FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND “EPISTEMIC BLANK SPOTS”: ENTRENCHING HEGEMONY?

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ABSTRACT

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Feminist International Relations (IR) theory and literature critiques the traditional theoretical foundations of international politics, policy, and academia. Viewing the world as a dynamic set of socioeconomic systems and structures, feminists look at the foundations of these institutions, their interactions, and how they impact marginalized groups. Although given that a few of the most prominent feminist International Relations scholars share some of the same socioeconomic and regional roots as their counterparts within mainstream IR, these feminist theorists may have their own sociocultural epistemological issues. Using a critical discourse analysis, this study analyzed if—and how—the background of several leading feminist IR scholars affected their discourse, particularly as it related to their discussion of women outside of the “western” world. This study finds that “western” hegemonic discourse is challenged and entrenched in various ways, most notably in the use of hierarchical dualisms and dichotomies and how they inherently (dis)privilege specific societies.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Feminist International Relations (IR) theory and literature focuses on critiquing the traditional theoretical foundations of international politics, policy, and academia. Feminist scholars argue that using a feminist approach provides a deeper, more complex analysis, which highlights previously unseen issues and consequences. Viewing the world as a dynamic set of socioeconomic systems and structures, feminists look at the foundations of these institutions and how they interact to impact the most marginalized groups. Although, given that some of the most prominent feminist International Relations scholars share similar socioeconomic roots as their counterparts within mainstream IR, these feminist scholars may have their own sociocultural epistemological issues. This study will analyze if—and how—the background of feminist IR scholars affects their discourse, particularly as it relates to their discussion of women outside of the “western” world. First, however, to grasp the importance of a feminist perspective to International Relations, it is necessary to give a brief background of the development of feminist IR literature and where it is situated in IR theory and mainstream international relations discourse.

The Foundations of International Relations Theory

International Relations is a sub-field of Political Science which focuses on the interactions and relationships between global political entities, including states, multi-lateral institutions, and non-state actors. The development of International Relations theory is characterized by three dominant schools of thought: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Realism is perhaps, the single most significant theoretical paradigm in IR, as it has shaped how a majority of scholars and policymakers in the west have viewed international politics since 1945.
In addition, realism is the foundation and/or reference point for the latter two paradigms. Realism posits that the international system is comprised of sovereign actors (states) under an anarchical structure, which puts these actors in an ever-present struggle for power. Liberalism accepts the realist tenet of anarchy, but rejects the assumption that the structure of the international system must end with a constant power struggle; and, anarchy can be mitigated with cooperation and transparency (such as operating through the use of intergovernmental organizations, treaties, and agreements) (Haar, 2009). Constructivism, however, challenges realism altogether. Based upon Critical Theory, constructivism argues that the international system and relations between states is the result of “constructed” behavior—rather than containing inherent characteristics. The behavior of states is (re)produced, not an objective, static truth. Essentially, states are in a struggle for power because that is the view that has been projected upon international politics; however, this does not need to be the case. The international system is imbued with the characteristics given to it by its actors; this system can be about power and war, but it can also be about collaboration and peace.

_Feminism and IR Theory: The Gendered State_

Feminist International Relations developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2011), during this third great debate within political science research. As critical theorists set out to challenge the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of realism, feminists began taking a gendered analysis to IR with this new theoretical approach. Feminist IR scholars sought to spark debate about “finding the women” and “where are the women?” in the mainstream field of traditional IR research (Tickner, 2014; Enloe, 2014). It should be noted that gender and the impact of women had been introduced in development studies about a decade earlier in the 1970s. However, since development studies is often grounded in economic theory,
it can be separate from IR, which is based in political theory. In fact, at the first Women and 
International Relations Conference held in 1988 at the London School of Economics, feminist IR 
scholar J. Ann Tickner noted that due to many of the guest speakers talking about women’s role 
in development, “there was little material that we would call IR in the disciplinary sense” (2014, 
p. xvi). The feminist IR work that developed around a decade later, however, took on hegemonic 
masculinity in international politics and challenged the notions of the state as an objective actor. 

Since men have (and continue) to dominate the institutions of traditional politics, their 
points of view are what determines both intra- and inter-state actions. Feminist IR asserts that 
states are gendered because men and masculinity have shaped state behavior, and subsequently, 
the international system (Peterson, 1992; Enloe, 2014; Tickner, 2014). Additionally, this feminist 
approach also challenged the notion of “high politics” and its focus on security issues, as well as, 
IR approaching the state as an abstract, monolithic, sovereign actor. Feminists argue that what is 
happening below the state-level impacts state behavior, such as internal conflicts between 
domestic groups or actors. For example, the competing ideologies between conservative and 
liberal political parties within the United States Senate has meant that the U.S. has not 
ratified certain global treaties, such as United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All 
Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As only one of six countries that have not 
ratified CEDAW and given its place in the international system, the U.S. is not in the company 
of other countries one would expect. Instead, other countries which have not ratified CEDAW 
are Iran, Somalia and Sudan. In other words, states are not as autonomous or objective as IR 
theory assumes (Peterson, 1992, p. 3).¹ Feminist IR scholars sought to use this view of the state

¹ Consequently, this feminist view of states also supports the existence of a false dichotomy between International 
Relations and Comparative Politics (the study of intrastate actors, behaviors, and decision-making below the state 
level).
and international politics as a way to highlight the absence of women in all areas of international relations, including politics and academia. Furthermore, these scholars wanted to bring awareness that including women and making gendered analysis an integrated part of IR theory would produce more substantive work designed to tackle some of the links between international affairs and economics, such as the persistence of poverty and the creation of better social policies.

*Appreciation without Inclusion: The Marginalization of Feminist IR*

International Relations has *implicitly* ignored women under the assumption that its theories were agendered and applicable to all people, equally. In the past 30 years, feminist IR scholars have actively sought to engender IR and resist marginalization of their research. The introduction of gender as a means of analysis to International Relations was, overall, widely accepted as a useful tool; however, feminist IR scholars have pointed out that this did not lead to mainstream research *understanding* the importance and impact of gender to IR theory and incorporating it into the field. Conducting a feminist or gendered analysis does not simply mean creating a “gender variable” and adding it into current research methodologies. Scholars must delve deeper into the construction of masculinities and femininities and how these are being enacted in the international political system. In her famous 1997 essay, “You Just Don’t Understand,” Tickner laments this very notion, arguing other disciplines have already begun to critically think about the social constructs of the state, global actors, and gender. It is the field of IR that would most benefit from looking through a gendered lens. In a later essay Tickner again advocates for a less rigid approach to the discipline: “We must chart new courses rather than try to fit women's encounters with international relations into existing frameworks” (1999 p. 48). Ten years after “You Just Don’t Understand,” Feminist IR theorist Marysia Zalewski noted the
continued marginalization of gender in IR work in “Do We Understand Each Other Yet,” arguing the lack of change was because “the ‘doing’ of feminism is simultaneously the ‘undoing’ of the discipline of IR” (2007, p. 303). A feminist analysis is troubling—if not threatening—to mainstream theorists because it would require a deconstruction of the three traditional paradigms. IR scholar, R.B.J. Walker takes the argument further noting that the slow progress isn’t simply a matter of the misunderstanding of feminist analysis, but a matter of the discipline’s resistance to any major shifts in theoretical analysis as a whole:

“It is a matter of knowing how it is that questions about gender, or indeed about class, culture, philosophy, or human identity, have been so easily marginalized, subverted, and co-opted in and by this particular discipline. In short, attempts to juxtapose feminism and international relations quickly run up against a much broader and more insidious politics of forgetting, against a discourse that has made all forms of critique more or less impossible within this specific discipline—and possible only within sharply circumscribed horizons in modern social and political life in general” (1992, p. 192).

In the post-Cold War era with the rise of diverse international actors Murphy (1996) suggests that there is a “new audience for international relations” and thus, previous approaches and methodologies may need to be reassessed in terms of their utility. Multiple IR theorists have lamented this very same issue, which will be discussed in further detail in the literature review.

In attempting to critique IR research through a gendered lens, feminist scholars must continually be mindful of another epistemological issue that occurs not only within mainstream IR literature, but also within the feminist paradigm: the prevalence of “western” scholars and
how this impacts research and discourse. The dominance of western scholars creates the potential for the world to be viewed through their sociocultural frame, leading to troublesome “epistemic blank spots.”

As the current geopolitical and academic climates exist within a “First World/Third World” (or Developed/Developing) dichotomy—a dichotomy created by asymmetric dominance of the west—it is often the case that the research and literature of scholars in the First World creates the narratives of those in the Third World (Bilgin 2010; Dingli 2015; Mohanty 1988). Since International Relations literature and research is concentrated in the “western” world—and even some European scholars have complained of a dominance by their U.S. counterparts—this is the research that is published and widely cited; therefore, creating the discourse (Maliniak, Oakes, Peterson, & Tierney, 2011; Strange, 1995). This thesis seeks to analyze feminist IR scholarship in terms of the discourse that is being used. How is the scholarship discussing women in the “developing” world? Is a “western hegemonic discourse” being created? And if so, how is this discourse being (re)produced?

Furthermore, the research will link this discourse to development policy and determine if/how the language that scholars use impacts the literature and proposed policy solutions to problems women face in the Global South. The proposed research is intended to be more explanatory than prescriptive and attempts to spotlight an epistemological concern in feminist IR literature. This paper uses a more reflexive3 approach to explore any existing epistemological challenges of prominent feminist scholars within the field to determine if and/or how the popular texts in feminist IR may create and perpetuate a problematic discourse. By analyzing the use of

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3 The notion that one’s own culture and socialization impacts their world view (and thus, their research).
language in feminist IR, this study will highlight the importance and/or necessity of reflexivity in feminist international relations literature.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

At the nexus of feminist theory and International Relations, feminist IR scholarship draws its strengths and weaknesses from both disciplines. Scholars have criticized their respective fields due to the exclusion of voices from those in the Global South or “Third World” (Ackerly, 2000; Enloe, 2000; Mohanty, 2003; Sholock, 2012; Woodhull, 2003). International Relations scholars have argued that not only is IR centered in the west, but mainly in the United States. In her Presidential Address to the International Studies Association quarterly journal, Susan Strange bluntly stated: “American scholars may not be aware that they need a hearing-aid. Non-Americans have no doubt of it” (1995, p. 293). Again, Walker sums up the issue of stagnation—and perhaps, resistance—to both feminist theory and broader global perspectives within mainstream International Relations, candidly stating:

“The attempt to develop feminist perspectives on world politics cannot be restricted to the critique of theories of international relations alone. It is not by accident that feminist critiques have only established a minimal presence in this specific discipline. The extent to which this specific discipline has remained impervious to almost any form of philosophical or political critique gives some indication of its role in generating and legitimating what is taken to be crucial and incontrovertible about political life within the sovereign state.” (1992, p. 180)

Yet, in the 20 years that have passed since Walker’s critique, IR has repeated the same shortcomings and scholars have continued their critiques, arguing that IR is ethnocentric. Despite competing theoretical frameworks and significant intellectual differences between different
schools of thought within mainstream International Relations, IR theory remains grounded in “western experiences and intellectual history” (Rother, 2012, p. 59). This leaves many scholars calling into question the accuracy and adequacy of IR research and theoretical frameworks (Rother, 2012; Dingli, 2015; Bilgin, 2010). Some academics have even attempted to develop a “non-western” IR theory (Acharya & Buzan, 2007; Bilgin, 2008; Smith K., 2009); however, the previously developed mainstream theories remain the focus of IR theory, as the hub of production is in the western world, and the United States in particular.

Furthermore, while critiques of hegemonic thought are problematic for both disciplines, it is troubling for feminists (of any academic discipline), as feminism is both a theory and social movement that seeks to give voice to historically marginalized groups and individuals that have been silenced. Feminist scholar Nelly Stromquist, who focuses on gender and international development education, notes this “dual nature” of the paradigm, which is different from many theoretical paradigms: “At its core, feminism…is a theory of power relations…and it is a movement seeking social justice” (2000, p. 419). Recent surveys of feminist and gender scholars further support this concept of feminism’s dual nature. The Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations (TRIP) at the College of William & Mary conducts surveys analyzing the relationships between research, teaching, and policy and politics. The most recent TRIP results showed that feminists see their work as having real-world policy implications and prescriptions at a greater percentage than those in other sub-fields (Maliniak, Oakes, Peterson, & Tierney, 2011). Despite these views, the link between academia and policy can be weak in terms of a global perspective. Thus, western feminists must also be conscious of their own positions of power, relative to the women existing outside of these bounds. Feminists have incorporated the term “reflexivity” into their research, which refers to a researcher remaining conscious of his or
her relationship to the field of study, and the ways in which one’s sociocultural practices and privilege will always influence the lens in which s/he sees the world. In other words, there is a certain extent to which research cannot be truly objective. Such reflexivity is important as the current discourse and conversations in feminism focus on deconstructing hegemony.

Third Wave Feminism: Decolonizing Discourse and Global “Feminisms”

From its earliest roots, feminism and feminist theory set out to analyze and question the patriarchal and engendered structures of daily life. The current “Third Wave” of feminism began in the late 1980s and early 1990s and is marked by discussions of inclusivity of social identities that were largely absent in the first and second waves. Critiquing the prior feminist movements is not only what distinguishes third wave feminism, but it has been argued that third wave feminists specifically position themselves “against” the previous discourse, as opposed to building on it (Mann & Huffman, 2005, p. 57). Contemporary scholars and activists have highlighted the importance that feminist analysis should not be about “woman,” but “women.” Third Wave feminists stress the importance of the multiple facets to one’s identity, which include race, culture, class, sexual orientation, and so forth. Without considering the intersections of these various social identities, a feminist analysis is void of substantive understanding of the inequalities women face, producing superficial progress towards gender equality and social justice. While third wave feminists have their differences, their discourse contains common threads or theoretical concepts, two of which are intersectionality and post-colonialism. As these concepts are rooted in decentering hegemonic thought, they have been integrated into the development of multiple “feminisms” or strands of feminism around the world.

The theory of “intersectionality” is a groundbreaking concept that has shaped feminism for the past two decades. Officially coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a leading feminist scholar of
critical race theory, intersectionality argues that various systems of oppression have different—and often harsher—impacts on individuals with multiple (or intersecting) social identities.\textsuperscript{4} Furthermore, intersectionality studies demonstrate how these systems interact and mutually reinforce each other to produce compounding effects of oppression and discrimination (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw). Rooted in Black Feminist thought, intersectionality has highlighted the distinct experiences of women of color. Furthermore, the development of Black Feminism emphasized how white, middle-class women were often presented as the faces of feminist theories and movements—especially within liberal and second wave feminisms, and therefore, (problematically) were its main subjects of focus. The issue lay not simply in the active exclusion of women of color, but in passive universalism. Thus, feminists must be careful not to assume homogeneity in experiences and perceptions. A feminist analysis is meant to give insight into the \textit{multiple} power dynamics that can be created by patriarchy \textit{and} society and culture—and, subsequently, works to undo this creation. It is important that patriarchy and sexism are not implicitly treated as the “ultimate oppression,” which can lead to the false notion that all women experience this oppression in the same way, and not in varying degrees under the hierarchies of racism, classism, nationalism, and other socio-cultural structures (Thompson, 2002, p. 337). However, because a majority of feminist scholarship has been developed in “western” academia, various assumptions have been made that \textit{implicitly} support a “First World” neo-colonial, hegemonic discourse that can passively silence the variation in women’s lived experiences.

In “Under Western Eyes,” post-colonial and transnational theorist Chandra Mohanty critiques the assumptions and politics that have been created through “western feminism.” Mohanty argues that feminism has been dominated by the perspectives of “white, middle class”

\textsuperscript{4} It should be noted that such analyses and notions were in development in previous decades by first and second wave feminists, however, intersectionality was not fully conceptualized until Crenshaw in the 1980s.
women and has implicitly led to a “suppression of heterogeneity” of women of color around the world (1988, p. 333). This type of discourse used towards women in the “Third World” leads to the assumptions that they all have the same wants and needs (Ackerly, 2000; Mohanty, 2003; Verschuur, Guérin, & Guétat-Bernard, 2014). Likewise, Vrushali Patil asserts that a “traditional feminist” concept of patriarchy that strictly focuses on women and men (without thought to which women and which men) has played “an indispensable part of an emerging problematization of simplistic, monolithic accounts of gender oppression in general” (Patil, 2013, p. 847). Feminists must be careful in assuming which values—if any—transcend cultures.

