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**THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY UNDER A FEMINIST APPROACH\*****Mauricio Lascuarín Fernández\*\*****Luis Fernando Villafuerte Valdés\*\*\*****ABSTRACT**

The sociological logic of the study of international relations is based on the recognition of the asymmetrical relations of power, from his performing, like realism and neorealism theories arise from there, and this tradition coincides with

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the development of visions of the study of gender and feminism, where the epistemological principle are similarly asymmetric relations between men and women both in their roles, social, cultural, economic, political, etc. Indeed, feminist approaches to International Relations have introduced gender as an essential tool for analyzing the interactions between states in the international framework. However, in spite of these efforts to construct a better International Relations Theory, feminist analysis has had little impact on international politics. The aim of this essay is to analyze the value in adopting a feminist perspective on International Relations.

**Keywords:** International Relation Theory, Feminist Approach, Gender.

## LA TEORÍA DE LAS RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES BAJO UNA PERSPECTIVA FEMINISTA

### RESUMEN

La lógica sociológica en el estudio de las relaciones internacionales está basada en el reconocimiento de las relaciones asimétricas de poder. Desde este enfoque, tal como en el realismo y el neorrealismo, y las teorías que han surgido de allí, se ha permitido el desarrollo de perspectivas del estudio de género y feminismo, donde el principio epistemológico es la relación asimétrica entre hombres y mujeres en sus roles sociales, culturales, económicos, políticos, etc. Entonces, La perspectiva feminista sobre las Relaciones Internacionales ha introducido el concepto de género como una herramienta esencial para el estudio de las interacciones entre los Estados y el escenario internacional. Sin embargo, a pesar de estos esfuerzos para construir una mejor Teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales, el análisis feminista ha tenido poco impacto en las políticas internacionales. El objetivo de este ensayo es analizar el valor de adoptar una perspectiva feminista en las Relaciones Internacionales.

**Palabras clave:** Teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales, Perspectiva feminista, Género.

## A TEÓRIA DAS RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS SOB UMA PERSPECTIVA FEMINISTA

### Resumo

A lógica sociológica no estudo das relações internacionais está baseada no reconhecimento das relações assimétricas de poder. Desde este enfoque, como acontece no realismo e o neorrealismo, e as teorias que têm surgido de aí, têm permitido o desenvolvimento das perspectivas dos estudos de género e feminismo, onde o princípio epistemológicos é a relação assimétrica entre homes e mulheres em seus roles sociais, culturais, econômicos, políticos, etc. Assim, a perspectiva feminista sobre relações internacionais introduziu o conceito de género como uma ferramenta essencial para o estudo das interações entre os Estados e a nível internacional. No entanto, apesar desses esforços para construir uma melhor teoria das relações internacionais, análise feminista teve pouco impacto sobre as políticas internacionais.

O objetivo deste ensaio é analisar o valor da adoção de uma perspectiva feminista em relações internacionais.

**Palavras-chave.** Teoria das Relações Internacionais, Perspectiva Feminista, Gênero.

## INTRODUCTION

The sociological logic of the study of international relations is based on the recognition of the asymmetrical relations of power, from his performing, like realism and neorealism theories arise from there, and this tradition coincides with the development of visions of the study of gender and feminism, where the epistemological principle are similarly asymmetric relations between men and women both in their roles, social, cultural, economic, political, etc., and starting from this recognition of inequalities is that we can locate the philosophical point of union between feminist theories and international relations.

This argument might seem very strange for the beginning of a process of theoretical reflection on this theoretical relationship, however, the idea is very simple, both theories, the relations international part of academic status with a greater emphasis on a more pragmatic logic, understanding the debate more in term of diplomatic processes or realpolitik than developing a methodological-theoretical that generates a sense of science, and similarly, theories of gender or feminist debate has been reduced to a marginal field of discussion in the field of social science, since it reduces to a very closed and very focused academic group.

