

So, how can the results presented in this paper be used and interpreted? In the methodology section, I discussed a problem related to discourse analysis in terms of the difficulties that may appear when the language within a discourse is suspected to be consciously constructed in purpose to fit into a certain frame, and how this particularly involves the analysis of official documents where words and phrases might be deliberately vague with the intention of using an appropriate and politically correct language. When I initiated the analysis, I was aware that I might encounter this type of problem and that it could make the analysis of underlying norms and values more difficult. It is evident that the UN is aware of

the need to use an appropriate language in all publications, and in particular official policy directives. The analyzed documents were all written in a gender-sensitive language where expressions that may cause any type of misinterpretations are cautiously avoided. What is worrying with this from my perspective is that the fear of being misinterpreted risk to end up in evaporated policies, where the unclear and diffuse understanding of gender equality are reflected in the UN gender discourse and thus causes problems when transferred into practice. Among the driving principles that are defined in the UN Women Strategic Plan are the promotion of accountability and coherency when it comes to gender awareness and gender mainstreaming (UNW/2011:12). In my opinion, this pinpoints one of the main problems within the contemporary UN gender discourse: the lack of accountability and coherency when it comes to the understanding of gender equality and the strategies for implementing gender mainstreaming. As I have stated previously in this paper, my understanding of discourse is the culture of understanding of a specific concept, and how one connects this understanding with values and normative thinking, which constitutes the foundation for how to culturally relate and socially position oneself and other subjects to this concept. I believe that we need a more consistent and coherent understanding of gender equality in order to be able to define clear and efficient strategies for reaching the Millennium Development Goal of promoting gender equality. From my perspective, the role of international institutions matters as international policies, such as the analyzed documents in this paper, are an important part of the constructed norms and structures which the rest of the international society relates to. The policies of the UN thus influence other actors within the international development discourse. In my opinion, a crucial part of addressing gender inequalities is to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, as well as provide alternative gender roles. The overall aim with gender mainstreaming strategies should be to detach gender from traditional “gender issues” and instead turn it into a normative perspective. In order to achieve this, there is a need for more challenging elements in the UN gender equality policies. With a diffuse understanding of gender equality, gender policies risk to be insufficient in its intended purpose to eliminate gender inequalities, which is why a consistent and coherent understanding is important if we ever are to reach the goal of eliminating global gender inequalities.

My intention with this paper was that I through my findings wanted to add to the current understanding of gender discourse. In similarity with most qualitative research, it can be problematic to generalize results from discourse analysis. The interpretation of the result reflects on the subjectivity of the researcher, and with this in mind, I am aware that I cannot perceive my result as general or objective. I therefore regard my result as my interpretation and comment to the debate. However, one of the fundamental ideas of discourse analysis is that the outcome reflects on the discursive truth, as one way of defining discourse is that it creates the reality it refers to. In the methodology section, I refer to Bacchi who argues that in order to be able to address both the way we are in discourse, and the way we do discourse, we need to have a dual-focus research agenda when conducting discourse analysis. I agree with Bacchi about the necessity to understand both

perspectives when doing discourse analysis, and this is something that I have tried to keep in mind when summarizing my results.

The outcome of the analysis revealed additional aspects that would be interesting to study in an extension of the research based on the findings in this paper, such as how the UN gender equality policies are being transferred into practice, and how the UN gender discourse is reflected in the understanding of gender among member states or other international institutions. I believe that my results also reflect on the feminist debate on gender mainstreaming. In the theoretical framework, I mentioned how feminists in recent years have debated whether it is possible for feminists to have a shared agenda on gender equality without a mutually shared focus or subject. The result of my analysis revealed that different feminist ideals were prominent within poverty reduction and post-conflict security. However, in my opinion, different ideals do not necessarily have to be an obstacle for a joint approach to eliminate gender inequalities.

7 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender inequalities and the discrimination and exclusion of women in development are a universal problem that is interlinked with a range of other development issues. The UN has taken a leading initiative in promoting gender equality, but has also been subjected to critique for shortcomings when it comes to the understanding of what gender means, which is considered being reflected in a failure to address the complexity of gender in policies and development programs.

The intention of this paper is to go beyond the stated policies and explore how gender equality actually is understood within the UN, and what kind of values and presumption of gender the UN embeds in the concept of gender equality. My main research question is thus how gender equality is perceived in UN documents, and I am going to analyze this by comparing the perception of gender equality in UN official documents within the two development issues of poverty reduction and post-conflict security. What I am interested to explore is what constitutes the understanding of gender in UN documents, and if the theoretical underpinnings of the UN gender discourse varies depending on the context of the analyzed issue. The overall aim with this paper is to contribute to the discussion on how to make the integration and mainstreaming of gender awareness in the field of international development more efficient and coherent.

Context

Considering poverty reduction, focus have shifted throughout the years from merely defining poverty in relation to earned income and assets to a more nuanced perspective, which involves what poverty is linked to and how it is signified. Today, the common perception of poverty is that it is not just about the lack of money, but rather about the lack of ability to change and affect the individual living situation. When it comes to the gender dimension of poverty, women generally suffers more from poverty compared to men. The underlying reason for why women are at greater risk of falling into poverty can be found in socio-cultural traditions, as well as economic and judiciary discrimination. In recent years, this “feminization of poverty” and its root causes have gain more attention within the international development discussion. Feminists have argued that in order to challenge the societal factors that causes and preserves female poverty, poor women themselves must be allowed to participate in the planning and designing of poverty reduction programs. The result has been increased initiatives to target women and improve the participation of women in poverty reduction programs.

