



## **Feminist Cognitive Contribution in the Field of International Relations**

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### **Abstract**

The feminist approach has been able to strongly appear in the field of international relations by its important hypothesis "gender", which has clarified the dichotomy in the whole world, especially within the field of international relations. Besides, it was also able to add many notes on the most outstanding concepts of the field as in topics of "peace, security and war" and criticized the hypotheses both realist theory and liberal theory regarding these concepts by highlighting and confirming the marginalization that occurred within these theories concerning with many important topics within the field of international relations, including "gender" as well as the feminist cognitive contribution within the field of international relations.

**Keywords:** IR Theory; Feminism; Theorizing in IR

### **Introduction**

Feminism is considered as a broad term given to the works of intellectuals who concerned with the gender to the academic study of international politics, using feminist theory and sometimes the theory of free gender to better understand global politics and international relations. From the beginning, the feminist approach indicated almost complete absence of women from the theories and practices of traditional international relations. This absence in both the marginalization of women in the decision-making process and in the assumption that the reality of women's daily life is not affected by international relations and is not important to her, and beyond that, feminist contributions in international relations can be understood through their deconstruction of gender, whether as socially constructed identities or as a strong organizational logic, this means recognition and then to challenge assumptions about male and female gender roles that dictate what both men and women should do in global politics, and what is important in considerations of international relations. These assumptions, in turn, shape the global political process and its effects on the lives of men and women, as well as indicating that traditional international relations were neutral between the two genders, meaning that gender and international relations were two separate fields that did not affect each other. The feminist approach indicated that traditional international relations are in fact blind in gender. Thus, feminist studies take both women and gender seriously, and in so doing challenge the foundational concepts and assumptions of the international relations field.



### **Topic 1: Feminist Contributions in International Relations**

Actually feminist movements initially has ignored international relations as a potential field of feminist studies, and rather focused on domestic policy or domestic social politics. An important change occurred during the year 1980, at that time, it became clear to feminist thinkers that the tools used by international social relations schools are similar in their adoption of gender discrimination as a basis for prejudice against women, such as the concepts of power, control, and safety, which represent traditional male concepts.

#### **First: Gender within international relations**

International relations clearly have ignored women on the assumption that their theories were homogeneous and applicable to all people equally. In the past 30 years, feminist international relations scholars have actively sought to resist the marginalization of their research by introducing "gender" as a means of analyzing international relations in general. Feminist international relations researchers pointed out that this did not lead to the prevailing research understanding for the importance and impact of gender in international relations theory and its integration in the field. Conducting a feminist or gender analysis does not mean simply creating a "gender variable" to be added to the current research methodologies. But ,scholars must delve into the construction of masculinity and femininity and how they are activated in the international political system. (RICHARD K, 1988) Jane Anne Tinker analyzes in her book (Gender in Relations) presenting gender as an analysis category in the field of international relations is due to the marginalization of women in the field of foreign policy making through a type of gender stereotyping that indicates that international politics has always been a gendered activity in the modern state system, given that the making of foreign and military policy is largely done by the men. The discipline that analyzes these activities must equate what is female with what is male , and there is no healthier place than the field of international relations, a system that has for the most part resisted the inclusion of gender in its discourse, and adopts its assumptions and interpretations almost entirely on activities and experiences of men. So any attempt to present a clearer analysis between the two sex in the field by conducting long- term and strong discussion between masculine masculinity and politics. Characteristics associated with the manhood such as toughness, courage, strength, independence and even physical strength throughout history, have been those most valuable in managing politics, especially international politics. In many cases, manhood has also been associated with violence and the use of force, which is a type of behavior when practiced on the international scene and it is appreciated and praised in the name of defending the nation. (Tickner, 1992)

In her famous 1997 essay "You Don't Understand" (Tinker) laments this very idea, arguing that other disciplines have already begun to think critically about the social structures of the state, global actors, and gender, and that the field of international relations is the one that benefits most from looking through a gender perspective. A subsequent article (Tinker) called again for a less rigorous approach to discipline, and we must depict new cycles rather than trying to encounter women with international relations in existing frameworks.