We can say therefore that while the “equal to that in the rest of the social sciences, the contributions of feminism are one of the most important sources of renewal of the current international theory” (Nicolás, 2005, p. 1). The idea is that their contributions “have had the wisdom of identify with the necessary rigor basic problems of character sexist of the key concepts in international relations” (Nicolás, 2005, p. 1), so both disciplines are developed with a deficit in its academic legitimacy, one is challenged to its epistemological character and reduce it to a logical pragmatic diplomacy and strategic in their work and feminism analysis is reduced to a very specific issue and not articulate it methodologically with theoretical discussions more larger, thus, the subject of feminist theory or genre is as a discussion would complement of the democratic theories economic, cultural, social movements, etc.

Outcast bass is the idea of “the implications of that problem as to affect issues such as the selection of the topics object of study, design and selection of methodologies, interpretation and dissemination of the results and, ultimately, our ways of understanding the world” (Nicolás, 2005, p.1).

However, it is necessary to say that the potential for analysis of gender and feminist approaches would be a very useful in scientific and academic analysis of different areas, and especially in



the field of international relations, so far, the fundamental contributions of feminism, “although welcome from different critics, have been virtually ignored by the main or conventional core of the disciplines” (Nicolás, 2005, p. 1) of the social sciences.

The growth of the feminist movements within political and social theory has produced analyses with evident implications for International Relations Theory. These include discussions of specifically gendered definitions of security, power, authority, and among others. Feminist argued that the theoretical foundations of International Relations are based on traditional male-female dichotomies.

The aim of this essay is to answer the question: *what is the value in adopting a feminist perspective on International Relations?* In order to answer this question, this essay is divided in four parts: First, feminist perspective on International Relations, in where is described a variety of feminist approaches to International Relations and some benefits of this perspective. The second part of the essay will examine the different epistemologies of the Feminist Theory on International Relations, at this point; it will be explain how the Feminists construct the knowledge to aboard International Relations. Third, the criticisms of the Feminist International Relations Theory, here, it will be described the limitations of this theory. Finally, the conclusion, where it will be answered the main question based on the information subjected in this essay.

### **Feminist perspective on international relations**

Feminist approaches to International Relations have introduced gender as an essential tool for analysing the interactions between states in the international framework. However, in spite of these efforts to construct a better International Relations Theory, feminist analysis has had little impact on international politics; policy-makers and decision-makers seem confident in dismissing feminist ideas. Furthermore, women’s roles in creating and sustaining international politics have been treated as if they were natural and not worthy of investigation. (Tickner, 1992; True, 2001; Hutchings, 1999).

Feminist analysts argue that perhaps this lack of feminist ideas in international politics has been because for many years it has been thought that the international politics elite is just for men. Therefore, only men and not women are capable of dealing with the issues of international politics, under those circumstances, foreign policy actors and decision-makers are male (Enloe, 1993).

In the sense of this debate, we have Professor Ann Tickner, who represents one of the most radical feminist authors who defend the incorporation of the issue of women as a study in international relations. Its importance lies in the fact that it takes up one of the classical authors of the realist view of international relations, Morgenthau, and complicates it in such a way that it shows that the international system is structured and understood by a male, partial, and incomplete vision therefore proposes to add a female perspective which help to conceptualize

a world different from the existing view and generate a feminist epistemology of international relations which proposes to build an alternative feminist allowing to make it more accessible to the field of international relations to women, which would then permit overcome this partial view of the debate on international relations, building a more complex vision but comprehensive while in the world.

This author tries to build a more epistemological vision of the nature of international relations, and not concentrate so much on elements of *realpolitik*, allowing you to remove access barriers to the women, since for her, this would not change substantially the way in which relations have been built man-woman in the theoretical debate of international relations as a scientific discipline. The central argument lies in the fact that the items on the international agenda are constructed from problems that matter in primary way men.