Within the discourse of post-conflict security, the role of women was unacknowledged for long time but the situation has recently started to change. Among the contributing factors is the expanded understanding of security, which

has resulted in the recognition of the concept of human security, as well as the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Despite the changing structures, women are however still in minority when it comes to female participation in peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions, and women has a general low influence in post-conflict societies. Scholars who have studied gender and militarism argue that the reasons for the low status of women within post-conflict security context can be found in the masculinized norms and structures of militarism which requires and reproduces gender inequality. Further on, when gender is addressed within peacekeeping operations, it is often done without adequate attention for the complexity in both the concept and context.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical point of departure will be the introduction of the concept of gender mainstreaming, which has been the primary theory and strategy for implementing gender awareness in UN policies and development programs in recent years. The concept of gender mainstreaming was initially perceived as a mean to integrate a gender perspective in issues and discussions that previously had been separated from gender context, but have in recent years been subject to extensive critique primarily from gender and feminist scholars for not fulfilling the expected purpose as was hoped for. Another problem noted by critical feminists is that the new gender mainstreamed policies are many times too vague and diffuse in its content, which embeds for the possibility to reinterpret or overlook important aspects in the content and aim of the policies. From a feminist perspective, the primary purpose of gender mainstreaming should be to address structural gender inequalities in the processes and outcomes of institutional policies and to investigate how these structural inequalities are created and preserved within international institutions.

Methodology

Due to my research purpose, I found discourse analysis to be the most appropriate method to use. The fundamental idea of discourse analysis is to relate and interpret the underlying meaning and content of a text in order to investigate how it is used and to connect it to social context and underlying values. The overall purpose is to reveal the meaning of a text, and to study the values and relations that are connected to the specific culture or context of a defined group. Discourse analysis has been a prominent method within contemporary feminist academic field in terms of revealing socially constructed and gendered power relations on different levels in international society. In addition to gender mainstreaming as theoretical scope and discourse analysis as main methodology, I will also look into what kind of feminist theoretical standpoints on gender equality and gender mainstreaming that can be extracted from the discussion on gender mainstreaming as institutional strategy. The feminist ideal typology has been constructed from feminist ideas on the different perspectives and idealized images of gender equality extracted from the context of poverty-reduction and post-conflict security together with the idealized perception of the function of gender mainstreaming as strategy for gendered policy-making. The ideals have been divided into three

different categories named Sameness, Difference and Transformation. The idea is to use these categories as an analytical tool for identifying potential feminist influences in the contemporary gender discourse of the UN.

Analysis

The empirical material which the analysis are based on consists of UN reports, action plans, official policy documents and different guidelines on gender mainstreaming and gender equality plans related to my two chosen focus areas: poverty reduction and post-conflict security. The structure of the analysis was built around three different topics: the identification of underlying values and norms; the potential presence of gender roles and stereotypes; and the recognition of feminist ideals.

The analysis revealed both commonalities and diversities between the two compared fields. Among the commonalities was a general notion of gender equality as a matter that should include and engage women in the same extent as men. This approach was initially claimed in the documents to influence all gender related work within each field, and can be interpreted as a will to a more modern perspective on gender by the UN. This approach seemed however to clash with the ideas of how gender equality should be achieved in practice, as the idealized vision was difficult to trace in the suggested activities. The critique towards the UN of adapting an outdated understanding of gender in its policies was also possible to trace within both contexts, although not in the extent that was first expected. Further on, both discourses applied an approach to gender equality where more emphasis were put on efficiency rather than rights. Gender equality were often defined and defended in relation to something else, as if its own value is not enough. Among the diversifying findings were the opinions on key objectives of gender equality strategies. Within poverty reduction, more emphasis was put on equalized access to productive resources, while quotation on the other hand was highlighted within post-conflict security.

When it comes to the presence of gender roles and stereotypes, the analysis revealed few findings. In this sense, the language in the texts carefully avoids any type of expressions that may contribute to the reproduction of traditional images of typical male and female roles. Regarding the findings of feminist ideals, the analysis provided different results for the two contexts. The Transformation ideal emerged as distinct within post-conflict security, while within poverty reduction the overall interpretation on the other hand leaned towards the Sameness ideal.

Concluding Remarks

In the concluding remarks I discuss the positive and negative aspects of the findings, and how the result of the analysis can be interpreted. In my opinion, the UN has an overall thorough understanding of gender which did not differ as much between the two fields as I initially expected. However, the texts generally seems to lack a consistent and coherent definition of gender equality and the aim of gender mainstreaming as strategy, which risk to result in evaporated policies and an overall unclear gender discourse. In my perspective, the UN has a crucial role as leading international institution for policy-making with the impact over norm-

setting standards within international gender discourse. The policies of the UN thus influence other actors in the international society. In my opinion, a crucial part of addressing gender inequalities is to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, as well as provide alternative gender roles. The overall aim with gender mainstreaming strategies should be to detach gender from traditional “gender issues” and instead turn it into a normative perspective. In order to achieve this, there is a need for more challenging elements in the UN gender equality policies. Therefore, I believe that there is a need for a more consistent and coherent understanding of gender equality within the UN gender discourse in order for it to challenge contemporary gendered power relations.

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