(Underwood, 2009). Feminists assert that through our use of language, we arrive at a perception of the world through these binary oppositions. Our understanding of gender depends on a set of culturally defined binary distinctions, such as the general versus the specific, the objective versus the self, the self-versus the other, the mind versus the emotion, and independence versus interdependence and culture versus nature; usually the first of each pair of characteristics is associated with masculinity, and the second is associated with femininity (Tickner, 1992).

Sarah Brown argues that a feminist theory of international relations is an act of political commitment to understand the world from a socially subordinate perspective. There is a need to define the non- defined relationship yet between building power and building gender in international relations, and recognizing, as most feminist theories do, that these hierarchies are a social construction that allows us to imagine the conditions necessary to transcend it. (Brown, 1988) Nevertheless, feminist theories must go beyond women's experiences in different specializations , and try to challenge the basic concepts of the disciplines themselves, and the central concepts of the theory and practice of international relations, such as power, sovereignty and security, have been framed in terms of linking them to masculinity, relying on feminist theories to examine and criticize the meaning of these and other basic concepts of international politics can help us reformulate these concepts in ways that may allow us to see new possibilities for solving our current insecurities, by suggesting that the personal is political. The Feminist researchers draw our attention to the differences between the public and the private in the local political system, the differences between the local and the foreign, at home and abroad, and as the order and chaos and the center and the surrounded are considered important assumptions in building theory, and as organizational principles for the way we view the world. As the realists focus their interpretations on hierarchical relations between states, and Marxists on asymmetric class relations, feminists can shed light on gender hierarchies embedded in the theories and practices of global politics which permit us to see the extent to which all of these domination regimes have come (Tickner, 1992).

The most prominent feminist theorists such as (Jane Anne Tinker, Rebecca Grint and Kristen Silvestre) refer to gender issues and the absence of a woman's life and experiences, in addition to clarifying the obvious. The analyzes found that instead of gender-neutral discipline as some claim, the theoretical foundations of international relations are specific and based around divisions between males and females that define females as "the other" as they argue that divisions are formed by international forces, although so far rarely what was considered in this was that it originally occurred using a "gender lens", as scholars of traditional international relations divided discipline into components of social sciences and then rebuilt it into what is now known as international relations (Scott, 1988).

Although discipline in international relations maintained an almost continuous silence on gender issues and continued in the absence of "women" as subjects, this silence and absence are not vacant, they constitute what (Bourdieu) calls the "two sides of the investigation." Ideological view of gender as difference is an integral part of the international theory tradition that is manifested in the false opposition to idealism and realism, shared by many contemporary feminists. In this sense, the emergence of the separation between the



development of international theory and the development of feminist thought conceals the way in which gender was constructed and preserved in international relations as a whole. A truly liberal internationalist feminist will take the difference between the sexes as a starting point, but it will not take it as a given, its right goal and purpose must be to explain how gender is constructed and maintained in international relations and whether it can be removed? How is this possible? (Brown, 1998)

Feminist research has also demonstrated the value of taking women's experiences and contributions seriously and has used this as a basis for demonstrating how international relations depend on gender ideas about who does what? And who experiences what? Why? In world politics - moreover, there is also recognition that women are an important factor in political, economic and social processes. Despite their classification, feminism does more than focus on women, or feminist issues to highlight both inequality and power relations. Feminism reveals gender power and what global politics does, given its concern for women's subordination to men, gender inequality, and building gender identities. Feminism has challenged a homogeneous concept of women in international relations and exposed gender logic as strong organizational frameworks (Smith, 2018).

### **Second: The concepts of security, peace and war in international relations**

Security studies are one of the international relations fields where unsatisfactory confrontations illustrate the rupture between the sexes that prevent more sustainable conversations between feminists. Researchers in the field of international relations, as (Anne Tickner) lamented that feminist theorists have rarely achieved serious engagement with other researchers in international relations, This is something they have called for a lot, and in many ways the theory and practice of international security remains a man's world. (Tickner, 1997). This lack of communication between the field of security studies and feminist researchers exists despite the increasing influence of feminist thought and practice in the world of politics, as well as despite the passage and implementation Security Council Resolution 1325, which integrates gender into Security Council processes and obligates member states to include women in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction, and similar initiatives across the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, shows that gender is a prominent concern in global governance. Also, all specific international phenomena show not only the importance of women in international security, but the importance of gender as a factor in understanding and addressing problems. (True, 2003)