Despite these criticisms to the realistic vision of the power of Morgenthau, Tickner not discredits in your same theory, but that argument simply that it was very limited, since he lacked a feminine approach in terms of its epistemological perspective and therefore in the construction of the international agenda.

The central argument is that Morgenthau use definitions agreed upon under a male tradition, so your rational theory of politics, responds mostly under the parameters of the male values, therefore proposes redefining the principles of political realism from define masculinity and femininity from feminist theories of the time.

Another point of discussion, is the fact that part of the reflection, that the vision of the conflict as a fundamental part of international relations, could change under the logic of a vision of feminist, since it could move from the idea of an abstract to a concrete, morality in which sensitivity, tolerance could become a bridge towards building an international community under the parameters of the construction of social consensus and States.

In deconstructing international relations theory, feminist analysts argue that the theoretical foundations of International Relations are male-defined, and are constructed around male-female dichotomies, which define female as "other" and assign gender-specific roles that exclude women from the public sphere. Tickner (1992), Grant (1991) and Sylvester (1994) argue that, although largely ignored, these issues shape and are shaped by international forces. Using a "gender lens", these writers have broken down the discipline into its largely social science components, and have then reconstructed them with a feminist understanding of the discipline of International Relations.

Tickner (1992), states that the world of international relations is a masculine domain, therefore many male scholars suggest that a change in the way world politics is conducted is needed. Because all the knowledge about the behaviour of states in international relations depends on assumptions that come out of men's experiences, "it ignores a large body of human experiences

that has potential for increasing the range of options and opening up new ways of thinking about interstate practices" (Tickner, 1992, pp. 17-18).

Feminist contributions to international relations are not just about adding women to the study of international politics, they are deeper. During the late 1980's in the third debate "feminist scholars contested the exclusionary state-centric and positivist nature of the discipline primarily at the metatheoretical level" (True, 2001, p. 243). Many of those feminist contributions sought to deconstruct and subvert realism, one of the dominant power politics explanation for post-war international relations (Tickner, 1992). These new theoretical and epistemological challenges to international relations opened the space for critical scholarship, in where "they begged the question of what a feminist perspective of world politics would look like substantively and how different would be" (True, 2001, p. 235).

During the 1970's and 1980's a huge amount of material on women's lives and the role of women in international economic development (mainly in the third world) was generated. That provided a base for themes of peace, justice, development and among others. As a result of this, a new field was emerged known as Women in Development (WID), which documented how male bias in the development process has led to poor implementations of projects and unsatisfactory policy outcomes. WID seek the empowerment of women, including through participation in development decisions that affect their own lives (Pettman, 2001). From this point of view, women are not outside of development; rather, women's contribution is central to development.

In the realm of environment, feminist scholars suggest that "it is masculine national and global institutions dominated by instrumental rationality, including science, the state, and the eco-conservationist establishment, that structure the relationship (of domination) to the environmental calamities" (True, 2001, p. 234). As a respond of this issue, eco-feminist critiques deconstruct the masculine gender bias of those institutions and suggest environmentally sustainable alternatives, which stress women's autonomy and local self-reliance within and in relation of eco-systems (Tickner, 1992).

In the area of foreign policy, feminist analyses reveal gender as a variable by exposing the dominant male gender of policy-makers and the gender assumption that these policy-makers are strategically rational actors who make life and death decisions in the name of abstract conception of the national interest. Some scholars claim that women are rarely insiders of those actual institutions that make and implement foreign policy (Randal, 1982). Feminist foreign policy analyses have opened new substantive areas of policy-making and research in the relation between states. In addition, feminist empiricists analyse the persistent gender-gap in the foreign policy beliefs of men and women foreign policy-making elites and citizens, some researchers argue that women leaders in western states are more likely to oppose the use of force in international actions and are typically more supportive of humanitarian interventions (Kofman, 2008; Tickner, 1992; Rosenau et al., 1982).