Ethel Tungohan, whose scholarly work looks at gender and social movements, argues that “women's rights, though a persuasive, powerful, and valuable catalyzing trope, assumes a common agenda for all women” and “fails to consider the effects of class, culture, and geographical positioning, which consequently negates serious analysis of the implications of gender alongside issues of cultural rights, indigenous land claims, and socio-economic issues” (Tungohan, 2010). Contemporary debates around global feminist theory and embracing difference involve Islamic feminism and discussions concerning the veil (Moghadam, 2002; Haddad, 2011; Mernissi, 1987); Chicana feminism (Anzaldúa, 1997); Native American feminism (Smith A. , 2005); and, numerous transnational feminist theories and global movements.

While Post-colonial, transnational, and global feminisms have similarities, they also have their differences. Post-colonial feminism, much like its name implies, is focused on bringing to the fore the voices of marginalized women around the world (Mishra, 2013). Transnational feminist theory is concerned with the effects of globalization, particularly with an intersectional focus (Gupta, 2006; Patil, 2013). Global feminism, as its name implies, is primarily concerned with the notion of a “global sisterhood” and enacting feminism on a broader, global scale (Singh,
The common thread in these three strands of feminist theory, however, is the aim to build coalitions through the celebration of differences. The acknowledgement and appreciation of these various identities and lived experiences is central to strengthening solidarity.

Post-colonial and transnational theories continue to heavily influence various global feminisms. The task of decolonizing discourse and creating an inclusive dialogue has developed out of the need for women of color around the world to work against what they see as “western feminism” which is often presented simply as “feminism” (Chowdury, 2009; Gupta, 2006; Haddad, 2011; Mohanty, 1988; Mohanty, 2003; Tungohan, 2010). These global feminisms work to present counter narratives through lived experiences and different sociocultural ideals. Working to move beyond the necessities of “talking” and “talking back” (DeVault, 1996; hooks, 1989; Smith S., 1993) to one another is central to the task of coalition building between western feminism and global feminisms. Building and working across differences is the ultimate task of feminism as a broad movement in order to challenge and deconstruct the various institutions of patriarchal oppression. However, western feminist discourses can often take a paternalistic—and at times, imperialistic—approach, which works against these efforts.

*The Questions of Coalitions and Solidarity*

Transnational feminist scholar Elora Chowdury, critiques Western feminists as having often taken the “benevolent first world feminist position” and argues that global feminism has recreated the imperial and colonialist hegemony entrenching “a narrative justification of western liberal notions of democracy and used in the service of reconstructing/reconsolidating its civilizing mission” (2009, p. 52). She further argues that “global feminism using a universal human rights paradigm constructs for itself the role of the heroic savior of women in non-western societies” (53). Transnational feminist scholar Winnie Woodhull offers the same
critique, arguing that “if anything can be said with certainty about third wave feminism, it is that it is mainly a first world phenomenon generated by women who, like their second wave counterparts, have limited interest in women’s struggles elsewhere on the planet” (2003, p. 76). She goes on to claim that Third Wave feminists “mistakenly assume that their sincere appeal to feminist action, self-help, and solidarity really addresses a worldwide audience…paying lip service to the importance of third world feminist struggles without bothering to investigate the ways in which those struggles are linked with their own” (p. 77). Building off these sentiments, Tungohan not only takes western Third Wave/global feminisms to task for often ignoring intersectionality and creating a global picture of women without inclusivity, but also addresses the problem of creating a global sisterhood. Tungohan claims the concept is too broad in scope to effectively address issues of women around the world (2010). In moving global and transnational feminism forward, she argues that “the challenge now is to see how feminism can promote the interests of diverse individuals and groups of women in a way that is cognizant of power dynamics” (2010, p. 112), and, to examine how these dynamics play out or function differently in the geopolitical arena and multilateral institutions. This concept is central to enacting transnational feminist approaches.

Transnational feminist Jyotsna Gupta, whose work focuses on gender and diversity, noted that in the past two decades, “The category ‘woman’ has been deconstructed to take cognizance of the differences among women” (2006). Unlike Chowdury’s critique of both global and transnational feminisms, Gupta sees transnational feminism as different in that it “envisages the desirability and possibility of a political solidarity of feminists across the globe transcending race, class, sexuality and national boundaries, based on the concrete experiences of transnational organizing of women” (2006, p. 25). That being said, when it comes to the potential for feminist
solidarity there are common grounds such as violence against women, global trafficking of women and children, gender justice, and other egregious violations of human security. However, other matters, such as “services to the global South, or religious fundamentalist prescriptions regarding dress codes…and reproductive rights” often sees women on opposing sides (p. 26). A good example of this is Muslim women and discussions around the veil. It seems that western feminists—and the western world in general—make a far bigger deal out of the veil and the notion of oppression than Muslim women themselves (Chowdury, 2009; Haddad, 2011; Mernissi, 1987).

All of this literature highlights the fact that various strands of feminist theory should be taking an international (and intra-national) approach, but they are not. Gender and political science scholar Aili Tripp, who specializes in women’s movements and transnational feminism, quotes a leading US advocate for women’s rights and human rights in the United Nations and other international policy circles, as stating “not enough of the theory [feminism] is being related to feminist practice . . . the way that I see theory being discussed in the university often seems to ignore the concrete struggles . . . of most women in the world” (2010, p. 195). Marginalized individuals and groups are often presented with limited or singular narratives of their identities and lived experiences. It is in this vein that my research is focused on a discursive analysis of western feminist International Relations scholarship and examines how the literature of western feminist IR scholars potentially creates and/or frames the narratives of women in the developing world.

_Feminist Theory in International Relations_

Feminist International Relations literature has primarily focused on mainstreaming gendered IR work within the field (Tickner, 2014), calling for new methodologies and broader
inclusion of gendered subject matter into the discipline (Grant & Newland, 1991; Shepherd, 2015; Tickner, 1999; Youngs, 2004; Zalewski, 2007). Prominent feminist IR scholar Ann Tickner sees feminist IR scholarship as: a) challenging the foundations of the discipline, b) critiquing its foundational myths; and c) reconstructing some of the core concepts of the field (1999, p. 44). This is doubly important as some have pointed out the inadequacy of IR theory as a whole: “The categories of international relations theory…reify the ethnocentric hubris of particular cultures” (Walker, 1992, p. 183). A feminist gendered analysis works to rewrite women's experiences from within these new conceptual frameworks. Though feminist scholars seek to show the benefits of viewing global politics through a gendered lens, it is also important to consider the producers of knowledge and research in terms of culture. This reflexivity is the unification of feminism and international relations. Woodhull importantly argues, “In the increasingly globalized world that we have inhabited at least since the 1990s, it is essential that feminism be conceived and enacted in global terms” (2003, p. 78). Feminist scholars acknowledging their own positions of privilege lays the ground for “effective coalition-building across racial and geopolitical inequities” (Sholock, 2012, p. 3). Leading feminist IR scholars J. Ann Tickner and Cynthia Enloe, along with Craig Murphy, echo such sentiments and have argued that we need to “recast” international relations literature to include the perspectives of different women (Enloe, 2004; Murphy, 1996; Tickner, 2005). Enloe argues the importance of recognizing multiple structures of hegemony: “Conducting a feminist gender analysis requires investigating power: what forms does power take? Who wields it? How are some gendered wieldings of power camouflaged so they do not look like power?” (2014, p. 9). However, feminist IR literature has not been studied in terms of a detailed discourse analysis, despite some of the existing epistemological concerns.
Some IR scholars have made it a point to emphasize the stories of women in the developing world and acknowledge their significance to the overall discourse (Ackerly, 2000; Enloe, 2000; Enloe, 2014; Jabri & O'Gormann, 1999); there has been less emphasis, though, on identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing a discourse that arises from the socio-cultural disparities present in the field of feminist IR theory. Murphy argues that “the knowledge needed…must come from the critique of existing ways in which the experience of women has been included within a field, a critique that points out how such studies may have obscured issues of race, class, and other forms of difference” (pp. 534-535). Mohanty also argues for this examination of privilege: “western feminist writing on women in the third world must be considered in the context of the global hegemony of western scholarship - i.e., the production, publication, distribution and consumption of information and ideas” (1988, p. 64). While beneficial from a scholarly and intellectual standpoint, Murphy questions the feasibility of such an inclusive approach. As traditional International Relations research is focused on theory-building, this requires abstraction and simplification. There is the continual issue of wanting to reduce the world—and thus, its people—into smaller, easy-to-analyze, parts. This approach creates a need for a certain level of homogenization. Perhaps, however, mainstream IR has fallen into the habits of traditional research methods and interests.

As feminist IR theorist Abigail Ruane notes, “even good faith efforts to pursue more inclusive interests can be limited…not because of bad faith, but because of lack of imagination or an inability to relate” (2011, pp. 52-53). She further argues that even when attempts at inclusiveness are made, certain (“often elite”) interests still retain prioritization. Tickner repeats these thoughts, postulating that even as the field notes the absence of women, it will only add a famous few scholars to the curriculum: “While these additions provide role models for women,
they do nothing to change the discipline in ways that acknowledge that anything can be learned from women's experiences” (1992, p. 143). Where many have left the question of feasibility open (Murphy, 1996; Tungohan, 2010), Ruane suggests a model based upon “inclusive borders and inclusive roots” (2011), where decreasing hegemony can be seen as a two-step process: “pursuing interests with more inclusive borders” and then using this “as a foundation to redefine interests more substantively” (p. 49). Again, Tickner echoes the same sentiments noting that after the “famous few” have been mainstreamed, eventually this will make way for a variety of women’s voices and experiences to be added to the literature (1992, p. 144). Thus, Feminist IR literature has (at minimum) two obstacles to overcome: (1) continuing to push for acceptance among mainstream international relations scholarship; and, (2) diversifying the representation of women and perspectives represented within the literature.

While this paper doesn’t address feasibility or how to ensure the inclusion of different voices, multiple perspectives are inarguably necessary. Lack of inclusion (whether intentional or not) contributes to creating a hegemonic discourse; and, in turn, influences the policy literature that may be developed from this discourse. The best solution for ensuring that differences are represented in the literature is continually being aware of who is producing the literature and the language being used. If the field of feminist IR theory is repeating the epistemic power of western scholars, it is implicitly supporting and (re)producing a hegemonic discourse that already silences marginalized voices.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis has two objectives: 1) to identify if there is a “western hegemonic discourse” within feminist International Relations literature; and, 2) identify how this discourse impacts women’s development policy literature. As such, the most appropriate research method would be
a *qualitative critical discourse analysis* (CDA). Rooted in post-positivism, discourse analyses study how language is used and how it (re)produces the world. The discursive study will serve as a form of critical theorizing of the knowledge/power nexus in feminist IR (Milliken, 1999, p. 241). It should be noted, however, that the research will not simply analyze the presence of a western hegemonic discourse, but also identify language actively working against hegemony. In order to increase validity, it is equally as important that the study seek out language that cautions against universality, acknowledges intersectionality, opposes the creations of “otherness,” and advocates for sociocultural inclusivity.

**What is Discourse Analysis?**

In its most basic definition, discourse analysis is the study of language in use; or, the study of “talk and text.” This definition, however, does not get to the “why.” Why is discourse an important tool? What can be learned from such an analysis? Researching discourse provides insight into how language gives meaning and constructs social realities. Language is not simply a tool that we have been given to use; it is a dynamic set of tools that produce and reproduce the world in which we live. Whether used passively or actively, language gives meaning; creates meaning; entrenches, and changes meaning in sociocultural contexts.

Using discourse as a method of analysis is grounded in the work of Michel Foucault, who was interested in the mutually reinforcing connection between knowledge and power.

“In any society there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of
power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and
on the basis of this association” (1980, p. 93).

While Foucault was more concerned with rules, systems, and institutions, discourse analysis has
branched off into studying all aspects of society. Unlike a statistical analysis, a discourse analysis
is not meant to “predict or control” or even to “capture the truth of reality”—as there are no
objective truths—but, instead to “offer an interpretation or version which is inevitably partial”
(Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001, pp. 11-12). Additionally, various types of discourse analyses
and methods have been developed.

A critical discourse analysis is particularly concerned with studying dominance in social
and political context (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 2) and sees language-in-use as “always part and
parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices…that always have implications
for inherently political things like status, solidarity…and power” (Gee, 2011, p. 68). In order to
analyze the potential creation and perpetuation of a “western” hegemonic discourse, the
genealogical method of CDA will be the most applicable. This method will allow for an
evolutionary discursive analysis and track the development of discourse throughout feminist IR
and women’s development policy. Additionally, the study is analyzing if/how the selected
groundbreaking feminist IR texts have influenced the overall feminist IR discourse, as well as
discourse in women’s development policy. Taking this into account the research is not only
genealogical, but can also be described as longitudinal; not only analyzing the discursive
literature within two different fields, but also between them. This will in turn create the potential
for further study into the questions of how these two fields are linked/delinked and why this is
occurring.
Conceptualization and Operationalization

First, it is necessary to define what is meant by “western” when we say “western hegemonic discourse” or “western scholars” or “western ideologies.” Western is polymorphous and often depends on the context in which it is being used. For example, economically speaking, certain countries fall on a “western axis” per se, such as Japan or Singapore, but culturally are not considered western. Additionally, despite its geographic implication, western does not mean there is a specific line in which we can draw and identify which countries encompass the west. This research is only concerned with western culture (which will also be further broken down). Western culture is taken to mean countries whose populations are primarily composed of those with white, European ancestry whose societies are similarly derived from European culture, norms, and ideals—or, Eurocentric.

Second—and a very important point—“western” does not necessarily encompass all people within the borders of these countries at all times, in all contexts. As with the idea of Eurocentric, “western” refers to the white individuals in these countries. Two things support this notion: women of color feminisms that have been created within western countries; and, anti-western scholarship and literature. “Black Feminism” and “Chicana Feminism” are movements that developed in the United States (a western country), but are concentrated in sociocultural groups that exist outside the dominant, Eurocentric culture, and thus, outside the dominant discourse. In fact, the discourse from this literature often challenges the very same aspects of hegemony criticized in non-western scholarship (Chowdury, 2009; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw). When women in the “Third World” and non-western countries refer to western feminists, they

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5 It should be noted that—much like societies—discourses do not exist in a vacuum. “Discourses are not ‘units’ with clear boundaries,” and discourse(s) can influence the thoughts of others, which in turn, influences their discourse (Gee, 2011, p. 36).
often specifically mention or depict white women (Bilgin, 2010; Haddad, 2011; Mohanty, 1988; Mohanty, 2003; Chowdury, 2009). This indicates a specific image of what “western” means and looks like to those outside the west. Now, this is not to say that these individuals do not recognize or disregard the sociocultural heterogeneity of those in western countries. However, when it comes to the dissemination of dominant feminist discourses, white women were the faces of the movement (Chowdury, 2009; Crenshaw; Sholock, 2012). Thus, in its simplest definition and for the sake of this research, “western” denotes sociocultural norms, ideals, values, and terms rooted in a white, Eurocentric society. This now moves the research to two important questions before detailing the methodology: (1) what are these “western” norms, ideals and values (i.e. how are they defined)? And, (2) how can these be deduced and categorized?