Feminists have analyzed traditional concepts and theories in security studies, and by doing so, they have demonstrated gender bias in basic concepts of security such as, the state, violence, war, peace, and even security itself, and they have urged a redefinition in light of this bias.( True) indicated that the state is based on dual divisions between the sexes (from inside and outside) and (public and private), and that women's lives and gender dependency are trapped in the private internal dimension of that duality, where abuse is invisible, and from a feminist perspective, the state is seen as misleading that aims to protect their citizens, but it often perpetuates the subordination of women. The gender-based analysis shapes the unified nature of state security by saying that safe countries often achieve security only by



sacrificing the security of some of their citizens, meaning "women", rather than focusing on state security. Feminists have proposed an approach to security that begins with an analysis of the margins of social and political life (Locher, 2001).

In addition to criticizing the concepts traditionally used in the study of security, gender-based perspectives have also revealed new empirical knowledge about "sexual violence" in war and gender participation in armed conflict. Feminist researchers have indicated that rape is more prevalent in times of war than in times of peace. (Hansen, 2001) In addition to referring to the serious threat to women's security as a result of rape in wartime, for these reasons feminist researchers have pushed "wartime rape" into the agenda of security studies, arguing that "rape in wartime is a collective security problem; rape occurs not as a matter of non-thinking or provocative or regrettable behavior, but as a matter of national war. (Runyan Peterson and 1999) . Feminism came up with a new philosophy for the field of international relations, a philosophy that expresses out of the ordinary in traditional international relations. In 1994 (Cynthia Enloe) raised a question at a conference to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the first international relations department in the world at the University of Wales, where feminist issues were at the top of the agenda for realism and global systems, after a great man spoke from traditional international relations about his accomplishments, Cynthia raised her hand and asked, "When was the last time you were surprised?" The speaker blinked on the stage several times and muttered that he did not understand the importance of the question, (the silence of the audience) surprised the audience with new things in the world or anomalies in traditional international relations. When were you last surprised? Emerged as the official theme of the conference, Cynthia found a way to rethink and focus on feminist philosophy and a new worldview from the perspective of women (Sylvester, 2001).

The book "Bananas, Beaches and Rules" added a different view of discipline to the field of international relations, as (Cynthia Enloe) illustrated a polyvalent dialogue with women and power in the world, travel to and outside war sites, and an emphasis on the strength needed to maintain the international political order in its form. (Sylvester, 2001). Jane Elstein also came up with her book "Women and War" also with a different view of international relations, as it showed the complexities of identity and knowledge, how it can be a mother and become a political theorist. She studied experiences of war and peace, and how students of international relations are trained for these experiences. (Zalewski, 1992).

She has also indicated that the empirical and narrative facts of the war are a different thing, and has placed her treatment of a great activity in international relations about women's vision within the subject matter of the field, and her book received many citations in the literature of international relations so that it can be considered part of the law, and indicated the thin line that separates the feminism questions in questions of international relations, international relations in feminism and other fields. And there are research implications raised by the work that brings feminism to international relations. In relation to re-research that makes international relations a subset of feminism, that both approaches deal with issues that we can relate to the international relations, such as war, peace, trade, cooperation, and international development. Those who work with feminist questions that are brought into international relations, that the field has contributed to work that needs to feminist



improvements and adjustments. As for those who look at international relations questions in feminism, they find that the international relations constitution cannot deal with important feminist issues, such as rape as a war-fighting strategy (Sylvester, 2001).

The most prominent researchers in the field of international relations (Elshtain, Anlo and Tekner) have confirmed that the state is the realm of men, and that women are always excluded indeed even if they join men in the main field of establishing the state, which is "war." When women fight war, it is noticeable that they are not placed in power-sharing after the war as a condition for their participation in the fighting, and thus men are free to distribute power among themselves, especially in the area of building and leading the state. In an article entitled "The Problem of Peace", (Elshtain) mentioned that the myth of the Greeks says that the gods themselves came to power only through war. Heraclitus considered war the father of everything, arguing that it is only through conflict as a natural law of existence anything could be established, and those who refused to fight became slaves, meaning "women." These myths left their effect on the thinkers and the founders of the discipline of international relations. (Elshtain, 1988).