The sphere of security, have attracted sustained scrutiny from feminist scholars because of their centrality to international relations theory and practice, and because of their particularly strong masculine bias. Many, including Grant (1991), have identified national security structures and the attendant ways of thinking as the sources of much of the gender bias in inter-national relations theory as a whole. She argues that the initial gendered separation of the public and private spheres in the organization of state and society produced an exclusively male concept of citizenship. Men were given the military role of defenders of the state, thereby acquiring a privileged and active status in national life. Women were invisible, did not have access to the state machinery and did not participate in national decision-making. Domestic concerns played little part in shaping "the national interest".

Zalewski (1995) and Enloe (1993) point out the extent to which beliefs about gender differences have been deliberately constructed in the security sphere. The ideas of the masculinity of war and the image of the macho soldier have reinforced the patriarchal order. The traditional exclusion of women from armed combat was a mechanism designed not primarily to protect them, but to protect male privileges (Zalewski, 1995). Beliefs and myths about masculinity and femininity act on their own, or are consciously manipulated by the authorities, in the process of escalating or terminating armed conflict.

Ann Tickner (1992) states "since women are frequently the first casualties in terms of economic hardship, it is possible to gain some new insights into relationship between militarism and structural violence" (p. 18). Nevertheless, feminist's theories would have to challenge the core concepts of international relations such as power, sovereignty and security that are associated with masculinity. If these concepts are examined and criticized by a feminist perspective, it would be helpful to reformulate those concepts in order to see new possibilities for resolve current insecurities (Tickner, 1992).

Feminist international relations scholars generally agree on the need to provide more holistic definitions of security, applicable to all of humanity. Tickner (1992), Peterson (1992) and Sylvester (1994), all point out the contradictions between state-centric projects of national security and global security. Human rights abuses and military threats are usually generated by the nation state itself. Effective environmental protection and management are beyond the capabilities of any one state. Finally, inequitable national and international economic systems are a fundamental source of human insecurity and suffering. However, the feminist critiques goes beyond these observations to emphasize the structural violence that produces gender inequalities and point out that "women's systemic insecurity is ... an internal as well as external dimension of state systems" (Peterson, 1992, p. 32).

Some scholars have shown that 80 per cent of all refugees and displaced persons are women and children who are vulnerable not only to the insecurity as refugees, but also to sexual violence and forced prostitution. Since 1985, gender considerations have been increasingly integrated into the design of refugee relief programs (Todaro, 2001; Ingham, 1995). The influence of these



ideas of is much evident in the United Nations Development Program's concept of "Human Security", which includes economic security, access to food and health services, personal security, political security and participation in community life (Todaro, 2001; Kardam, 1991). Now feminist perspectives are called to expose gender biases and research aspects of human behavior that are usually ignored in security studies.

In the case of some Latin American and Caribbean countries, from the early 1970s onwards, "there was some preoccupation with Cold War ideological issues, the security dimensions of US-Caribbean relations, regime security and territorial integrity. More recently, there has been growing recognition of the non-military threats to security, notably narcotrafficking, environmental disasters and destabilizing shifts in the global market economy" (Byron et al., 1998, p.218). In addition, Caribbean societies are increasingly aware of the pressures of their external environment on their internal security. Women's experiences indicate that the major sources of insecurity for them are internal (within the state and within the family). Feminist activist groups and researchers in the region have extensively documented the structural insecurity for many women that results from poverty, underdevelopment and the gendered division of labours (Byron et al., 1998).

Despite these experiences in Latin America that can be said, is the same pattern in most of the Less Developed Countries (LDC), there have been few attempts to integrate gender perspectives into explicitly international relations analyses of LDC's security issues.

From this view of the dichotomy of the relation man-woman in the vision of international relations, can make a series of reflections that encompasses the idea of the why approaches of gender contribute to the idea of an elective distribution of the prosperity of the global economy, which leads also to reflect the theme of feminine joins basically from the logic of inequality, and the effects on social cohesion.