Western normative ideals have not necessarily been defined by the west, but by those outside of it. This is because western society has often assumed its values were universal to humanity; however, many non-western individuals have stated differently. Furthermore, in non-western, post-colonial discourse scholars have argued that the west often sees the world through its own gaze. These notions of “universalism” and “framing” are what will guide the categorization of the data. A simpler way of thinking about this is that the analysis is looking for both the presence of and the absence of particular language. Does the literature make mention of and acknowledge the heterogeneity of societies? How often is this mentioned? How are individuals in these societies being discussed? Is the need for inclusivity acknowledged? There are particular concepts to take into consideration:

- Reflexive/Reflexivity
- Intersectional/ity
  - Race/Ethnicity
These categories serve as a thematic “coding framework” which involves the use of “theory, definitions and inductive injunction to catalogue all the categories” (Allan, 2016, p. 39) that create a relationship to the idea of “western” discourse. That being said, as the texts are read and re-read various categorizations will develop and categories may also change. Critical discourse analysis is in the hermeneutic tradition, not meant to be static, but also informed by the texts. Due to this method, there is no clear demarcation between data collection and analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Furthermore, while gathering "count" will be more straightforward, answering the "how" is the true inductive challenge that will be the heart of the analysis. This step is the part that reveals meanings and use, moving the research from "categories to discursive formation" (Allan, 2016, p. 39). For this purpose, a framework developed by Literacy Studies scholar James Paul Gee will be used.

The “how” portion of the research is guided by the interaction between five discursive concepts, or what Gee calls “tools of inquiry” (2011). First, intertextuality, which argues that texts can “unconsciously or implicitly invoke other texts due to the dominance of certain

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6 How the authors/texts discuss and navigate these particular dichotomies will be interesting because the language and terms to discuss these differences is not heavily integrated into “mainstream” IR discourse, however alternatives have been proposed by non-western scholars (Mohanty, 2003; Esteva & Prakash, 1998).
discourses, texts, and language norms that may be pervasive, if subtly so” (Ackerly & True, Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science, 2010, p. 210). Second, there are conversations or “debates in society or within specific social groups over focused issues” in which there is a consensus over the multiple “sides to take.” Third, the notion of situated meanings, which are the “meanings words and phrases take on in actual contexts of use.” Fourth, the use of social languages or “any variety or style of speaking or writing associated with a socially situated identity of any sort.” Finally, there is the concept of figured worlds which are theories, stories, models, or images of “a simplified world which captures what is taken to be typical or normal about people, practices (activities), things, or interactions.” These five concepts are necessary to give a whole picture of a discourse analysis. Furthermore, Gee argues that any discourse analytic should ideally seek to fulfill seven specific “tasks.” Revolving around the five discursive analytic concepts, these tasks will serve as “building blocks” to guide the analysis:

1. Significance: How are they (the concepts) used to build relevance or significance for things and people in context?

2. Practices (Activities): How are they being used to enact practice/s or activity/ies in context?

3. Identities: How are they being used to enact and depict identities?

4. Relationships: How are they being used to build and sustain (or change and destroy) social relationships?

5. Politics: How are they being used to create, distribute, or withhold social goods or to construe particular distributions of social goods as “good” or “acceptable” or not?
(6) Connections: How are they being used to make things and people connected or relevant to each or irrelevant or disconnected from each other?

(7) Sign Systems and Knowledge: How are they being used to privilege or disprivilege different sign systems (language, social language, other sorts of symbol systems) and ways of knowing? (Gee, 2011, pp. 121-122)

While the research will not be able to answer in full detail how each of the five discursive concepts impact each building task for the texts—which amount to 35 questions for each of the seven texts—the critical discourse analysis will attempt to address these concepts in some way. This will at least give some consideration to the use of these objects of discourse, if only as background, to create a whole picture.

Lastly, keeping in line with feminist ethics in research and reflexivity (Ackerly & True, 2010), the situated identity of the researcher (myself) should be mentioned. This is particularly important in the efforts to identify elements of a “western” discourse because I am citizen of the United States. Naturally, there may be some norms, attitudes, ideals, and values that I may not identify as western, but could be categorized as such. Thus, there is the potential to have my own sociocultural “epistemic blank spots.”

Methodology

The cornerstone of the research will be joint qualitative discourse analyses on (a) feminist International Relations literature and (b) global development policy literature on women. The first part of the analysis will identify if there is language that helps to create a “western hegemonic discourse” within feminist International Relations literature. Using these findings, the second analysis will look at United Nations (UN) gender and development policy documents and identify if similar language appears in this work. The qualitative study will require human
coding, which I will perform as the researcher because machine coding and software does not work as well for identifying context and meaning.

Discourse analysis is an “iterative” and “inductive” process that involves reading and re-reading the text and their building upon the knowledge to identify the interrelationships between them. It is a dynamic process of “interpretation and reinterpretation” (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001, p. 39). The coding will involve pulling out “extracts” from the texts and using these to identify themes, categories, and objects of the discourse (Carabine, 2001). Then, comparing and cross-referencing these extracts to locate a potential “western hegemonic” discourse (or language working against this creation). The extracts can be a phrase, single sentence, or small paragraph to identify the nature and context of the language used. The extracts serve as a form of categorizing, which will be coded using the “coding framework.” Additionally, the extracts are the units of analysis which are taken from the books and reports detailed in a later section.

What is a feminist IR theorist?

Prior to detailing the selection of texts that will serve as data, it is important to briefly make note of who is a “feminist IR theorist.” Certain scholars identify as feminist IR theorists, those whose work is grounded in IR theory and use feminism to disrupt, challenge, and question the main tenets of its theories, concepts, research, methodologies, and practices. Then, however, there are theorists who work on topics in and/or adjacent to international relations, but this work is more so grounded in various theories and these scholars do not identify as feminist IR theorists (Tickner, 2014). While all of this may seem like semantics, it is important to make the distinction for two reasons. First, feminist IR is highly interdisciplinary; however, not all of the literature is concerned with IR theory on the whole. While specific IR subject matter may be researched, such as gender and state/citizenship/political identity, and so forth, it is not aimed at
discussing/critiquing IR theory itself. Second, the distinction is important for the sake of brevity. Noting this difference will limit the amount of texts necessary to the research. As this work is concerned with feminist IR theory and the works of feminist IR theorists, the texts chosen will be limited to those written by scholars who identify as feminist IR theorists.

Data

Feminist International Relations literature is a marginalized sub-field within IR discourse (Zalewski, 2007; Youngs, 2004; Tickner, 2014). However, there are still enough academic scholars and scholarly works that it still requires narrowing down the specific texts to research. Also, unlike mainstream International Relations (which has sub-fields such as security studies, political economy, comparative politics, etc.), the field of feminist IR can encompass any research that takes a gendered analysis to IR. Thus, it was necessary the data exclude texts that attempted to only address feminism in a narrower context. The exceptions to this rule are *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* by Cynthia Enloe and *Gender in International Relations* by J. Ann Tickner, since these are inarguably seminal works in feminist IR. The methodology for selecting the texts to be used in the discourse analysis is: 1) finding the most prominent feminist IR scholars; and, 2) using these scholars to narrow down the most contributive works (i.e. most cited) through Google Scholar. Furthermore, it was important to ensure the literature came from a variety of scholars, otherwise the results would have been invalid--if not, self-fulfilling; meaning that, using multiple examples of an individual’s work would identify *their* discourse, but not necessarily that of the field. It should also be noted that the sample of literature is from western, white feminist IR scholars (lest this research implicitly exclude non-western and/or white feminist IR scholars under the assumption they are not producing research). Finally, to ensure that there was a large enough time frame to allow for any discursive shift, the texts were
selected over a lengthy period of time, 1992-2014. The following texts were selected (listed chronologically):


The policy literature used for the discourse analysis comes from UN Women (The United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment) and its predecessor UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women). UN Women works with a variety of global scholars, civil society organizations, NGOs, think tanks, and other global organizations. Thus, their work serves as a prominent hub for policy work on gender in development. Furthermore,
UN Women—and by extension the UN—is one of the largest and most influential voices on a variety of gender and development issues due to institutional capacity. However, it is important to note that the selected texts are a small sample of both women’s development literature and development policy literature as a whole. As the genealogical method will again be used for this analysis, development documents were selected from within a large enough time frame (20 years) to allow for potential shifts in the discourse. Additionally, in order to aid the longitudinal comparison, the time span of the texts range from 1995-2015. The following documents are to be used for the discourse analysis (listed chronologically):

1. UNDP, *Gender and Human Development 1995*
2. UNIFEM, *Progress of the World's Women 2000*
3. UNIFEM, *Progress of World’s Women 2005*
5. UN Women, *Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*
CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS OF FEMINIST IR LITERATURE

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS PART I

The first part of this genealogical discourse analysis studies seven seminal texts from feminist international relations theorists over the course of 22 years (Figure 1). The research is particularly concerned with how “non-western” women are discussed and how the “western” hegemony of IR has framed these discussions. While feminist IR scholars have done well at acknowledging and recognizing the plurality of identities among women (and men) around the world, the pitfalls of language developed in a “western” context often presents itself, particularly in the use of hierarchical dichotomies.

Figure 1: Feminist IR Literature Timeline

The chapter will be split into two larger analytic sections: Discursive Themes, which will then be divided into small sub-sections based around these themes; and then, the Conclusion. The thematic sections will identify strands of “oppositional discourse” and focuses on language directed towards decentering hegemonic norms, attitudes, and contexts. Conversely, these
sections will also isolate “hegemonic discourse” and highlight the strand(s) of the discourse framed in language based around western norms, ideals, and attitudes. Each of these themed sub-sections will analyze the language in terms of the “tools of inquiry” and how these are used to (re)produce hegemonic or oppositional discourse. Finally, the Conclusion section will use the thematic sub-sections, the building tasks, and tools of inquiry to understand how these texts discussed and framed women outside of the western world. This section will also delve deeper into the genealogical aspect of the analysis, focusing on any shifts in discourse, and summarize the findings.

DISCURSIVE THEMES AND CATEGORIES

Thematic Category 1: Sociocultural Underpinnings of IR

Keeping in line with one of the overall themes of feminist IR, each of the texts not only pointed out the sociocultural foundations of international relations, but this was also the first task in each piece of literature. This is particularly important as each author was attempting to frame the knowledge/power nexus of IR within a particular idea of man/masculinity. This can be seen in all of the authors’ continual and repeated use of the words: western, Anglo-American, or Eurocentric. In both theory and practice, international relations is situated in a western frame. Despite being presented as competing theoretical debates, feminist IR theorists point out that the three IR paradigms (realism/neorealism, liberalism/neoliberalism, constructivism), in general, share (or inherit) some assumptions rooted in the logic of Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Hans Morgenthau. While these authors’ works are most closely associated with the realist paradigm, aspects of their philosophies were taken so much as objective truths, that they managed to be thread and woven into the other two, leading IR to be passively gendered. In
challenging these particular authors, philosophers, and theorists, feminist IR is challenging the “canon” of the discipline.

Extract 1:
“An examination of the literature that attempts to trace the history of hegemonic masculinity in the West reveals at least four ideal types...of dominant masculinities. These are inherited from different periods of European cultural history” (Hooper, 2001, p. 64).

Extract 2:
“Discourses on freedom and emancipation have, therefore, merely served to consign to the realm of the ‘inhumane’, ‘uncivilized’ and ‘backward’ whole societies and peoples who do not share the cultural characteristics of (western) ‘Enlightenment Man’” (Steans 17).

Extract 3:
“...the ideal form of masculinity performed by men with the most power attributes, who not incidentally populate most global power positions—typically white, Western, upper class, straight men who have conferred on them the complete range of gender, race, class, national, and sexuality privileges” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 7).

Extract 4:
“At core, the modernist, Eurocentric ideology of limitless growth presupposes a belief in (white, Western) “man’s” dominion over nature (promoted, for example, in Christian and capitalist belief systems) and the desirability of (white, Western) “man’s” exploiting nature to further his own ends. Conquering nature, digging out “her” treasure and secrets, proving (white, Western) man’s superiority through control over and manipulation of nature—these are familiar and currently deadly refrains” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 98).

A particularly striking phrase was used by Pettman:

Extract 5:
“This heritage informs IR’s construction of states and international politics” (Pettman, 1996, p. 8).

The use of the word “heritage” was poignant and succinct. With one word Pettman asserts that the foundation and development of IR cannot be divorced from its sociocultural roots. The continual use of the terms Western, Anglo-American, and European/Eurocentric, throughout
each of the texts indicates the authors’ attempts to continually recognize the frame of international relations; a frame through which all peoples’ identities have been situated and constructed.

As feminist IR is aimed at challenging the foundations of international relations, the most obvious discursive tool at work is *conversations*. Feminist IR theorists set themselves in opposition to mainstream IR by not only positing that IR is constructed through a “western lens,” but also challenging the notion of its supposed gender neutral assumptions. In this debate, Feminist IR literature is interesting in that it disrupts or deconstructs the *figured worlds* or theories, models, and images of international relations before attempting to construct their own. While the literature attempts to move away from generalizations and homogenizing concepts, feminist IR does start with a simplified “global model,” which asserts that in the vast majority of societies in the world, women are not equal to men, whether it be economically, socially, or politically.

*Thematic Category 2: Masculinities and Femininities*

Pointing out IR in a western frame, the literature was also consistent in identifying that the discipline—and its resulting politics and policies—does not privilege *all* men. The use of the phrase “hegemonic masculinity” or “masculinities” in the previous extracts recognizes the multiple identities of men in the international system. All cultures have their own expectations and views on gender, masculinity, and femininity. This is important for two reasons. First, if not all men are privileged—as privilege is salient based upon intersectional identities (to be discussed later)—then it is possible for some women to be privileged above certain men. Second, the literature highlighted that this hegemonic masculinity set the standard of femininity based upon a particular image of a white, western women.
In decentering hegemonic frames, each text also made sure to mention that all gender identities (masculinities and femininities) have their own societal, cultural, and historical backgrounds.

Extract 6:
“Although all femininities are subordinated to all masculinities, it is also the case that some femininities are subordinated more than or differently from others. The idealized image of Western femininity remains associated with Victorian notions of womanhood that celebrated the gentility, passivity, decorativeness, and asexuality that was imposed on white, middle- to upper-class women who were the only ones who could enact such standards. Working-class women, women of color, and/or lesbians are either denied the (dubious) status of feminine because they cannot meet these standards, or are feminized (that is, devalorized) in other ways through processes of racialization and/or sexualization” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, pp. 7-8).

Extract 7:
“…what it means to be a man or a woman varies across cultures and history” (Tickner, 1992, p. 7).

Extract 8:
“The realization of multiplicity means that we can be skeptical of the assignment ‘women’ while searching for treasures that lie in women’s rooms (or spaces of life) … Each space gives us a different location of subjectivity, a different element of identity, such that to have meaningful identities and to query them too situates us as appreciators of the ways we stand in one space and regard another space with an empathetic-critical gaze that defies ready colonization” (Sylvester, 1994, p. 13).

Extract 9:
“Beyond gender relations as power relations between men and women, ‘worlding women’ means exploring differences among and between women, too” (Pettman, 1996, p. xi).

Extract 10:
“It is by and large associated with universalizing, ahistorical theories and vague generalizations. As a number of feminists have argued, gender relations are insufficiently coherent to warrant the term patriarchy in general” (Hooper, 2001, p. 41). [Emphasis in original]

Extract 11:
“If one fails to pay close attention to women—all sorts of women—one will miss who wields power and for what ends” (Enloe, 2014, p. 9).
The deconstruction of masculinities and femininities is another way in which feminist IR disrupted *figured worlds*. However, in this instance there was no attempt to create any new singular image or central model of masculinity or femininity as that would be antithetical to feminist theory itself.

*Thematic Category 3: Feminist Theory, Feminisms, and Intersectionality*

In challenging the theories of the discipline, feminist IR authors have also challenged the methods for analyzing and viewing the world. The literature argued that identifying these problems and new methods was essential because current methodologies not only obscure issues of gender difference, but also other aspects of peoples’ lived experience such as race, class, nationality, sexual orientation, and other facets of identity.

Extract 12:

“Were it to be realized, such a ‘re-vision’ would have a profound impact on the discipline of international relations, which is noteworthy for its exclusionary perspectives both with respect to women as well as non-Western cultures. As this analysis has suggested, a discipline that includes us all would require a radical redrawing of the boundaries of its subject matter” (Tickner, 1992, p. 144).

