

Abstract

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(Title in Swedish: Rättvisa Rättigheter? Integrering av kvinnors mänskliga rättigheter och ett genusperspektiv)

Since its emergence in 1945, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) has been one of the key international actors in the field of human rights. Despite its efforts to promote human rights, the UN has received critique for inadequately championing women's human rights and for failing to promote equality between the sexes. The UN has responded to this criticism by adopting different strategies for the promotion of women's human rights and equality between the sexes. This thesis focuses on these different strategies and especially on two of the later strategies for strengthening and integrating women's human rights and gender equality initiatives. The main focus of this work is on the post-Cold War shift from using mainly targeted, woman-centred equality strategies to using both woman-centred and different integrative or "mainstreaming" strategies. That is, on the shift from addressing women's human rights and equality as a predominantly separate issue from the "mainstream", to addressing these issues both as separate issues, but also as integrated in the "mainstream". The post-Cold War shift in UN women's human rights and gender equality law, politics and policies has contributed to greater attention being paid to women's human rights violations and sex-based inequalities. However, in this thesis it is argued that while successful to some extent, the strategies have also had unintended consequences; not the least a reproduction of certain images of "women" and "womanhood" and that they have had a neutralizing effect on women's human rights and gender equality issues.

This thesis positions itself within the contemporary discussion surrounding international human rights and is a contribution to the feminist and critical legal debates about international human rights and the "hows" and "whys" of rights-based and gender-based approaches to equality between the sexes within the UN's human rights framework.

Key words: women's human rights, gender mainstreaming, gender equality, sex equality, equality strategies, international human rights, United Nations, feminist perspectives, gender perspectives, international law.

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