The principle is based on the logic of social exclusion, and is by definition tends to be associated to factors over which outsiders have no control: ethno-racial origin, characteristics such as gender, age and physical capacity, and geographic location, for example: gender and ethno-racial origin are those which affect the greatest number of people excluded in the world. In terms of gender there have been significant advances in recent decades, especially in terms of access and educational attainment of the female population, gender remains an important variable of exclusion, particularly with regard to political and economic opportunities. Domestic violence, she herself many times product of the social pathologies of exclusion, affects disproportionately women and children, with the aggravating circumstance that the violence may spread then to the street, becoming a domestic phenomenon in a social phenomenon, and reproduces from generation to generation.

In terms of economic participation, although there has been a growing incorporation of women in the labor market due in part to advances in education, the conditions of employment of

women are often relatively unfavorable: they face unemployment rates higher than men, they are concentrated in a small number of occupations, they are over-represented in the informal sector with low levels of social protection, and continue to face significant wage gaps with respect to men. In many cases the labor laws that protect women rights of maternity and of access to certain occupations at high risk has produced unwanted effects, reducing their economic opportunities. There has also been an increase in the gaps between the women, being particularly of indigenous and African descent faced a worse situation.

Then that makes the vision of the incorporation of women in the public sphere in is made from the study of public policy and not through an integrated approach, therefore, a feminist perspective on security will prioritise issues associated with the achievement of justice, gendered militarism, human rights and social protection, therefore, it can be said that security under this perspective is more inclusive because it contemplate issues that are frequently neglected in the conventional International Relations Theory, which principally are focused on themes such as balance of power and prevention of war. This gendered point of view, will offer important alternatives for the achievement of a more comprehensive and complete security concept.

## Epistemologies

Epistemology (theory of knowledge) investigates the nature and conditions of knowledge. Feminist epistemologists are concerned to analyse the nature and position of knowers and the (gendered) politics of knowledge. Almost all feminist perspectives have been motivated by the common goal of attempting to describe and explain the sources of gender inequality, and hence women's oppression and to seek strategies to end them (Tickner, 1992).

Feminists see the classical tradition as an offshoot of, and proselytising device for, a political order that subordinates and excludes women. Thus Tickner's critique of "hegemonic masculinity" contends that "international politics is such a thoroughly masculinized sphere of activity that women's voices are considered inauthentic. The values and assumptions that drive the contemporary international system are intrinsically related to concepts of masculinity; privileging these values constrains the options available to states and their policy-makers" (Tickner, 1992, p. 408).

The traditional epistemologies in international relations exclude the possibility that women could be knowers or agents of knowledge, in this sense, feminist argued that "realism employs a distinctly masculinist way of knowing the world and then the sovereign man becomes the subject of knowledge" (True, 2001, p. 243).

Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1990), attempts to supplement the classical framework by considering women's contributions and experiences. But she does not devalue or reject the framework as such. Thus, Enloe (1993) looks at international diplomacy, geostrategic military alliances (as symbolized by military bases), international tourism, and First World - Third World

economic relations. The first two are hallmark concerns of the classical paradigm. The third and fourth derive from neo-Marxist and international political economy theories. In each case, Enloe (1993) presents innovative avenues of inquiry, and an intriguing reworking of perspectives that have grown stale. At this level the author explains that the personal is political, meaning, "relationship that were private or merely social are in fact infused with power, usually unequal power backed up by public authority" (Enloe, 1993, p. 457).

Her study of international diplomacy, for example, concentrates on the role of diplomatic wives in structuring the "informal relationships" that enable male diplomats "to accomplish their political tasks" (Enloe, 1990, p.98) are "vital to creating and maintaining trust between men in a hostile world" (Enloe, 1990, p.123) "negotiations *man-to-man* are most likely to go smoothly if they can take place outside official settings, in the *private* sphere of the home or at gatherings that include wives" (Enloe, 1990, p.114). She tries to create a methodology in which is possible to enlarge the conventional ways of knowing the truth of international politics. In this sense, Enloe (1990) proposes that with taking women's experiences of international politics, it would be possible to acquire a more realistic understanding of how international politics actually works.