Extract 13:

“We must take on the gendered anarchies and reciprocities of a field, freeing prisoners from manipulated dilemmas and refusing divisive levels of analysis that third world cooperatives and first world peace camps can teach us. I have attempted to provide the outlines of a process of empathetic cooperation as postmodern feminist method” (Sylvester, 1994, pp. 225-226).

Extract 14:

“By transcending the levels-of-analysis problem and transgressing the private/public/international divides, not to mention introducing voices from outside the Anglo-American world, empirical research on this subject might severely disrupt the all-male, largely Anglo-American space of IR, and thereby interfere with the production of hegemonic masculinities therein” (Hooper, 2001, pp. 228-229).
Furthermore, because theory requires abstraction, and abstraction requires homogeneity, the literature challenges abstract theory and research methods, and even the language derived from such thinking.

Each author explicitly attempted to resist the use of homogenized language; and, where such language needed to be used, different methods were employed to navigate and mediate its use. For example, Christine Sylvester continually put women or woman in quotations (“women” / “woman”) throughout her book. This was to symbolize that when referencing this group of individuals that a prior false homogeneity was attributed to them; yet, there is no other popularly used and “accepted” word to refer to said group.

Extract 16:
“Now a third feminist wave is finally comfortable with postmodernity. It affirms difference (women has triumphed over woman) and is also skeptical about whether women exist as a meaningful identity and type of person or whether ‘women’ is a set of socially assigned characteristics and evocations” (Sylvester, 1994, p. 23).

Quotes were also used in other texts to denote “western-originating” terms that were attributed to countries and societies outside this frame (i.e. “non-western”). These include terms such as: third world, developing, modernization, and other words that represent a hierarchical dichotomous relationship (however, there were still issues on this matter, which will be further explored at the end of this chapter). Additionally, keeping in line with highlighting the “western” frame of IR, the texts also put certain concepts in quotations, such as masculine, feminine, nationality, state, sovereignty, and citizen. In critical theory, this technique is called “citationality.” Developed by French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, “citationality” is the notion
that a concept can be simultaneously authentic and inauthentic. The meaning of a word is established through its continued use, such as citing and reiterating (and furthermore, this is a core function of language) (Nakassis). Thus, a term may not necessarily be “universal” with one inherent meaning, but rather a constructed meaning. When the feminist IR scholars put quotations around certain words, it is to challenge and/or deconstruct the universality of such terms. This use of citationality was a disruption of figured worlds, situated meanings, and social languages constructed in western discourse.

Mainstream IR scholars who have been comfortable (and insist) on the notion of objective truths resist the ontological and epistemological subjective positions of feminist IR theorists.

Extract 17:
“Mainstream IR scholars have expressed frustration with feminist IR broadly conceived, but most especially its poststructuralist guise, because of the reluctance of feminist scholars to offer up a singular, coherent perspective on IR” (Steans 135).

Extract 18:
“For this model to flourish in IR would require that we not only alter our lense but also make profound changes in our individual and collective practices” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 253).

Extract 19:
“Every time the conversation slips into abstractions, one of the women pulls it back to women’s complex everyday realities. This is what making feminist sense of international politics sounds like” (Enloe, 2014, p. 359).

Thus, not only do these feminist IR scholars acknowledge difference, but in essence, they “double down” on the importance of difference by resisting current methodologies. This represents a commitment to decentering the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity in terms of knowledge and power.
However, as one progresses through the readings, there were some notable differences in the presence of feminist theory, and the conversations and debates being had in feminist academia, particularly concerning intersectionality and feminisms. This, in turn, led to a substantive development in feminist IR discourse. While the ideas underpinning intersectionality were alluded to in earlier readings (extracts 6-11), in later texts there is a more concrete and substantive conceptualization of this term. This can most likely be attributed to the prominence of multiple feminisms that emerged in feminist theory during this span of time.

Extract 20:
“…these feminists claim that all types of violence are embedded in the gender hierarchies of dominance and subordination…” (Tickner, 1992, p. 30)

Extract 21:
“It has become increasingly difficult to theorize gender identity in isolation from other identities, and the intersections of gender, class, race, and sexuality have become preoccupations of both feminism and cultural studies” (Hooper, 2001, p. 7).

Tickner’s use of the words “claim” and argue indicates that the subject is still being debated and/or relatively new. The same can be said for Hooper’s statement that theorizing outside of considering intersectionality has become increasingly difficult. The incorporation of feminist theory is also a non-linear development. Sylvester (1994) and Pettman (1996) incorporated the concept of pluralities into their work, using language that does not imply any sort of contestation.

Extract 22:
“Alongside and often overlapping with older-identified distinctions between liberal, socialist, radical and cultural feminisms, for example, are variously named black, third-world and ethnic-minority feminisms, themselves far from homogenous. They have prompted increasing feminist attention to difference as an issue between women, as well as between men and women” (Pettman, 1996, pp. ix-x).

Still, however, in the later texts intersectionality and multiple oppressions are elaborated upon and discussed at length.
In 2010, Runyan and Peterson go further in their discussion of intersectional analysis in IR (even devoting 3 ¾ pages to the subject), including a definition and how such an analysis adds to more comprehensive research.

Extract 23:
“It was imperative for activists to reflect upon the limitations of white, western feminism that had privileged a primarily liberal political agenda, and to address the concerns of women around the world in ‘historicized particularity of their relationship to multiple patriarchies as well as intersectional economic hegemonies’ and to focus on ‘multiple, overlapping and discrete oppressions rather than construct a theory of hegemonic oppression under a unified category of gender’” (Steans 126).

Extract 24:
The premises of intersectional analysis mean several things. First, women and men have multiple identities simultaneously, describing themselves or being described not only by gender but also by race, class, sexual, and national markers, such as black, American, working-class, gay male. Second these identity markers, however, are not just additive, merely descriptive, or politically or socially neutral…some parts of our identities carry privilege and others do not… Third, different parts of our identities become politically salient at different times… the fourth meaning of intersectional analysis—namely, the kind of masculinity or femininity one is assumed to have rests on the meanings given one’s race, class, sexuality, and nationality” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, pp. 25-26).

Extract 25:
“Contemporary feminist scholars engage in intersectional analysis to avoid the practice of ‘essentialism’… Only by recognizing [intersectionality] can we advance a more comprehensive notion of gender equality that sees it as indivisible from racial, class, and sexual equality and equality among nations” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, pp. 26-27).

The incorporation of different feminisms and feminist theories can obviously be attributed to which scholars were being cited. While reading, it is clear which scholars were heavily incorporating different feminisms into their work. This includes citing feminist theorists such as such as, Nira Yuval-Davis (gender and ethnicity), Chandra Mohanty (post-colonial feminism), Gayatri Spivak (post-colonial feminism), Judith Butler (Queer feminism), Gloria Anzaldúa (Chicana feminism), Patricia Hill Collins (Black feminism), and bell hooks (Black feminism).
Below is a brief example of which feminist IR theorists included the works of these aforementioned feminist theorists.

**Figure 2: Feminist Theorists Cited in Sampled Feminist IR Texts**

Feminist IR Author: Feminist theorist (# of works cited in the bibliography of feminist IR text)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Works Cited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sylvester</td>
<td>Collins (1), Spivak (1), Mohanty (1), hooks (1), Butler (1), Anzaldúa (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pettman</td>
<td>Yuval-Davis (4), Spivak (3), Mohanty (3), hooks (3), Butler (1), Anzaldúa (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper</td>
<td>Mohanty (1), Butler (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steans</td>
<td>Mohanty (1), hooks, Spivak, Yuval-Davis, Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson &amp; Runyan</td>
<td>Yuval-Davis (2), Spivak (4), Mohanty (1), Collins (1), Anzaldúa (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the list, it is clear that Tickner and Enloe were the outliers in terms of exploring feminisms and feminist theory. In terms of Enloe’s lack of theorist citations, her book was not theory focused overall. However, on Tickner’s end, her book was theory-focused and this lack of plurality was later critiqued by her peers:

**Extract 26:**
“However, in spite of these nuances in the detail, her books’ overall structure and main thrust...tends to oppose a monolithic and one might say essentialized masculinity...in IR theory against an equally monolithic opponent known as either ‘feminist theories,’ ‘feminist approaches,’ or ‘feminist perspectives’ The overall effect is one of theoretical confusion and an undifferentiated eclecticism in deploying incompatible feminist approaches” (Hooper, 2001, p. 58).

Steans criticizes Tickner and notes her use of standpoint theory:

**Extract 27:**
“In her book on *Gender in International Relations*, J. Ann Tickner drew upon standpoint feminism to both critique mainstream IR and to suggest how the field might be (re-)visioned.”

“However, clearly attempts to theorize from the position of ‘women’s lived experiences’ are problematic. One of the main objections to standpoint is that there is no ‘authentic’ women’s experience that can serve as a basis for knowledge claims” (Steans 14).
However, it is unclear if Steans is criticizing Tickner’s use of standpoint theory; or, Steans could be arguing against standpoint theory in general since it hinders the parsimonious theory building of traditional IR. Situated in postmodernism, standpoint theory argues that there actually is value in individuals’ varying perspectives from their lived experiences. This theory was influential in the development of Black feminism and intersectional feminist theories. The correct use of standpoint feminism would work against hegemonic discourse, and decentering mainstream IR and the masculinities that uphold it is the starting point for all of feminist international relations literature. The use of standpoint theory and feminisms derived from this theory would be to contest traditional IR’s theories of the world and to call into question all of the politics and policies that have risen out of these models, norms, and previously unopposed ways of thinking.

*Thematic Category 4: Problematizing Development*

In acknowledging the sociocultural roots of IR, many of the authors highlighted how this frame extended to the ideas of international economic development, modernization and globalization. This is particularly important as development and human rights tends to be one of the larger areas in which “universalism” takes place. In speaking of development and the western ideals of man’s dominance over nature, Tickner calls development a “project” that is “imposed” on non-western countries. The use of these two words is a claim that “development” is being done to countries and people (rather than with them).

**Extract 28:**
“Rooted in Western cultural traditions, [development] has been imposed on other cultures as part of the Western project of domination” (Tickner, 1992, p. 123).

**Extract 29:**
“Whether it is ‘development’ that needs problematizing and challenging. This latter is especially so for those who critique development within patterns of global domination and subordination.” (Pettman, 1996, p. 176).
The use of the word “project” also implies that not only is there a desired outcome, but presumably, that one would know what said outcome looks like. Preconceived ideas have created measures of development that are based upon western values and a western image of what makes a country “developed.” These concepts can be seen in many current debates, such as what is considered a developed political system (i.e. democracy); what is considered appropriate political values (ex. secularism); what is considered a developed economic system (ex. Capitalism, free markets). Progressing through the literature, the texts continue to echo these sentiments.

Extract 30:
“In the twentieth century [development] was overlaid by the mantra of modernization—a bourgeois-rational practice that has replaced religious conversion as the key Westernizing tool” (Hooper, 2001, p. 97).

Excerpts:

Extract 31:
“Ideas about what constitutes development, and policies ostensibly [emphasis added] designed to achieve modernization, are conditions by dominant ideologies that assume that the western experience provides the model for the ‘developing’ world. The production of knowledge about ‘development’ is itself a historical process that is conditioned by the socio-political, economic and cultural contest in which it takes place. Historically, ‘development’ has been driven by dominant western perceptions of the needs and circumstances of people in ‘underdeveloped’ countries” (Steans 88).

Extract 32:
“…the global North continues to exploit the global South through less direct and different manipulated forms of ‘neocolonial’ or ‘neoimperial’ rule. Most recently, ‘neoliberal governmentality,’ or the marketization of all life, has been put forward as the current form of neoimperialism” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 34).

Aggregating the language from Tickner, Hooper, and Runyan and Peterson, the use of the words “project” and “tool” denote that development is being used with a particular aim, and furthermore, this aim may be ambiguous and malevolent, rather than the benign, simple goal of “bettering” human lives.
These feminist IR texts are attempting to “problematize” development using *conversations, figured worlds, and situated meanings*. Feminist IR scholars are bringing to the forefront the “subaltern” or “oppositional” discourse on how development has been practiced. In this practice, “development” has—at various times—also meant “westernization.” Some feminist scholars, theorists, and activists claim that the oppression of women has been co-opted into ideas of development and have been used to create images that are a mis-representation of non-western women. It is in the objectives of development and liberation that we often find the characterization of Mohanty’s “third world woman.”

In the literature, the authors subverted images of the “Third World woman” by attempting to disrupt those of women in the “First World,” showing that development and progress in western countries was not universal and that not all women or communities have been included.

Extract 33:
“Just as many African Americans are ghettoized in urban slums in the United States, other marginalized peoples are subject to arbitrary boundaries that wall off areas of environmental stress. Native Americans have been placed on some of the worst rural land in the United States, just as South African blacks have been relegated to overcrowded, resource-scarce townships” (Tickner, 1992, p. 116).

Extract 34:
“These struggles make many faces, stand on many borderlands of eagles and serpents, and homestead each other with many strategies. Some simultaneous struggles are relatively easy to see, as in South Africa, where efforts to homestead the acrid terrain of apartheid move in cross-cutting directions; there are similar struggles, it seems in Peru, erstwhile Yugoslavia, Liberia, Canada, Angola” (Sylvester, 1994, p. 183).

Extract 35:
“There is an unstable hierarchy of difference, as, for example, ex-East Germans occupy an ethnicities category as different and inferior to their West German co-citizens. So Irish people in the UK also experience racialization for certain purpose, in stereotypical difference and at tie danger through association with ‘terrorism.’ But they do not routinely experience the ‘at-sight’ racism that black and other ‘visible’ minorities do just walking down the street” (Pettman, 1996, p. 73).
In light of these critiques, a necessary distinction should be made. Development and globalization are not interchangeable terms or concepts. Neither are the various models of development that have different meanings, such as industrialization, modernization, urbanization, human development, sustainable development (some of which are now considered passé). Development literature has gone through its own evolution in discourse and methodologies. While feminist IR critiques many of these practices as having been born out of “western” sociopolitical and economic thought, development literature has increasingly attempted to stray away from “top-down,” ethnocentric approaches. This research will only look at a small sample of development policy texts, but it should be noted that both academic and development policy experts exercise caution on issues that may be linked to universalism.

**Thematic Category 5: Civil Society, Women’s Movements and Lived Experiences**

Due to international relations being concerned with “high politics,” there was also a focus on women’s lived experiences and day-to-day lives. The influences of women were found in women’s movements at local levels, and if these had a high-level of mobilization, were part of the civil society that informed multilateral policy at institutions such as the United Nations. This

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**Extract 36:**
“Significantly European feminists also cited the problems of racism in Europe, noting that women of colour in the region were particular affected by global restructuring processes and made a massive contribution to unwaged and low-waged work” (Steans 131).

**Extract 37:**
“Religious beliefs interact with and may reinforce other cultural sources of gender stereotyping. This is generally the case in regard to identifying the home/family as women’s sphere and the public/politics as man’s sphere. It can also be quite explicit, as in the seclusion of women practiced in many Islamic countries or in Western ones where neoconservative politics (sometimes inspired by Christian fundamentalism) seek to return women to the home and reconstructed patriarchal and heteronormative families” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 118).
is particularly important because a) it speaks to women’s agency in “non-western” countries; and b) it indicates that these women were not waiting to be rescued or saved. It was a matter of their stories not being told.

Extract 38:
“When women have been politically effective, it has generally been at the local level. Increasingly, women around the world are taking leadership roles in small-scale development projects…” (Tickner, 1992, p. 142)

Extract 39:
“It [the book] seeks ways to look at the world that can incorporate women’s experiences and make visible the gender politics of its construction and reproduction. It disrupts IR by telling other stories, stories inscribed upon the bodies of real women, across borders and time, which speak also of resistance, action, and inevitably, change” (Pettman, 1996, p. 214).

Extract 40:

“The international network Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUM) was formed in response to several events in 1984” (Pettman, 1996, p. 81).