### **The second axis: Feminist criticism of the theories of international relations**

The theory of international relations is an attempt to explain events on the international arena, according to a specific interpretive perspective that focuses on a set of data and variables. Theories of international relations help to organize, interpret and predict a reality to a certain extent, and none of these basic theories or the many versions of them are truly correct absolutely, as they all provide correct perspectives but differ individually in interpreting aspects of political behavior or motives that motivate the population, politicians, and states of actors. Feminist theory came with a new proposition and different from the theories of traditional international relations, which is summarized by the participation of women in political action and giving them a greater role by eliminating Gender and women's equality with men in all areas of life and in the world of international relations in particular, and the application of the principle that the world is not only for men. Therefore, feminism directed its criticism to the most prominent theories of international relations, which are realism and liberalism, as they are considered the two basic theories in this field.

#### **First: Feminism's criticism of realism**

After the end of the Second World War, realism theory appeared in front of the idealist theory after its failure and its exposure to a severe setback, and since that time realism has assumed the fore position in the theories of international relations and it can be said that it is the prevailing trend in the interpretation of phenomena in international politics. The realist school is based on power and the achievement of interests primarily. Political realism is closely related to the global view of foreign policy practitioners. For realists, security is related to the military security of the state, and given their pessimistic assumptions about the potential behavior of states in an "chaotic" international environment, most realists doubt the possibility of states achieving complete security in an imperfect world, where many states that have national security interests go beyond self-preservation, and where there is no



international government to curb their ambitions. The realists believe that war can break out at any time because nothing can prevent it, and as a result they advise states to rely on the capabilities of their own power to achieve security (Tickner). , 1997)

Realism linked masculinity ( male) to international relations, while feminist views linked international relations and national security with women's experiences, and how it affects the three levels of analysis that realism has defined to interpret international relations: the individual, the state, and the international system. Feminism believes that these levels do not depend on the behavior of men only. While realism assumes states as actors and frontiers, it renders the boundaries between chaos and order and lawful and unlawful violence unproblematic (Brown, 1988).

In his book, *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau built a world almost entirely free of women. Morgenthau claims that individuals engage in a power struggle when they come into contact with one another, because the tendency to dominate is present at all levels of human life, the family, the international system and the political system. Since women rarely occupy positions of power in any of these domains , (Morgenthau) assumes in the subject of domination, man in the first place, although not all men his "political man" is a social construction based on a partial representation of human nature devoid of the behavior of men in positions of public authority. Morgenthau argues that while society condemns the violent behavior that may result from this struggle for power within the political system, he encourages it in the international system in the form of war, where scholars of international relations criticized the "political man" to Morgenthau. Because of his narration of human nature, the social construction of dominant masculinity and its opposition to imperfect femininity were central to the method of international political discourse. In general, contemporary realist theory relies heavily in its analysis on the ideas of the Greeks down to Machiavelli. This type of social masculinity has been projected onto international behavior. It was legitimized by the glorification of war, and by the glorification of the "warrior citizen" (Brown, 1988).

For feminists, warrior woman is not an unavoidable negative description of human nature, nor a desirable possibility. It is considered as a construction and gender that could be reviewed of personality and citizenship, the feminist theorist (Wendy Brown) suggests that Machiavelli's representation of the political world and of its citizens is deeply gendered; it relies on the image of true masculinity that requires attributes that exceed those naturally found in men. (Elshtain, 1987) While contemporary international relations do not explicitly use this misogynist discourse, the contemporary understanding of female citizen is still associated with the Greeks and Machiavelli's portrayals of the warrior and the noblest sacrifice a citizen can make is to change his life for the sake of his country. When the National Organization for Women decided to support the recruitment of women in the United States Army, it discussed her case on the basis that if women were prevented from participating in the armed forces on an equal basis with men, they would remain in second place, but despite the increase in women and numbers in non-combat roles in the armed forces of certain countries, the relationship between recruitment , male and female remains very strong in most societies today (Tilly, 1977).