On the other hand, Sylvester (1994) suggests three kinds of epistemologies: a) Empiricism and liberalism, b) Stand point and Radical-Cultural Politics and c) Social feminist Practice and Post-modern scepticism.

The first epistemology starts from the premise that "modern science provides a valuable way of knowing that activities of women in the world, and therefore, is a potentially helpful tool for recovering and valorising feminist contributions to civilization" (Sylvester, 1994, p. 31). Sylvester argues that in the empiricist persuasion there is something called good science and bad science, in where the former,

+can be thought of a sub-field of the critical social science in that it would expose the culture wide interest, values and assumptions that end up functioning as evidence behind the back of the natural and social science, meanwhile the latter is blinded to the ways in which it descriptions and explanations of its subject matters are shaped by the origins and consequences of its research practise and by the interest, desires and values promoted by such practices. (Sylvester, 1994, p. 31)

Therefore, it can be said that the feminist empiricist approach, seems to be more compensatory that transformational of the modern scientific world view. The same can be said for the liberal feminism politics that are closely associated with empiricist epistemology. Liberal feminism, seek women's equal rights in any working field without suffering any pay and status discrimination. Women should also enjoy the political fruits of citizenship through legal control over persons a property and also should have the opportunity to enter into male-market domains of high-level and high pay in jobs in the international institutions (Sylvester, 1994).

The second epistemology is related to Standpoints and Radical-Culture Politics. In feminist standpoints epistemology, the approach makes aware of women as an agent of knowledge and theory. Therefore, the women's experience can constitute the ground for more critical and universal theory of international relations (True, 2001). Radical-Cultural feminist, see women's subordination as universal, though taken different forms at different times. Also argue that the system of patriarchy is responsible for women's oppression (Sylvester, 1994; Baylis et al., 2001).

Finally, the third epistemology is related to Socialist feminist and Post-modern Scepticism. The former argue that women's position in society is determined by both structures of production in the economy and by structures in reproduction in the household. Therefore, socialist feminism tries to understand the position of women in their multiple roles in order to find a standpoint from which it would be able to explain their conditions. (Tickner, 1992). On the other hand, Post-modern feminist criticised the argument of standpoint arguing that, "a unified representation of women across class, racial, and cultural lines is an impossibility" (Tickner, 1992, p. 16). This is because feminism is based on the experiences of "white western women", and this can provoke the same dualising distinction that feminist object to in patriarchal discourse (Tickner, 1992; Runyan, 2000). "Post-modernism believe that a multiplicity of women's voices must be heard lest feminism itself and become one more hierarchical system of knowledge construction" (Tickner, 1992, p. 16).

In general, feminist has constructed a variety of approaches to International Relations. These proposals have demonstrated that there are other possibilities to understand the international relations framework and not only the traditional disciplines, such as liberalism and realism, in where the later has been not given any attention to gender as a category of analysis. Therefore, feminist epistemologies would contribute to the understanding of gender in International Relations Theory provided that they have the opportunity to develop their theories.

However, beyond these epistemological contributions, there is a part that is essential to understanding this difficult relationship between international relations and feminism or gender theories, and is the fact that finally this conflict is a political and academic and not scientific.

This can be concluded to the extent that not to include the feminist debate on theoretical reflection of international relations is due more to a practical resistance than theoretical (Nicolas, 2005). This refusal would correspond to a traditional view of the academic field of international relations, where is handled an irreconcilable division between theory and praxis, so are very radical positions from the methodology, so this reflection of linking with the theoretical views everyday social practices is not and removed a large part to the development of the incorporation of new perspectives in the field of international relations. (Tickner, 1997, 2005; Whitworth, 2001)

This would lead us to a reflection quite risky and controversial, to say that finally the academic field of international relations is very conservative in understanding the evolution of reality in



relation to its theoretical body, since “the main body of the discipline and its own institutional dimensions, remains impervious to its direct impacts” (Nicolas, 2005, p. 2) avoiding any process of change.