Extract 41:
“Women Living Under Muslim Laws, which now is a board transnational network of feminists in countries as diverse as Egypt, Sudan, Bosnia, Tunisia, Pakistan, and Malaysia, has been sharply critical of any nationalist discourse used to deny women’s rights or to limit women’s public organizing” (Enloe, 2014, p. 94).

Recounting these movements served as creating figured worlds for non-western women whose stories had been made invisible. The incorporation of women’s experiences in Enloe’s book was an example of social languages. Her entire book was a retelling of international relations through the eyes of women in their day-to-day lives. The language of the book was closer to “story-telling” as opposed to “traditional,” academic, theoretical language. Enloe used her situated position of power in academia to tell these stories. The book recounted and recovered stories of women’s activism and influence on global, local, and personal levels. This is further evidenced
by her introduction and continual use of the phrase “feminist investigation.” “Investigate” does not simply mean research or analysis, but indicates there is something of importance that is “hidden” and needs to be uncovered/discovered.

Extract 42:
“But a feminist-informed investigation makes it clear that there are far more women engaged in international politics than the conventional headlines imply.” (Enloe, 2014, p. 5).

Incorporating discourse on women’s movements, one must also talk about solidarity and coalition-building across different cultures and societies. While all of the literature repeatedly acknowledged the importance of difference, as years progressed, and with the introduction of intersectionality, the notion of difference was expanded upon. The inclusion of multiple oppressions as it relates to power led to questions of methods and approaches to bridging these differences. In other words, it is one thing to acknowledge difference, it is another to realize the magnitude of that difference. Discussing challenges of the academic/theoretical/political/daily issues of solidarity and coalition-building showed an evolution in discourse and understanding of the positions of power between women.

Extract 43:
“Discussions of the meaning of security revealed divisions between Western middle-class women’s concerns with nuclear war…and Third World women who defined insecurity more broadly in terms of the structural violence associated with imperialism, militarism, racism, and sexism. Yet all agreed that security meant nothing if it was built on others’ insecurity” (Tickner, 1992, pp. 54-55).

Extract 44:
“The divisions among women at international conferences are reminders that by no means are all women’s politics feminist; and that feminists from different locations in terms of both global power and political beliefs struggle to assert their own understandings and goals” (Pettman, 1996, p. 183).
The understanding of intersectionality was further served by an awareness that one can be both an “insider” and an “outsider” simultaneously. Breaking away from the dichotomous thought of either/or identities gives a more complex, nuanced (and more accurate) view of positions of power.

In further recognizing the plurality of women (and people in general), intersectionality also means there are no clear demarcations within or between different societies, cultures, and individuals. As the literature progressed there was a development in the presentation and understanding of insider/outsider identities of women around the world, particularly those of women in feminist movements.
The insider/outsider identity also extends itself to the idea of complicity and nuanced power, particularly when talking about women and elites. The discussion of complicity was important in many of the texts, particularly those that expanded upon intersectionality. Varying positions of power mean that some people, even women, can benefit from an engendered, socioeconomic system; and, because of these benefits, they may prop up a problematic system, passively and actively.
The concept of complicity also links to the notion and discussion of reflexivity, particular in terms of scholarly research.

As outlined in the literature review, reflexivity is an incredibly important concept in feminist theory. It posits that one should always be attentive to the complexities of their identity and where it is situated in systems of power. Furthermore, in keeping true to feminist
methodology and research practices, some of the authors acknowledged their own positions of power.

Extract 57:
“Privileged individuals are not to blame for (inherited) institutional hierarchies; but the privileged in every hierarchy have greater power and therefore greater responsibility for transforming those and related hierarchies… Our objective here is to increase awareness of these opaque issues and promote less unintentional participation in reproducing inequalities and structural oppressions, that is, taking paths of least resistance, when these are actually part of the problem” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 59).

Extract 58:
“These debates inform this attempt at worlding women—moving beyond white western power centres and their dominant knowledges, while recognizing that I, as a white settler-state woman, need to attend to differences between women, too” (Pettman, 1996, p. x).

Sylvester refers to her life experiences and situated identity as a “dynamic objectivity” (p. 18).

Extract 59:
“It is important to provide a context for one’s work in the often-denied politics of the personal; because, in a postmodern era, we simply cannot take refuge in our previous certainties of objective vision” (Sylvester, 1994, p. 17).

The last three themes on identity (insider/outsider, reflexivity, and complicity), intertwine with each other. They are different ways to recognize the complex structures of power in an engendered international system. Locating one’s identity within this system is a key step in mediating and navigating one’s own position of power; which, in turn, helps to fight against (re)producing hegemony.

Hegemonic discourse, however, was continually present in the use of western-originating, dichotomous language. The language is relational, hierarchical, and by its use/definition privileges the western world. The authors attempted to navigate this language—some more successfully than others—but it becomes evident that the current language is insufficient.
Thematic Category 6: Hierarchical Dualisms and Flat Earth Language

Perhaps the greatest shift (and pitfall) in language was the use of dichotomies developed within “western” IR. The discipline developed descriptive language that “cut” the world in two based upon “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics imposed upon each dualism rooted in the sociocultural logic at the foundations of IR (Figure 2). There is a feminization of the “other” and those characteristics associated with masculinity are considered to be best.

“Dichotomized thinking is both habitual and political: Its structure constitutes…not simply a different category (A and B)…but a relationship of hierarchical opposition (A and not-A); it thus reproduces either-or thinking and privileges some qualities and interest over others. Much is at stake, and it takes a great deal of power to maintain categorical boundaries…” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 69).

Figure 3: Hierarchal Dichotomies of Mainstream International Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MASCULINIZED</th>
<th>FEMINIZED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First World</td>
<td>Third World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-developed</td>
<td>Under-developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Global) North</td>
<td>(Global) South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West(ern)</td>
<td>Non-west(ern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occident(al)ism</td>
<td>Orient(al)ism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the use and navigation of these dichotomies was of particular interest because it is incredibly pervasive. Even as some of the scholars acknowledged the issues of dichotomous language, such language would still be in use throughout their texts. It was the most egregious example of figured worlds and situated meanings in (re)producing of mainstream IR knowledge.
Furthermore, Pettman acknowledges issues of the masculine/feminine dichotomy and the need for heterogeneity:

Extract 60:
“Like women, foreigners are frequently portrayed as ‘the other’: nonwhites and tropical countries are often depicted as irrational, emotional, and unstable, characters that are also attributed to women. The construction of this discourse and the way in which we are taught to think about international politics closely parallel the way in which we are socialized into understanding gender differences” (Tickner, 1992, p. 9).

Extract 61:
“The militarization of the South, with weapons sold or given by the North…” (Tickner, 1992, p. 20).

“…by the year 2000, 80 percent of the world’s population will live in the south, we in the West…” (Tickner, 1992, p. 20).

“…and Third World women who defined insecurity more broadly…” (Tickner, 1992, p. 54).

Furthermore, Pettman acknowledges issues of the masculine/feminine dichotomy and the need for heterogeneity:

Extract 62:
“…our understanding of gender signifies relations of power… In Western culture, these concepts take the form of fixed binary oppositions that categorically assert the meaning of masculine and feminine and hence legitimize a set of unequal social relations” (Pettman, 1996, p. 8).

Extract 63:
“Neither are all third-world women poor… Nor are all women in the first world middle class—or white. This cautions us against any easy reproduction of first-world/third-world difference, and especially against reproducing ‘third-world woman’ as passive victim” (Pettman, 1996, p. 183).

“Through international networks and conferences, ‘third-world women’ have become visible, and claimed a voice, or rather, many voices” (Pettman, 1996, p. 183).

Yet, we also see the usage of this dichotomous (and homogenizing) language:
Steans also pays attention to hegemonic language and the knowledge/power nexus:

Extract 65:
“Within the academy, certain forms of knowledge are institutionalized and valorized… Academic disciplines develop theoretical and analytical frameworks, generate concepts, construct categories and develop theories about the world and how it works” (Steans 134).

Yet, again, dichotomous language (which is a result of hegemonic discourse) is used throughout Steans’ text:

Extract 66:
“Through the developing word… (Steans 89)”

“How Third World states…” (Steans 88)

“…the UN could not avoid becoming embroiled in the East-West and North-South conflicts” (Steans 96).

“…since gender issues now received low priority among Third World elites…” (Steans 97).

Some scholars used this language while applying quotations (much like in the use of “women”), as an attempt to mediate the issues with dichotomous, hierarchical language. In the section, “Mapping the Book,” Peterson and Runyan use conceptualization as a tool to subvert dichotomies and hegemonic language.
Extract 67:
“We instead use, where possible, the terms ‘global South’ and ‘global North’ to denote social locations of subjugation and privilege respectively. At times we invoke the global North or North or the global South or South to refer to the geographic locations associated with First and Third worlds, but at other times, we mean to include nonprivileged groups in both the geographical south and North when we refer to the global South. We also remind readers that there are elites in the South who share the privileges of the global North” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 34).

The authors were very careful in their use of language and use of terms heavily rooted in specific cultural contexts.

Extract 68:
“We most often use ‘sexual minorities’ to signify individuals and groups who contest or do not conform to heteronormativity. Although ‘LGBTQ’ can capture an array of sexual minority identifications, we note here that … these Western-originating terms are less widely circulated elsewhere…” (Runyan & Peterson, 2010, p. 33).

Hooper is also interesting in that her usage of the term “developing” is limited and used only when she begins her content analysis on The Economist magazine.

Extract 69:
“There is a dilemma here for feminists, of whether to try and avoid masculinist language but risk not being taken seriously…or whether to make strategic use of it to gain credibility for feminist arguments (or otherwise subvert it for feminist ends), and perhaps risk compromising one’s own feminist message…While a playful approach to academic language could be seen as subversive, unfortunately this too can have masculinist connotations. Thus my own use of language can at times mirror the ironic, journalistic tone characteristic of The Economist, which I criticize.” (Hooper, 2001, p. 10)

Another way the authors navigated and mediated the use of dichotomous language was to repeatedly recall the structural inequalities of the international system, particularly when using the terms “Third World,” “developing,” or “underdeveloped.” This is an attempt to point out that the supposed peoples and countries represented in these terms are not the bottom part of the hierarchy by coincidence.
These sorts of comparisons and juxtapositions show the full relationship of the hierarchy with two distinctions. First, as masculinity is always in flux and defines itself by the feminine (and vice versa), so goes the same for these dualisms. There would be no First World without the Third World; there is no Global North without the Global South. These are not objective models or “truths” about the world. These ways of thought are promulgated by the asymmetric knowledge/power nexus in international relations and global politics. Second, the particular use of “global minority/North” shows another distinct issue with these dichotomies and dualisms: the issue of being equally halved. This is a complete distortion and shows the politics of language and how it can be used to redistribute or withhold social goods. The vast majority of the world’s population lives in the developing world and non-western societies. Thus, a minority part of society is responsible for promulgating norms and language through an international system created by them. Furthermore, taking into account the specific use by Runyan and Peterson, it becomes disturbingly problematic that a minority population is responsible for the control and use of global resources. Non-western scholars have actually proposed terms that disrupt this
discourse such as “one third world/two thirds world” (Mohanty, 2003; Esteva & Prakash, 1998), which directly challenges the misrepresentation in this “halved” relationship.

The use of these dualisms was the largest and most concerning; yet, it is the issue of (arguably) the least culpability. “It is very difficult to transcend dichotomous thinking altogether since we are limited to some extent by the structures of the language we have inherited” (Hooper, 2001, p. 52). And, as Peterson and Runyan argued: dichotomized thinking is habitual. Consequently, this presents the paradox of (simultaneously) challenging and entrenching hegemonic language. As stated earlier, the periodic use of quotations was a method to navigate and mitigate these issues, but it does not decenter this discourse. Enloe’s avoidance of these dualisms could also be attributed to the story-telling nature and purpose of her book; whereas, the rest of the texts were theoretical and/or attempting to give an overview and introduction of feminism, gender, and IR. The nature of this latter purpose requires a certain level of generalization or abstraction, which leads to homogenization. The irony lies in the fact that in these same texts, the scholars also warned against the nature of theory building because it potentially leads to “dangerous” levels of abstraction and homogenization. So, this could be seen as a double-bind that may be inherent to academic discourse.

CONCLUSION

How do these themes/categories and tools of inquiry work together to depict the images of marginalized women and women in the developing world? Putting these together with the seven building tasks, we can gather how feminist International Relations literature has constructed and deconstructed the idea of the “third world women” and disrupted stereotypes and preconceived images of women around the world.

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7 For reference, please see Ch.1, pages 22-24.
The basic task of dismantling and decentering the current theoretical paradigms of mainstream IR by challenging its “western” origins served as the foundation to call into question the supposed objectivity of knowledge developed within the boundaries of this discipline (Sign Systems, and Knowledge). This ultimately leads to deconstruction of the masculinities, and consequently, the femininities derived from mainstream IR, which challenges the universalism of its principles. These principles are the basis under which knowledge is disseminated within the field and they dominate the ways in which we think about the world. Thus, to deconstruct and challenge these principles then “problematizes” all of the concepts and practices derived from them. When considering how feminist IR challenged and problematized development, this served as the basis for the building tasks of practices and politics. While international relations and the international system advocate for development as benevolent, in practice, this concept has been enacted (at times) with various self-interested outcomes by those in positions of power. Tickner pointedly referred to development as a “western project” and other theorists critiqued the western frame of development models and practices. Furthermore, if one thinks about the politics of development, this concept is complexly used to withhold social goods such as foreign aid or development assistance.

The buildings tasks of relationships, identities, and connections are closely intertwined and dependent upon each other, especially in feminist IR. The literature also challenged, developed, and weaved together the various aspects of identity of women around the world. Challenging the views of women in the developing world also involved challenging how women in the developed world view their own status and position. Take, for example, the concepts of complicity and insider/outsider identities. The feminist IR literature strongly asserted that through actions such as underpaid household labor or unfair labor practices used to produce
globally-shipped goods (e.g. buying items produced in sweatshops) women have participated in aspects of patriarchy that disadvantage others. Another example is “femocrats” or women in power who condone—or even advocate—certain policies that are steeped in hegemonic masculinity, such as war. These are women that have upheld certain aspects of patriarchy because it is beneficial to maintaining their own power. Thus, it forces women in the developed world to think about their relationship and connection to their counterparts in developing countries, particularly in ways that do not create them as abstract figures. If these women are oppressed, if they are “third world”; if they are disadvantaged, then, those in the “first world” are not disconnected from their position. This oppression did not—and does not—happen by coincidence. Women in the First World/developed countries/Global North bear some responsibility, whether implicitly or explicitly, in maintaining the disadvantaged social status of those outside the west.

Furthermore, an interesting aspect of this analysis of feminist IR literature was not in how these pieces talked about women in developing countries or the “Third World,” but in how these women weren’t spoken about. Not in terms of making them invisible, but in not attempting to describe them; not attempting to speak for them, but straying away from one-dimensional or homogenized views of their lives. It seemed that the goal was simply to “trouble” the existing images and ways in which we think about these women and their lives. The task was not necessarily to describe, but instead, to deconstruct. Perhaps, this was a method to counter existing, problematic narratives, but without co-opting the stories of marginalized women for scholarly purposes.

The previously identified themes and categories will be carried forward to the second part of the discourse analysis on policy literature. The purpose of the next chapter is to see if any of
these objects in feminist IR literature have influenced and/or appear in the discourse of international women’s development policy.

Summary

When looking at the overall discourse of feminist IR literature, the not only stresses the idea of adding women to IR, but which women are added and whose voices are heard. This is disruptive to the discipline because of its agendered assumptions. The texts repeatedly and purposefully situate gender and international relations within a western context, to serve as a reminder that the international system has a specific sociocultural frame. This creates situated identities within this frame that may have been imposed upon individuals, particularly women in the “Third World”/ “Developing” world/ “Global South.” By giving examples of women’s agency, particularly in reference to women’s movements and civil society, it serves to uncover and build an image of these women separate from “western” created concepts. Often, images of marginalized individuals are depicted in relation to those in power, highlighting the (hierarchical) differences. Telling a plurality of stories decenters the singular frame in which one can see the world.