(Carol Pittman) argues that in all contemporary discussions of the state of nature the gender discrimination is generally ignored, although it was an important consideration for contract theorists themselves, and also although Hobbes suggested that women as well as men could be free and equal in the state of Nature, and his description to human behavior in this environment refers to the behavior of adult males whose behavior is a component of human nature as a whole through contemporary realist analysis. (Pateman, 1990). The theories that feminism uses to understand and explain the world of international politics are not separate from those who theorize and practice, even now a variety of realism has dominated the theoretical and practical aspects of international relations, leading to a certain sense of independence in larger domains while denying that gender is absolutely appropriate. The viewpoint of the feminist movement, which reflects a feminist psychoanalytic theory, usefully reveals concepts of man in realism and alerts us a society that enjoys independence of reaction from women, and helps define the subversive activities of theory within international relations.

Feminism asserts that those who want us to replace realism with something else, we are not talking about reformulating international feminism, but rather adding a new set of methods and partial observations to the image, although these discoveries are strange, but they corrupt realism and open the way to women, theory, and alternative practice. (Sylvester, 2001)

### **Second: Feminism's criticism of liberalism**

The liberal school has always been called the historical alternative to realism. The values of the liberal school prevailed in the first decades of the twentieth century, especially in the period after World War I called the period of idealists. The liberal thought was resurrected after World War II with the establishment of the United Nations. That was for a short period until the beginning of the Cold War and the return of realism again, but after the end of the Cold War, liberal thought was revived by talking about a new world order, and it is one of the schools in international relations that emphasizes international cooperation, as it views cooperation as the normal state of international relations and that conflicts, especially armed ones, are an exception, and that negotiation can be an alternative to war, and international institutions are the most important international actors.

Liberal tools include free trade, education, and international institutions to protect and advance the economic and civic interests of the individual as well as dealing with feminist criticisms of liberalism and the economic inequality inherent in free trade, which disproportionately affects women. (Jackie True) argues that "macroeconomic indicators that focus on males, such as gross national product reduces women's work." (True) also pointed out that "at the global level, women are a deprived group, they own one percent of the world's property and resources, perform sixty percent of the work, and constitute the majority of refugees, the illiterate and the poor" (True, 2003). This indicates that the capitalist structure is a patriarchal structure that effectively marginalizes the participation and contributions of women in the economy, where much of their work is reflected in illegal or unpaid domestic situations not included in economic assessments. The liberal institutions such as global trade organization and multinational companies have tended to the





establishment of free trade agreements, which weaken the state's protection of labor rights and public social funds, which negatively affected a large proportion of women in the labor force. This in turn hide female exploitation issues such as the gender division of labor and increasing sex orientation around the world (Code, 2003).

Feminists also challenge the liberal claim that international institutions provide methods through which women can become politically and socially recognized. Given that leaders and processes of formal international organizations come from patriarchal systems, their work can put women at a disadvantage. Hillary Charlesworth criticizes some recent formal international conferences, such as the Beijing Declaration \* and the agenda for the Twenty-first Century in Rio, indicate that the wording in the documents shows that while some consensus has been reached in decisive issues critical to women, not enough has been achieved to fulfil real changes proposed by feminists, and (Charlesworth) explains some disappointing results, such as disagreement over the definition of gender, and the inability to secure criteria for measuring progress. These criticisms emphasize the challenges of feminist theory, because they indicate that liberal feminist movements that have received great media coverage and which enjoy a huge support do not necessarily equate with the goal of achieving true gender equality (Charlesworth, 1996). Although early liberal theorists were explicit in asserting that their models of human behavior apply to men and not women, this distinction has since lost, because contemporary liberals assume that humanity as a whole behaves the same. Feminist critics oppose this theory of "human behavior", asserting that it is biased towards male representation, and (Harding) claims that for women the self is defined through the relationship with others and not in isolation from others (Money, 1985).