Would then not only from a theoretical debate, but part of an epistemological logic that goes beyond a discussion of concepts or methods of investigation or review of key concepts of international relations from a perspective of gender or feminist, but involves a sharing of power and domination of this discipline (Allen, 1998), so their fight from an epistemological point of view goes beyond the theoretical discussion and becomes a struggle for material and symbolic power, and includes the debate on issues that are studied, which is investigated and in general on the big decisions.

We can then say, “speak therefore not only forms of knowledge and their deformation, but also well-established nests in the various disciplines, and how the distribution of power and resources affects to the construction of knowledge in the discipline” (Nicolas, 2005, p. 3).

This would seem less, but it is not, since this would affect very specific issues in very specific terms, such as: the proportion of teachers and teachers in the teaching staff in relation to the proportion of men and women in the student body; the different expectations of promotion of women and men in certain universities; the distribution of academic posts in our departments, deaneries and rectors; the direction of research projects; prioritized areas, the design of the research, the selection of speakers participants in events or participation in congresses, contents of the course or the selected sources, among others (McAdam, 1988; Acker, 1990; Logan & Huntley, 2001).

Thus, the debate of epistemological status carries a theme of larger, which is the legitimization of the academic, theoretical and political practice of international relations, in an intellectual world dominated and still built by the masculine gender.

## Criticisms

There has been a controversy over the application of a feminist perspective in international relations. In order to answer the question “what is the value in adopting a feminist perspective on international relations?” is necessary to know the benefits of a feminist perspective as were described in the first section of this essay, but also is important to emphasize the limitation of feminist perspective on international relations.

One of the more generally point that has been criticized is as Ann Tickner states “feminist themselves are in danger of essentializing the meaning of women when they draw exclusively on experiences of western women” (Tickner, 1992, p. 16). It is clear, that western experiences cannot be used to explain the problems of non-western states, therefore, it will not be easy to apply a feminist approach across states or globally, because gender relations are not the same everywhere.

There has been an underestimation of the interplay of the global and local in the construction of gender relations. As True states "even while feminist international relations scholars are concerned foremostly with global politics, their applications of gender must be grounded in local analysis" (2001, p. 238).

Another point that has been criticized is the apparent confusion between sex and gender. Different feminist approaches have different views on gender relations, and how to change them so they do not routinely count against women. Gender is often used as synonym of women; some scholars in the international relations field have contended that the introduction of gender is just a code word of women.

Jones (1996) suggests that feminist scholars have focused on women to the exclusion of men in world politics because of their implicit feminist standpoint. In his view, the assumption that women are always victims and men oppressors has impoverished feminist analysis of important dimensions of the gendering process at the global level.

The great problem of the academic relationship between international relations and feminism, then is that it has reduced to encapsulate the debate to a simple distinction between sex or gender, or discuss the functionality of the feminist contributions to the study of international relations, under a logic of whether it benefits or weakens the discipline or the majority of the cases show that these problems affect only a minority and focused group who are women. This has unfortunately led to the vision of the public opinion, to reduce the complexity of the problem to a matter of victimization or aspects of human development for the feminine sector in the world.

This leads to a generalized idea about the problem of women, understanding them as an indifferent group, "to which equality is denied, but in which all would be identical despite their differences in age, class and race, among others, and likely to be the subject of a stereotyped treatment" (Nicolas, 2005, p. 5).

In this sense, retrieving a vision of a transversal vision that includes the complexity of international relations with a focus on gender that goes beyond treatment of power relations and gender feminist vision, which leads to a reflective of international reality analysis, proposing a feminized vision but not politicized from the point of view of the genre to create a new model of renewed knowledge of international relations.