Despite these attempts at disruption, the use of dichotomies shows the power of language and that one can only exist so far “outside the system” (even when aware of its pitfalls). This “discursive slippage” is a result of unconscious, habitual, and inherited language (Hooper, 2001; Runyan & Peterson, 2010). The continued use of western-imposed, hierarchical dichotomies means that uncovering new ways to view international relations requires new language to speak about international relations. Otherwise, feminist IR will disrupt discourse in one context, while entrenching it in another.
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS OF POLICY LITERATURE

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS PART II

The second part of this discourse analysis incorporates women’s development policy literature, looking for the ways in which the identities of women in the developing world are discussed and constructed in these works, and, how this compares to the feminist IR literature in terms of its discourse on marginalized women. To aid the comparison of discourse, the policy literature was selected from a 20-year timeframe, 1995-2015, approximately corresponding with the time period of the feminist IR literature (Figure 3).

*Figure 4: Women’s Development Policy Literature Timeline*

![Timeline Image]

While the majority of this chapter will be spent comparing the discourse between policy and academic literature (as that is the ultimate goal of the study), the first section will briefly review the policy literature itself. The following sections focus on the longitudinal analysis and will be organized into thematic sections detailing the emerging themes and categories. Again, Gee’s tools of inquiry will be used to analyze how language is used to create the different images
of women around the world. The previously identified themes and categories from Chapter 2 will be used in this analysis (although not necessarily in the same order):

1. Sociocultural Underpinnings of IR
2. Masculinities and Femininities
3. Feminist Theory, Feminisms, Intersectionality
4. Problematizing Development
5. Civil Society, Women’s Movements and Lived Experiences
6. Hierarchical Dualisms and Flat Earth Language

Additionally, the analysis will also look for any themes and categories unique to the policy literature itself. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings and, again, apply the seven building tasks.

WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT POLICY LITERATURE: AN OVERVIEW

Unlike the various authors covered in the feminist IR literature, the policy pieces were selected from United Nations development agencies. This is an important distinction for two reasons. First, as the research is concerned with the possibility of “epistemic blank spots” the nature of the authors is of great significance. The United Nations is a global community of experts who research and write on international politics and development. So, one would expect that epistemic blank spots in relation to western norms would be minimal. Second, the nature and purpose—and even audience—of UN research and reports remains relatively constant. Therefore, any discursive shift is minimal, but some does exist.

For this study, one of the most interesting, and very direct, changes in discourse was when the policy literature on gender switched from being authored by a general development agency (UNDP 1995) to UNIFEM (2000) agency which specialized in women’s development.
While the UNDP does have a gender component to its research, UNIFEM (now UN Women) is considered to be the main gender-based development agency of the United Nations.

Extract 73:
“Women still constitute 70% of the world's poor and two thirds of the world's illiterates.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.iii

This figure was repeated again on page 36 of the 1995 Human Development Report. Apparently, however, this figure is inaccurate and/or unfounded. According to the 2000 UNIFEM Progress of the World’s Women Report:

Extract 74:
“None of the indicators commonly used to track the incidence and severity of income poverty are gender-sensitive. Raw data is available in household surveys that could be used to calculate how many women are below the poverty line, as compared to the number of men (‘gender poverty ratios’). It should be a priority to make these calculations, since the widely quoted estimate that 70 per cent of the poor are women has no firm foundation [emphasis added].” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.12

For emphasis, this claim is repeated again later in the report:

Extract 75:
“Without a gender-sensitive income-poverty indicator there is no way of estimating the extent of feminization of poverty — leading to the use of global “guesstimates” such as the much-repeated claim that 70 per cent of the world’s poor are women. No one can identify the empirical evidence on which this claim is based, and demographic analysis has shown that it is not credible. [emphasis added].” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.95

Upon conducting a second review of the 1995 Human Development Report, the inability to quantify the “feminization of poverty” called into question some of the language in their report. Some of the discourse appeared to portray a more destitute image of women, particularly those in the developing world, considering some of the discourse was directly linked to the 70 percent estimate.

Extract 76:
“Poverty has a woman's face—of 1.3 billion people in poverty, 70% are women.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.4
It is not to say that UNIFEM reports were absent of such extreme language, but it was reserved for especially violent situations, such as the use of rape in conflict:

Extract 82:
“Many of these trends, including environmental degradation, armed conflict and widespread violence and increasing inequality between and within nations — have the potential to undermine human rights and dignity, turning people into bodies to be violated, vessels to be used to preserve one or another ideology. [emphasis added].” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.16

Of the UNIFEM/UN Women literature studied, no extreme language appears again after the 1995 report. Many of the phrases are striking not only due to their language, but emphasis is placed on them due to the standardized structure of UN reports. After the Foreword, there is an
Overview/Summary section which pulls out the highlights of each chapter. Thus, the strongest phrases and statistics are given at least twice (if they are not repeated again in the Conclusion chapter). Meaning, this extreme language could potentially make a greater impact through repetition. While it could also be argued that the language may be extreme to call attention to deplorable situations—and even shame the international community into action—given that women in the developing world already have to deal with the singular narrative of living destitute lives, this extreme language entrenches this solemn narrative.

This is not to say that the Human Development Report does not show examples of women’s agency. On the contrary it has many examples of women’s involvement in civil society, the formation of women’s movements, and participation in politics.

Extract 83:
“Japanese women, far from the stereotypical image, are a social force in many areas.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.44

In a textbox excerpt titled “Women and Girls are Kenya’s Breadwinners” the report states:

Extract 84:
“But girls, not boys, are the ‘breadwinners’ for the family—spending 10 times the hours of boys in work outside the household.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.44

Or, another textbox example on women’s political participation in Cuba, titled “Revolution within a Revolution,” shows the long history of activism by Cuban woman:

Extract 85:
“Since the 1959 revolution, gender equality has been among Cuba’s highest priorities… The Federation of Cuban Women created in 1960 to organize, educate and mobilize women from all parts of Cuban society has grown from 400,000 members in 1962 to 3.2 million in 1990.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.44

However, when looking at the reports by UNIFEM, which later becomes UN Women in 2010, it is clear that there is an emphasis on trying to accurately represent the inequality of women but
also their capacity, agency, and resourcefulness. For example, contrast the following example from the 2005 UNIFEM report with the 1995 Human Development Report phrase “poverty has the face of a woman”:

Extract 86:
“The working poor are both men and women. However, the further down the chain of quality and security, the more women you find. Yet it is their work…that holds families and communities together.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.6

The language presents the gender disparity while also highlighting the resiliency and importance of women in their communities. Even the discourse surrounding the “feminization of poverty” is slightly different:

Extract 87:
“A parallel observation is that the burden of poverty borne by women, especially in developing countries, is different from that of men, a phenomenon often referred to as the feminization of poverty. During the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985) researchers and advocates drew attention to the disadvantaged position of women economically and socially, especially those in female-headed households, and called for a gender perspective in the whole field of poverty research.” – Progress (2005) pg.37

The social language of policy literature also has one important caveat; these reports are akin to a “sales pitch.” The reports are repeated at the UN General Assembly, at meetings with country officials, in civil society, and other high-level events. The tone and statistics used in these reports help to determine funding for the agencies and/or any individual development programs either from the UN, individual countries, or commitment from the private sector. Furthermore, the countries may use the reports to help update or develop domestic programs and policies to further gender equality. Thus, the reports have to strike a balance between showing the resilience and capabilities of women, while also showing the disadvantages and consequences of persistent gender inequality. The feminist IR literature also sought to strike this balance, however, not to the same degree. Given that the feminist IR literature was not solely
focused on development and development policies, there was a greater ability to look at subject matter that did not require discussing variations in socioeconomic status.

Finally, and perhaps one of the most important distinctions to be made is the use of social language in policy papers and reports versus academic literature. The language tends to be less theoretical and more straightforward. Less theory also means less abstraction and homogenization. Throughout each of the texts are numerous examples of action by civil society and women’s movements. These examples are either in-text or highlighted text boxes, which bring special attention to the specific example in focus. While these examples serve the same purpose as those in the feminist IR literature (i.e. showing the agency and action of women in developing countries), the sheer multitude of examples flesh out a deeper sense of agency by these women. This will be further explored in a later section of this chapter.

Furthermore, the language that could be categorized into the themes that were present in feminist IR literature is different, but in many ways still invokes the same meaning. Either certain subject matter is not discussed, or, the discourse used is entirely different than that of the feminist IR literature. For example, a large part of the discourse in the IR literature focused on masculinities/femininities and the western frame of International Relations and global politics. The policy literature focused on this in subtler ways—and ultimately—less theoretical ways.

Extract 88:
“Neither public speaking, nor the ability to represent the opinions of the electorate, nor the art of winning public confidence requires exclusively masculine traits. But politics remains an obstacle course for women.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.83
Extract 89:
“A complementary transformation of the domestic sector is needed, so that men take on a larger share of the pains and pleasures of unpaid care work, and construct new masculine identities around the values of giving care and paying attention to the personal needs of others.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.49

“Recent studies in some more urbanized countries suggest that cultural factors — such as prevalent cultural ideas of masculinity — are encouraging boys to drop out at greater rates.” p.67

Extract 90:
“Stereotypes that define caregiving as quintessentially female (and maternal) seem to be much harder to dislodge than those around breadwinning, previously seen as a male domain. Increasing numbers of women are adopting what are widely seen as masculine lifestyles and patterns of work by engaging more intensively in the labour market.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.50

These excerpts discuss issues surrounding gender and stereotyping, however, in much less theoretical ways (in comparison to the feminist IR texts). Gender theory and deconstructing masculinities and femininities is important because it is responsible for breaking down one-dimensional images; however, such discussions also get heavily bogged down in theory and the complex language associated with it. Policy literature and discourse is meant to be more practical and accessible, and these texts follow suit.

Along these same lines, the western frame and sociocultural roots of International Relations is also approached differently. Instead of critiquing the structure of the international system itself, policy approaches are often the focus of analysis.

Extract 91:
“The starting point for this report is that all human beings, in seeking to form and express their ideas and to preserve or to change their current ways of living, find their lives shaped by larger economic, social, political and cultural trends.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.16
Thus, thematic categories 1 and 2 (sociocultural roots of IR; masculinities and femininities, respectively) from part one of the discourse analysis are rather muted in policy literature. Aside from the straying of theory in favor of practicality, there are potentially two additional reasons for this departure in discourse in regards to theme 1, both concerning conflicts of interest.

First, one can assume that since the multilateral institutions and agencies that dominate global politics and development are born out of western, sociocultural roots, this is the reason they ultimately call less attention to the issue. While these institutions have taken thoughtful consideration into diversity and inclusivity—and make these concepts an important part of their missions—the largest organizations were created in response to western interests and actions. The United Nations (originally the League of Nations), the IMF, the World Bank, the World

Extract 92:
“Development planners need to look at poverty from the perspective of the working poor – especially women... Finally, mainstream economists and others who advise policy makers need to revisit their assumptions regarding how labour markets are structured.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.71

Extract 93:
“There is growing demand from gender equality advocates – including those from national, bilateral and multilateral institutions – for greater investments in gender equality at the national level, but they are sorely in need of concentrated support from powerful advocates in donor countries who focus on accountability in development assistance policy and budgets.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2008) pg.97

Extract 94:
“Historical legacies also influence the scope for legal equality. Countries that experienced communist rule often have gender-equal family laws due to communist governments promoting changes in women’s roles in order to encourage full employment and to marginalize religion and traditional cultures. The legacy of British colonialism, by contrast, has been to stymie reform by creating multiple family laws on the basis of cultural identities of the communities lumped together in post-colonial states. The existence of plural legal systems based on cultural or religious identity can pose particular challenges to women seeking justice.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.31
Trade Organization (previously the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) were all started in response to the end of World War II. Given these beginnings and that certain aspects of hegemony can be “habitual,” these multilateral institutions still face some critiques of “ethnocentrism” and “universalism” in their policies and discourse. Perhaps they do not wish to call attention to the “heritage of IR” and the international system more than necessary because—at their core—these critiques problematize the institutions’ very existence.

Second, a large part of the budgets of these agencies comes from donor countries. Thus, wording and indictment of certain practices is not as strong as it is in the feminist IR literature. Take, for example, the way in which the policy literature discussed development. As discussed in the previous chapter, the feminist IR literature offered some pointed critiques in describing development as a “western project.” Such discourse is ultimately a problem for agencies whose very purpose is development. So, how did the policy literature problematize development? How did the literature, in essence, critique its own prior practices? And, in what specific ways did this language differ from the discourse in the feminist IR literature?

**DISCURSIVE THEMES AND CATEGORIES**

*Thematic Category 3: Problematizing Development*

What is “development?” Which problems should development policies target? How should progress be measured? These are some of the questions that have been—and continue to be—asked by academics, policy practitioners and officials when addressing issues in development, including why it has been uneven and slow. Since the Women in Development (WID) literature emerged in the 1970s (followed by the WID conferences), the development community has reached consensus that solely focusing on economic development and fiscal policies has proven insufficient in lifting communities out of poverty (*conversations*). Since this
time the development community has continually sought to overcome its deficiencies in addressing and ameliorating the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized peoples, including women. Human Development bridged these gaps.

The concept of “human development” was introduced in the early 1990s. It is a multi-dimensional approach to development which centers people and considers not only economic, but social and cultural progress when taking into account development policies and measures. It is human development that also serves as a foundation for the intersection of economic development and gender equality. Beginning with the 1995 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which specifically focused on gender, human development policy literature has brought into focus how development policies have—or, more importantly—have not benefited half of society. Human development served as a method to integrate gender while adopting “gender neutral” language, which highlights gender equality as a benefit for everyone, particularly economically. While the notion that “gender equality benefits us all” is present in feminist IR literature, it is not the focus the way it is in the women’s development policy literature. Again, given the nature and purpose of policy literature, the universal benefits of gender equality can be considered a “selling point” of their reports and policy recommendations.

Extract 95:
“Human development is a process of enlarging the choices for all people, not just for one part of society. Such a process becomes unjust and discriminatory if most women are excluded from its benefits. And the continuing exclusion of women from many economic and political opportunities is a continuing indictment of modern progress.” - UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg. 1

Extract 96:
“[Human development] eliminates the prevailing disparities between men and women and creates an enabling environment for the full flowering of the productive and creative potential of both sexes.” - UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg. 1
The report lists four links between human development and gender, noting:

Extract 97:
Fourth, empowering people—particularly women—is a sure way to link growth and human development. If people can exercise their choices in the political, social and economic spheres, there is a good prospect that growth will be strong, democratic, participatory and durable.” - UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg. 123

In the preface to the 2000 Progress Report, the Director of UNIFEM strongly asserted in less gender-neutral terms that:

Extract 98:
“If globalization is to be pro-women and pro-poor [emphasis added], it must be steered and shaped in accord with international human rights conventions and the development consensus and targets reached at various UN conferences.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.5

Even when ending the preface, the Director manages to state that gender equality is beneficial to all, but couches this sentiment in language that almost shames the international community into action.

Extract 99:
“The stakes for women are high. Women want a world in which inequality based on gender, class, caste and ethnicity is absent from every country and from the relationships among countries. Women want a world where fulfillment of basic needs becomes basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated. Where women’s unpaid work of nurturing, caring and weaving the fabric of community will be valued and shared equally by men. Where each person will have the opportunity to develop her or his full potential and creativity. Where progress for women is recognized as progress for all.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.6

These words go further in arguing that not only is human development good for everyone, but that development should not be considered progress until it is beneficial to everyone.

Furthermore, the concept of gender equality and human development also served to highlight the sociocultural position of women in “developed” countries. Gender equality has not been achieved in any country whether economically, politically, socially, or culturally. Exposing
and/or reiterating this truth disrupts the *figured worlds* that have been constructed between women in developed and developing countries.