Whereas (Alison Gagar) argued that the liberal portrayal of human nature gave an excessive value to the mind at the expense of the body, in our sexual division of labor men dominated intellectual fields, while women were assigned household tasks necessary for physical survival. It is unlikely that women will develop a theory of human nature that ignores human interdependence or formulate a concept of rationality that emphasizes individual autonomy. If the need for interdependence is taken as a starting point, society and cooperation will not be seen as confusing and problematic when we begin to think about alternative methods of defining rationality (Gill and Law, 1990)

Feminist theory asserts that liberal strategies to promote economic growth and improve global well-being, which depend on market forces and free trade, may have a different impact on men and women, given that women's work is often carried out outside the market economy, the model based on rational market behavior effectively does not accommodate all the economic activities of women, so we cannot assume that prescriptions resulting from liberalism will be the model that is as beneficial to women's economic security as it is to men. (Tickner, 1997) Some of the most feminist criticisms of liberalism begin with early arguments for natural rights based on the power of reason. Mary Wollstonecraft writes (1792) the international historical background of the French Revolution, which was famous for adopting the idea of natural rights granted by God and criticized some of these thinkers, for example (Rousseau) whose practice is limited to men alone, and at the core of (Wollstonecraft's) argument there is an ongoing interrogation of the claim that women are more emotional than rational, if women are really guilty of excessive feelings, then they



admit that not from their feminine nature but from the gender traditions and cultural restrictions; (Wollstonecraft) confirms , although the raw material of the mind is present in both sexes at birth, the vast differences in their education lead to the development of the natural rational powers of each human being in men and atrophy in women. (Wollstonecraft, 1792)

Regarding the consent in the social contract, Batman stresses that being in a contractual relationship does not in any way guarantee one's free status, and it is either in the act of "contracting or in practicing the terms of the contract itself." On the contrary, the modern form of social contract reaffirms the relationship between male and female through domination and subordination, and feminists have argued that we need to be interrogated to understand and spread consent as a key term in liberal theory, to properly understand the nature and extent of constraints under which women work as private caretakers properly. Nancy Hirschman argued , in their work on political commitment ,that the idea of consent itself considered as the basis for legitimate political commitment that based on the liberal ideas of the abstract "male" individual in asserting that the individual can and does indeed create all his relationships and all his obligations. Thus ,the consent theory deprives people of their social conditions and ignores the fact that social relationships enhance human capacity on autonomy, its formation and making it possible. (Zerilli, 2015)

Some feminists have criticized the idea of equality as an expanded principle, because this view tends to go hand in hand with the idea that equal rights expand by their own by a certain logic included in rights, so there is no guarantee that the principle of equality will extend to groups that are not included indeed within his jurisdiction, that is, more than there is a guarantee that anyone not currently included can't be so, and hence feminists insist on minding the actual practices of feminist politics, as well as concern about gender neutrality that is assumed to be the goal and basis of equality, is just a deceive to preserve male ideals, and many feminists criticize the "individual" at the heart of liberalism, which is a gender neutral individual in name only, and the pursuit of equality fulfillment is the pursuit of equality achievement with men, that is, the quest to be more like men, in a world where "sex" is already considered a critical basis for social differentiation ( distinction) (zerilli, 2015)

### Conclusion

The feminist approach added a new concept and a new hypothesis to the field of international relations, which is (the gender), as well as its additions to the intellectual foundations of previous theories such as (realism, liberalism), which included "strength, national interest and interdependence" and other assumptions that reduced international relations only within the framework of these theories that do not ignore of what happens in the world of matters beyond these frameworks. The feminist approach sought to include people who are marginalized in terms of international relations by revealing the dichotomy within political science in general and international relations in particular, and this division starts from the concept of the public and the private up to (Countries of the North and South), this division made international relations to not receive the opinions of other parties. In



In addition, the feminist approach was able to highlight weaknesses and shortcomings in each of the concepts of "security, peace and war" through the views of the most prominent researchers in feminist theory (Eichlin, Enloe and Tickner), they were able to confront and criticize the most important theories in the field of international relations, both realism and liberalism, and highlight the weaknesses and marginalization of both theories, which made the feminist approach possess a strong presence in international relations since its emergence in the eighties until now.

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