The opportunities for change are spacious, and not only in the literature scientific of the feminist theoreticians in its diversity, but in the methodological recommendations, reference models and orientations of international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the OIW or, especially, from the European Union.

With the exposed above, it can be said that gender is not the key concept that could explain everything in international relations, also is not the main aspect of the international relations

phenomenon that it is foster to understand. As True states, "it is important to consider, how, why and when gender is a salient or most salient factor in making the world go round" (2001, p. 239). Therefore, gender is only a piece in order to resolve the complex puzzle of international relations.

## CONCLUSION

This essay has described some feminist perspectives on international relations, not only the way in which feminists have construct new epistemologies in order to rebuild the international relation theory, but also their limitations. After some analyses on these issues, it is possible to answer the main question: what is the value in adopting a feminist perspective on International Relations?

Transcend this debate that we have exposed is more than one political than academic in nature, it is the first step to propose a relation between both disciplines that allow us to give a new meaning to the analysis of the international situation, and for that, would be necessary to leave behind the analytical theoretical debates, and begin to select, design, or adapt practical methodologies that can be formalized and standardized to achieve the objective of gradual.

These methodologies are in the sense of achieving better and effective conditions to build a social, cultural, economic and institutional environment that contributes to the promotion of the social equality of gender. These strategies that often have been implemented by multinational bodies, and which have been applied to the most diverse areas of the economy, society and politics, we can inspire and enable us to go beyond the doctrinal debates. They can also allow us to identify opportunities to combine, collect and adapt other policy instruments and practical strategies of promotion and progress on equality, perfectly applicable to the disciplines of social sciences; understood them not only as discussion communities, but as true social institutions that are characterized by male resistance to adopt innovations that favour equality (Cockburn, 1991).

The idea of building a framework to generate public policy is very efficient, since it would better possibilities to implement in international relations to construct a frame script common, flexible, allowing to create an epistemology with a transversal approach to international relations. However, to this point, it is necessary to the splitting of the inescapable commitment of institutions and people who are involved in the fields of decision-making in the field of international relations. For this, it would be necessary to begin with a series of very specific requirements, such as:

- a) Political will; b) A specific policy of gender equality in the State, connecting the idea that the personal is political, and the State is international; c) Statistics giving the base a diagnosis; whether old statistics exploited with methodology of genre or new proposals

designed with such methodology; d) A thorough knowledge of the relations of gender and how it affects the International area; e) The involvement of the administration; f) Financial resources and humans; and g) The participation of women in decision-making processes. (Nicolas, 2005, p. 8)

And from these conditions, build public policies focused and designed specifically to solve the problem of the absence of a feminine vision of the field of international relations.

Feminists' theories can offer some new insights on the behaviour of the states and the needs of individuals, particularly those on the peripheries of the international system. A feminist perspective based on the experiences of women can add new dimensions to understand the world politics system.

Feminists international relations scholars seek to illuminate how the International Relations are a gender construction, in which both men and women are essential actors in the real world. They try to explain that gender has been always there constructing the international framework, but because there is a maleness on the International Relations Theory, it has been neglected. True (2001), argue that women have been excluded for International Political life and engendered International Relations.

As Brown, states:

a feminist theory of international relations is an act of political commitment to understanding the world from the perspective of socially subjugated. There is the need to identify the as yet unspecified relations between the construction of power and the construction of gender in international relations. (1998, p. 472)

A feminist perspective on International Relations would help to acquire a more realistic understanding of how it works. Also it would help to achieve those missing aspects that are not considered in the international policy and decision-making, such as human security.

In sum, the value for a feminist perspective on International Relations could be that it will introduce a humanitarian and more sensitive vision that would help to understand how the world actually works. But as was mention above, a feminist perspective is only a piece in order to resolve the complex puzzle of International Relations.

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