Extract 100:
“In no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as men.” -UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg. 2 (Repeated again as a pull quote on pg 29)

Extract 101:
“These achievements should be celebrated. But they should be taken as a signal not that nothing more needs to be done in these countries but that they are in a position to adopt more demanding targets.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.80

Extract 102:
“Gender inequality in employment has multiple dimensions. First, women are concentrated in more precarious forms of employment in which earnings are low. In developed countries, women comprise the majority of part-time and temporary workers.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.9

Extract 103:
“In seeking to understand why progress in women’s enjoyment of their rights has been slow and uneven, this Report shares experiences from women’s rights advocates and movements around the world. Their struggles underline how persistent and pervasive discriminatory social norms, stereotypes, stigma and violence remain, holding back women and girls everywhere from realizing their full potential.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.9

Extract 104:
“Particularly in developed countries, there has been retrogression in social and economic rights. Industries where men were strongly represented—such as construction and finance—were most severely affected by the crisis. As a result, the gender gap in unemployment narrowed in the immediate aftermath of the crisis through a process of levelling down: more men lost jobs than women. However, where economic recovery is taking place— for example in the United States of America (United States)—men’s employment is recovering faster than women’s.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.26

Extract 105:
“Gender gaps remain everywhere.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.77

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8 A pull quote is “a brief, attention-catching quotation, typically in a distinctive typeface, taken from the main text of an article and used as a subheading or graphic feature.”
The purpose of these excerpts is to show that women and development is not simply a concept for the Global South/Third World/Developing world. Consequently, this also problematizes these dualisms and hierarchal dichotomies (*situated meanings*). The importance of development not stopping at GDP is emphasized in a pull quote from the 1995 Human Development Report:

**Extract 106:**
“Growth is not the end of development—but the absence of growth is.” -UNDP Human Development Report (1995)

**Extract 107:**
[Human development] analyses all issues in society—whether economic growth, trade, employment, political freedom or cultural values—from the perspective of people. It thus focuses on enlarging human choices and *it applies equally to developing and industrial countries* [emphasis added]. Human development also encompasses elements that constitute the critical issues of gender and development.

In addition to this language, the focus on human development means focusing on different communities at all levels within a society. For both developed and developing countries, the aggregation of data can mask the inequality and social injustices occurring within them, particularly in countries with high levels of inequality. Additionally, the feminist IR and policy literature did align on the notion that numbers do not tell the full picture of development. This concept is incredibly important when taking into account “developed” countries and the marginalized communities that exist within these states. Such images not only disrupt what is considered “developed,” but also, who needs development (*situated meanings, figured worlds*).

Not all women occupy the same socioeconomic status with men or *with each other* in any country. Inequality occurs on socioeconomic lines *between* and *within* countries around the world.
From this analysis it can be concluded that challenging and problematizing development is central to both feminist IR literature and policy literature (*intertextuality*). However, each body of sampled literature does so in different ways and to different depths. First, and most obvious, the policy literature is from institutions whose very *raison d’être* is global development policy. This inherently limits how much the concept of development will be critiqued in literature from these very institutions. However, like feminist IR, the policy literature did challenge single-focus economic development policies and the global restructuring polices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

Extract 108:
“Indebtedness has continued to rise in many developing countries, while unemployment persists in many developed countries. Economic inequality has deepened both between and within countries.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.17

Extract 109:
“Governments agreed that poverty is a problem in both the North and the South.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.53

Extract 110:
“This suggests that inequality is likely to be growing among women, with highly educated women enjoying rising incomes and good conditions of employment while women with less educational qualifications have stagnant or falling incomes.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.93

Extract 111:
“These twin enabling processes have put businesses of all kinds in a position to treat the whole world as their field of operations and to redeploy their capital and move the location of their production at will.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.29

Extract 112:
“The realization of women’s rights cannot be separated from broader questions of economic and social justice. Militarism and violent conflicts, the global financial and economic crises, volatile food and energy prices, food insecurity and climate change have intensified inequalities and vulnerability, with specific impacts on women and girls. Dominant patterns of development (emphasis added) have led to increasingly precarious livelihoods.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.26
So, feminist IR and the policy literature do share criticisms in hegemonic or “dominant” patterns and policies of development. However, along the lines of language, it needs to be reiterated that there are various models of development and evolutions in methods. Development literature has recognized that some terms are loaded, particularly in relation to sociocultural norms (such as “modernization”). While the selected Feminist IR texts make note of the differing definition, after further readings, it appeared that critiquing all of these various development models under the umbrella of western roots had the effect of blurring their distinctions—even when it comes to passé language. The development policy texts studied did not use some of these terms at all, except to critique the prior erroneous preoccupation with certain policy approaches.

Extract 113:
“During the 1950s and 1960s, women's concerns were often subsumed in a development paradigm obsessed with modernization and industrialization, with economic growth the central issue.” -UNDP Human Development Report (1995) p. 101

Although the policy literature texts did not use this language in relation to the development process itself, some of the terms were used as descriptors, such as “industrialized countries” or “urbanized countries” (1995 UNDP and 2000 UNIFEM reports). The 2008 UNIFEM report used the term modernization (below), but it is just as plausible that the word was used in the general sense of “updating” infrastructure.

Extract 114:
“The Ministry of Justice has been playing a leading role in the implementation of the Family Code through the modernization of the justice system and often in partnership with women’s networks of crisis centers for women survivors of violence.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2008) pg. 74

However, all variations of terms in relation to modernization, industrialization, and urbanization were out of use as of the 2015 UN Women Progress Report. Thus, while the feminist IR discourse in this analysis lagged behind the policy literature on this topic, the true length of this
lag is unknown (although, this research would signify a delay of at least a decade). Given that this is a broader study, perhaps feminist development literature or feminist political economy literature highlights the distinction and/or evolution of the aforementioned terms.

Furthermore, when thinking about the language of one—if not the most—popular dualism, “develop-ed vs develop-ing,” the former is past tense, meaning the action has already happened and concluded. However, development implies a process; one would not apply a process to the object with a name that explicitly states said process is complete. The process would apply to the object in a state of on-going (or yet-to-be-started) action. The use of this dualism explicitly links the notion of development to developing countries, thus carrying the assumption that development is only for these nations. This further marginalizes the people within these countries. When dissecting this language and this dualism, it seems unlikely that one can stray too far away from Mohanty’s concept of the “third world woman.” The situated meanings of this discourse and connection between these terms implies there are nations whose economies, politics, and societies need development—at the very least, more so than others. However, inequality does exists. Is this a double-bind for both academia and policy-makers? How should the discourse accurately reflect inequalities without having societies be defined by them?

The frustrations with this singular narrative can be found in both academic literature (as evidenced by post-colonial discourse in the literature review) and society at large. People do feel marginalized and narrowly defined by dominant discourse and development language, and social media has given further credence to these sentiments. For example, as recently as 2015, Twitter was used to counter negative portrayals of Africa—sub-Saharan Africa in particular—in popular media.

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9 For reference please see Chapter 2, pages 40-41, extracts 28-32
media and discourse. The hashtag “#TheAfricaTheMediaNeverShowsYou” was used to push back and express this frustration “because the thing you see is hunger, poor people, war, it's just like, this is the only face of Africa that is known. But believe me, the Africa I know, my Africa, is more than this. My Africa is all about amazing people, all about amazing places and landscapes,” lamented a photographer in Senegal (Leatherby, 2015). Therefore, despite attempts to update discourse in both academic and policy literature, certain stereotypes remain in the conscious of the general public, especially those in culturally dominant societies. However, the policy texts did seem to disrupt the hierarchical dualisms and dichotomies that are present in mainstream IR and in the feminist IR literature by using descriptors outside of binary language.

Thematic Category 4: Hierarchical Dualisms and Flat Earth Language

To problematize development is also to problematize the hierarchal dichotomies and dualisms that have originated from classifying different levels of development (situated meanings, figured worlds). Unlike the feminist IR literature, the terms “First World/Third World” never appeared in the policy literature. Although, the dualisms of “developed/developing” and “Global North/South” were often present in the discourse.

Extract 115:
“In so doing [the report] responds to the growing concerns of women in both the North and the South.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.17

“Governments agreed that poverty is a problem in both the North and the South. -UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg. 53

Extract 116:
“Women have entered the labour force in larger numbers in both developed and developing countries.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.26
These excerpts show that the hierarchical dichotomies are consistent between feminist IR and the development policy literature. However, since development policy also draws from economic literature, which has attempted to create a more stratified classification in levels of development, the women’s development literature also repeated the terms associated with these systems (*intertextuality*).

Extract 117:
“That is, women as a group voting differently from men, especially in developed countries.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2008) pg.18

“Gender equality and women’s rights groups in the North have lobbied to increase aid for gender equality, but stronger partnerships are needed between women in the North and the South.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2008) pg.97

Extract 118:
“As of 2009, female gross enrolment ratios (GER) in tertiary education were higher than male GER in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa and Developed Regions.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.80

“In developed countries, a clear positive relationship between education and labour force participation generally exists.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.80

Extract 119:
“Among the countries with sharply lower GDI ranks are four industrial countries.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.2

“Invite creditor countries, private banks and multilateral financial institutions to address the commercial debt problems of the least developed countries and of low and middle-income developing countries.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.57

“While recent studies in some more urbanized countries.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.67

“Finds that for open semi-industrialized economies (1975-1995), economic growth was higher...” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.147
Are these classifications any better? If they disrupt the dichotomies, do they disrupt the homogenization of people as a result of these dichotomies? Again, part of the answer to this question has to do with audience. Within the spheres of academics and policy experts, terms can, and often, do change. However, in terms of the general populace, such language may take longer to shift. The discourse of academic and policy literatures has already made an impact on general speech. The language most used outside of “rich/poor” is “developed/developing” and “First World/Third World.” This means that the homogenization that results from this language is still being (re)produced by a large percentage of the population—at least in developed countries.

Again, the previously mentioned Twitter example serves as an indication. The following chapter will go further in depth on what this lag in discursive shift means for the images and stereotypes of the people and marginalized communities within “developing” countries.

**Thematic Category 5: Feminist Theory, Feminisms, Intersectionality**

The second thematic area from the feminist IR literature is feminist theory, feminisms, and intersectionality. Many of the foundational concepts of feminist international relations theory were found in the policy literature, which argues: a) the international system is inherently...
gendered; b) however, the gender variable of analysis is more than just “add women and stir”; and, c) intersectionality is key to gender analysis. Additionally, the varying strands of feminism found within feminist theory were not explicitly present in these particular women’s development policy texts (conversations) (intertextuality). However, the wide and various accounts of women’s movements and global activism do serve to showcase the different ways that women enact feminism around the world. Feminist theory uses a few tools that are not found in policy work, mainly the theoretical concept of reflexivity. The policy literature studied does not acknowledge the social status and positions of the researcher/s and how this could potentially impact their results (or use of language).

Conceptualizing agency is another area in which the development policy literature sought to redefine the idea of development. Agency is rights plus empowerment. It is not only the defined legal ability to make a choice, but also the ability to make that choice free from social norms, constraints, and stigmas. Agency was also defined as women participating in development instead of thinking of it as a process done on/to them.

Extract 123:

Extract 124:

Another example is the language defining women as “agents of change”:

Extract 125:
“Women must be regarded as agents and beneficiaries of change. Investing in women's capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself but is also the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.2
These excerpts are examples of calls for inclusivity, which pushes back against the trope of the “Third World woman” waiting for change. Instead, this language is an acknowledgement that the participation of women in developing nations is necessary, as opposed to a benevolent gesture. As explained in the literature review, certain strands of feminism can be patronizing or paternalistic when discussing marginalized women and inclusivity. On this same note, the UNIFEM 2000 text continually mentioned the report serving as “dialogue.”

Extract 126:
“In addition, the process of achieving targets should be participatory. In particular, there should be active social dialogue with poor people’s and women’s groups, and the effective organization of such groups should be promoted… There is a danger that targets will be used in a top down, mechanistic way without sufficient voice for the people that they are supposed to help. It is important to focus not just on the ends but on the means used to promote the ends.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.6

The use of the word “dialogue” and its aim to help the report serve as a bidirectional conversation is important for two reasons. One, it has been asserted that research and analysis follows a certain pattern: the “developed” world researches and reports, while the “developing” world serves as the data/object. A dialogue disrupts this research axis (conversations, social languages, practices, figured worlds). Two, this particular report was published after the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2000. The MDGs, in fact, were later critiqued for being too “top-down” in their approach. This emphasis on agency through visibility and voice is repeated through policy literature.
Along these lines, a powerful statement came from the 1995 Human Development Report:

Extract 127:
“However, reorienting policies, planning, and practices towards creating more and better employment will not be possible unless two preconditions are met. First, the visibility of workers – especially working poor women and men – in labour force statistics and other data used in formulating policies needs to be increased. Second, the representative voice of workers – especially informal workers, both women and men – in the processes and institutions that determine economic policies and formulate the ‘rules of the (economic) game’ needs to be increased. This requires pursuing an inclusive development policy process that promotes the participation of the poor, both men and women, as workers: that is, a worker-centered policy process.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.104

Extract 128:
“What is called for here is an approach that focuses on the needs and constraints of the working poor, especially women, as workers, not only as citizens, as members of a vulnerable group or as members of poor households.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.12

Extract 129:
“Women’s efforts to remedy their situation when their rights are denied have ranged from ‘voice’-based approaches that emphasize collective action, representation of interests, and the ability to demand change, to ‘choice’-based approaches that promote changes in the supply of responsive public service or fair market practices.”
– UNIFEM Progress Report (2008) pg.4

Extract 130:
“The lasting transformation of social structures and institutions is possible when changes along these three dimensions—of resources, respect and agency—intersect and work in concert.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.44

Along these lines, a powerful statement came from the 1995 Human Development Report:

Extract 131:

This language not only discredits the concepts of “liberation” and the “savior complex,” but it also brings into question the notion of complicity. Much like the criticism of “femocrats” from the feminist IR texts, the policy literature critiqued those in positions of power for their inability to address—or even listen to—the concerns of marginalized groups.
Extract 132:
“A critical shortfall of development in the past few decades has been the persistent neglect of the creativity and productivity of half of humanity. The same is true of human development debates and dialogues. In most cases, they have touched gender issues—but not really focused on them.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.23

Extract 133:
“Better-off women with well-paid jobs are employing poorer women to work in the home, caring for their children or elderly relatives, cooking and cleaning for the household. But poorer women have to cope with a double burden of paid work and unpaid care work.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.88

Extract 134:
“Just as women workers are often invisible, so too are their organizations. This is particularly true of organizations created by informal women workers. Most international and national forums, conferences and seminars tend not to invite them directly, and not much has been written about them. This is partly due to the fact that some organizations choose to operate ‘under the radar’ in order to protect members. But it is largely owing to the fact that the working poor, even if they are organized, remain invisible in mainstream development circles, leading to the assumption that organizations of informal women workers do not exist.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.77

Extract 135:
“The inability of gender specialists and units to call their own multilateral organisations to account – even to implement the policies and strategies that have been agreed – is a systemic problem. The positioning, authority and resources of gender units in the United Nations and other multilateral organisations need to change so these units have voice and leverage to call for accountability to implement agreed gender equality policies, as well as to monitor allocations and expenditures.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2008) pg.105

Extract 136:
“The actions or omissions of transnational corporations, international and regional financial institutions, multilateral development banks, credit rating agencies and private foundations can limit the policy space for States to meet their human rights obligations. In addition, global inequalities mean that actions and omissions by the more powerful States will have adverse repercussions on the capacities of smaller and less powerful States to meet their human rights obligations.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.40
However, elites also failed marginalized individuals and women by not understanding gender analysis. Echoing feminist IR’s assessment of mainstream methodology, the policy literature was also critical of the “gender variable” or the “add women and stir” approach. Including gender in analysis does not simply involve adding women to already existing theories and policies. The policy literature echoed these same sentiments.

Extract 137:
“Human development, if not engendered, is endangered. That is the simple but far-reaching message of this Report” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.1

Extract 138:
“There is a tendency to add women on to inherently male-biased economic analyses and policies” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.60

Part of this critique is based on the concept of intersectionality—or the notion that various marginalized identities can compound so one experiences multiple oppressions. Both the feminist IR and policy literatures continually stress the importance of intersectionality, and much like the feminist IR literature, the policy texts strengthened its use and understanding of this concept over time. Intersectionality was strongly present in the 2005 UNIFEM report, in which the word was directly used or the concept was alluded to strongly.
Interestingly, this time period was also when intersectionality became more solidified in the feminist IR texts, beginning with the 2006 literature by Jill Steans and continuing into the 2010
book by Peterson and Runyan (Chapter 2, extracts). However, the concept did not reappear in the 
policy texts until 2015.

Extract 141:
“Howver, to build inclusive and effective movements, women have to confront 
tenacious hurdles stemming from gender-biased governance structures as well as the 
many cleavages that divide them—whether based on ethnicity, race, class or sexual 
orientation.” – UN Women Progress Report (2015) pg.54

Extract 142:
“Addressing these challenges calls for diverse, context-specific strategies. 
Alongside gender differences, class, caste, race, ethnic and nationality divisions 
have to be skillfully negotiated and incorporated into strategies built around shared 

As with the feminist IR literature, the importance of intersectionality centers on the 
acknowledgement of the cleavage in differences and women’s lived experiences, which can 
affect solidarity and coalition-building, particularly when it comes to activism. Furthermore, 
given that marginalized women have often felt that their lived experiences and agency have been 
passively silenced in the larger “western” feminist movements’ push for gender equality— 
particularly when these calls fall under the umbrella of development—recounting stories and 
examples of their activism also served as an acknowledgement of the continual need for their 
inclusion in achieving gender justice.

Thematic Category 6: Civil Society, Women’s Movements and Lived Experiences

    As mentioned earlier in relation to agency, women are not simply “objects” of 
development. The discourse surrounding development can be interpreted as something being 
done to/for women (and those in developing countries, in general), as opposed to being done 
with them. However, women have not only participated in development and gender equality, but 
their work has been the catalyst for change in multiple instances.
Extract 143:
“In many countries, women's traditional public invisibility allowed them to become political actors in peace movements at times-as during the military dictatorships in Latin America during the 1970—when it was extremely dangerous to be vocal. The roots of the present Chilean women's movement can be traced to women's advocacy of human rights and peace in the late1970s.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.101

Extract 144:
“The emergence of a vocal women's movement has made a difference. In many countries, women have pressed for social recognition of public and private rights, particularly reproductive rights and equal rights in divorce, inheritance and wages. In all societies, women have been alert to threats to their resource base and have often been the first to respond. The Chipko movement against the deforestation of mountain tracts in northern India began in the mid-1970s to prevent the destruction of forests by timber contractors.” – UNDP Human Development Report (1995) pg.100

Extract 145:

Extract 146:
“Many of the intergovernmental commitments at the Beijing and Copenhagen conferences to women’s progress in the economy came about as a result of NGO demands for attention to distressing economic conditions in both the North and the South.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.59

Extract 147:
“In addition, the process of achieving targets should be participatory. In particular, there should be active social dialogue with poor people’s and women’s groups, and the effective organization of such groups should be promoted.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.58

Extract 148:
Women are developing strategies through their organizations to ensure their participation in policy-making and rule-setting bodies at the different levels. This is a slow process, with gains and setbacks along the way, but women continue to build alliances, coalitions and networks backed up by research and technical assistance to jointly advocate and/or negotiate.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2005) pg.84
This focus on women’s movements and solidarity was found in the policy documents and feminist IR literature. Both sets of texts were concerned with the hindrance and formation of alliances and how to build solidarity (*conversations*). The policy literature seemed to focus slightly more on this topic. This can possibly be attributed to the agencies wanting to demonstrate their capabilities and capacities in this arena, given that one of their functions is to support civil society. Furthermore, this can be attributed to the overall nature of practicality in policy work. A quote from the 1995 report encapsulates this perception:

**Extract 151:**


This concept of “strategic sisterhood” is interesting in that it prioritizes purpose over authenticity. The 2000 UNIFEM Report echoed the same sentiments:

**Extract 152:**

“But in order to take effective action in partnership with others, it is necessary to make strategic simplifications in a complex world.” – UNIFEM Progress Report (2000) pg.288
Forming solidarities and coalitions for the explicit purpose of advancing gender policies is an interesting suggestion for bridging the gaps in the cleavages among vastly different communities of women. Perhaps, a deeper relationship or genuine sense of understanding can be secondary to pursuing social justice and gender equality; or—at the very least—you cannot have the latter without the former.

CONCLUSION

Now that both sets of literature have been analyzed, a full picture can be created of how women in the developing world are discussed can be created. How did the tools of inquiry in the policy texts compare to their use in the feminist IR literature? What does this say about the link between feminist international relations literature and policy literature on women in the developing world? Again, using the objects of discourse in combination with the seven building tasks, the following analysis will attempt to answer these questions.

The policy literature heavily emphasized on the agency of women in the developing world and their history of activism and feminist movements. Disrupting the figured worlds of these women as in need of “liberation” or “saving” created significance for their agency and how they enacted feminism. As the dominant discourse within feminism often led to the portrayal of white women as the face of the movement, the activism of non-western women was lost in popular discourse. Highlighting women’s movements at different time periods in all regions of the world deconstructed the identities of non-western women by recovering—or uncovering—their stories.

The identity of “third world women” was also disrupted by challenging the status of women in the “developed” world. Each text made it a point to assert—with words and data—that in no country do women currently hold equality with their male counterparts. In all areas,
economically, politically, and socially women remain at disadvantage. Thus, this challenges the relationships between women in the developed and developing worlds by problematizing the existence of a hierarchy between them. The intersection of development and gender equality is not just a concept that is needed in lower income countries. Equality and gender justice is an economic, social, and political necessity in all countries around the world, even those considered to be more “highly developed.” This also leads into the idea of building solidarity for advancing women’s rights, even if these coalitions are simply “strategic sisterhoods.” Calling for and creating these connections between women around the world are central to both the feminist IR literature and the women’s development policy literature.

Problematizing development closely tied together the building tasks of practices, politics, and sign systems and knowledge. The incorporation of human development, which challenges what constitutes development and how we think of progress (i.e. not just economic growth), disprivileged prior ways of knowing. This new approach is used to enact new development activities in practice, particularly the integration of gender equality and social justice. The politics of this new development approach highlights how previous conceptualizations of development and their unequal distribution of social goods was unacceptable.

Unlike the feminist IR texts, however, the policy literature taking on the task of problematizing development implicitly deconstructed hegemonic discourse and the images of women in the developing world. Feminist IR was strongly skeptical of globalization and development—including various models of development, such as modernization theory and neoliberalism, due to their sociocultural roots in western hegemony. The selected UN policy texts questioned development methods and policies, but not to the same degree. Given that the policy texts were produced by agencies that specialize in development, there was a special
interest (or conflict of interest) in not disrupting the international system. The policy literature certainly criticized certain methodologies, programs, and policies; however, stopped short of challenging the very purpose of development. To do is, in essence, to question the existence of such agencies and multilateral institutions themselves. In the policy literature, development is, by default, a necessary and benevolent goal, even if certain approaches are/were problematic.

Summary

When looking at the discourse between feminist IR literature and women’s development policy literature it is clear that there are both overlaps and departures in language. The focus on gender equality and feminism naturally gave way to a certain degree of intertextuality. The intertextuality between the literatures was strong in some areas and weak in others. The policy literature seemed to invoke certain concepts (i.e. the sociocultural roots of IR and masculinities and femininities) albeit to varying degrees. In addition, the hegemonic and oppositional discourse of the policy literature could be categorized into the same thematic areas as the feminist IR literature. Both sets of texts attempted to deconstruct the images of women in the developing world by troubling existing stereotypes in the highlighted thematic categories. However, what is surprising about this intertextuality is how strong this connection was given the degrees of separation. The policy literature did not cite any of these particular feminists as references. Thus, there are common threads or means of challenging and deconstructing discourse that may be inherent in feminist and gender analyses.

Much like the feminist IR literature, the women’s development policy texts did not focus as much on creating a single image of women in the developing world, but rather, deconstructing preconceived notions and stereotypical images of non-western women. Gee’s tools of inquiry—or objects of discourse—were used to disrupt the dominant dissemination of knowledge within
the international system. However, there was still a presence of hierarchical dualisms and
dichotomies. Even when attempting to use the income/development classifications of economics
literature, hierarchies were still present (i.e. highly developed, less developed, least developed/
high income, middle income low income). In terms of discourse, this leads to a more significant
question: Is there a way to speak about the world without dualisms or hierarchies, while still
accurately portraying the inequalities that exist? The following conclusion chapter will discuss
this question, and the overall research of this thesis, its limitations, and potential prospects for
future study.
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

SUMMARIZING THE RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

This research set out to look at the concept of “epistemic blank spots” in feminist International Relations literature. Meaning, how does the identity and background of the author or researcher affect their knowledge and impact how they discuss the world? This was specifically applied in reference to Chandra Mohanty’s trope of the “Third World woman,” a caricature based upon the depiction of non-western women in “western” literature, in which Mohanty argues that these women are homogenized as one-dimensional, impoverished, and oppressed individuals waiting to be liberated. Gee’s tools of inquiry (or objects of discourse) were applied to analyze the use of language and how it constructed and deconstructed images of non-western women. This provided a methodology that highlighted the emerging themes and categories in the texts, which then allowed for the isolation and identification of hegemonic discourse and strands of oppositional language. The discourse analysis also had a genealogical component, looking for any shifts in the use of language over a given time period.

Feminist International Relations Literature

The seven texts selected for the feminist international relations literature are considered seminal texts in the development of the discipline. These pieces were chosen not only because of what they added to the field, but also because they were authored by scholars at the forefront of feminist IR. The texts were also selected in consideration with the genealogical aspect of study. A 22-year time frame, 1992-2014, allowed for a reasonable analysis of discursive shifts and changes. Given that feminist IR is widely considered to begin in the late 1980s, this selection can roughly be considered from the origins of the sub-field to present day. The study found that feminist IR both decentered and disrupted the western, hegemonic discourse of mainstream IR in
certain aspects, while entrenching it in others. Some of this language had both direct and indirect impacts in the way in which “non-western” women in the developing world are depicted.

Most importantly, and perhaps most obviously, feminist IR set the foundations for decentering hegemonic discourse by deconstructing the sociocultural underpinnings of International Relations itself. Each text in the selected body of literature began by challenging formative IR texts and authors such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Morgenthau. Pointing out the “western gaze” and epistemological issues with their logic led to a challenge of the hegemonic masculinities and femininities embedded within this knowledge framework. To decenter views on dominant masculinities and femininities is to create space for various sociocultural conceptions and practices on enacting gender.

These objections also mean that feminist IR literature rejected and strayed away from the traditional methodologies and theoretical leanings of mainstream IR. The authors argued that the parsimonious necessities of theory-building are what have led to problematic oversimplifications. This can be seen in the final text of the first discourse analysis Bananas, Beaches, and Bases by Cynthia Enloe. She completely does away with the idea of traditional International Relations theory and research. Enloe instead calls for a “feminist investigation” in which she details and recounts the various stories of women shaping international politics. These lived experiences, both in subject matter and methodology, are in direct contrast to the quantitative, data-driven mainstream IR study. This obviously leads to questions of feasibility for conducting research, however, these will be discussed in the following section on possibilities for further study. Given that mainstream International Relations theory has dominated the international system and its construction, to challenge its foundations is to challenge and deconstruct what is known of global politics.
A major area in which oversimplification of theory has impacted discourse is the dualisms and dichotomies that have been constructed by mainstream IR. They are hierarchical and created in a way that privileges one group over the other. For example, there is no First World without the Third World, and, no “developed” countries without “developing” countries. The language is such that one is presumed to be “better” than its counterparts. If the language is not hierarchical, it is simplified to the point of being inaccurate. The flat-earth language used in terms of North/South and Occidental/Oriental divides the world into binaries based upon geopolitics, economics, and sociocultural history. However, even these are fluid. For example, Japan, while part of the Global North in terms of economics, is geographically and socially Eastern. Or, looking at the various strands of feminism, such as Black Feminism, while its origins are located in the west, it highly separates itself from what it sees as the dominance of western, Eurocentric feminism. These examples show that these dualisms, while deemed important, are also arbitrary. Furthermore, the inaccuracy of these dichotomies is greatly on display when considering that the world’s population is not divided into equal halves in the “developed” and “developing” countries. Those in the Global North are, by far, a minority of the world population.

Simplification of the world is a suppression of the heterogeneity of peoples’ lives. So, not only have the differences between men and women been overlooked, but the differences between women have been overlooked. While feminism already acknowledges how this oversimplification has impacted its theoretical development, the feminist IR literature sought to highlight how mainstream international relations has rendered women invisible—whether explicitly or implicitly. The texts recounted women’s movements and their lived experiences, showcasing how globalization and international relations has not only shaped their lives, but how
their activism has also been responsible for shaping globalization. It was important to show these women as activists and agents, pushing back against the notion of women—and citizens of developing nations overall—as simply subjects of development.

Acknowledging the differences among women is to call into question the prospects of solidarity and coalition-building for the future of women’s movements and activism. Is a global sisterhood possible? This is a particularly interesting question given that the feminist IR literature also recounted the complicity of “western” women in upholding the aspects of the international system which benefit them. For example, the femocrats who will challenge the system only when it aligns with their self-interests, or, the wealthy women who take advantage of their less privileged counterparts and hire them to help with childcare and housework while paying non-livable wages. Women’s numerous lived experiences have an impact on their identities, particularly in relation to their socioeconomic status and positions of privileges among each other, which makes it a necessity for feminists to understand intersectionality. However, the feminist IR literature had a discursive shift in terms of introducing this concept and its importance in enriching international relations research.

In the early literature, the feminist IR authors did acknowledge the necessity of including different experiences of various women. However, it was later in the literature, particularly in the Steans (2006) and Peterson and Runyan (2010) texts that detailed how intersectional analyses would enrich IR theory and research. Furthermore, these texts particularly described how intersectional identities work. It is not simply that different people experience different oppression based upon the various aspects of their identity, but that different aspects of identity are salient in that all people are privileged and disprivileged in different ways and in different situations dependent upon their identities. While it is important to understand the inequalities
present among individuals, those in non-western societies have taken issue with how their narratives are defined by these disparities. The entrenching of these singular narratives is partly due to the way western discourse has created over-simplified descriptions of the world.

Despite the critiques of hierarchical dualisms and dichotomies, reading the feminist IR texts revealed that they are pervasive and “habitually” used, even in literature whose goal is to counter hegemony. However, there was a discursive shift in terms of which dichotomies were used and how often. The First World/Third World dichotomy only fell out of use as of the 2010 Peterson and Runyan text, 18 years after the first feminist IR text in the study. Furthermore, there were a few instances of authors particularly using the phrase “Third World women,” which directly entrenches that exact trope derided by non-western and post-colonial feminists. Linking these women with the term “Third World” is not just a geographical reference. It also associates these women with the preconceived notions of what it means to be “Third World” in all aspects, socio-culturally, politically, and economically.

Women’s Development Policy Literature

The policy literature was selected from the United Nations documents, given the organization’s wide focus on development (as opposed to the economic focus on growth of the World Bank or IMF). One text was authored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the rest by UN Women (and UNIFEM, its predecessor). The discourse and language of the policy texts was different than that of the feminist IR literature, given the policy documents’ overall purpose and goals. The language, while theory-driven, is not complex and abstract the way academic literature tends to be. It is more straightforward, intended to be practical and accessible. Policy texts aim for solution-based and results-oriented language because they are speaking to practitioners, government officials, and politicians. For better or
worse, less attention is paid to the paradigmatic foundations of the research. Also, given that development policy is also closely tied to economics, the texts contained more quantitative research and data than the feminist IR literature. However, qualitative data still played an important role. Examples of women’s movements and lived experiences were heavily present throughout all of the texts to enrich the data and give it deeper meaning. Furthermore, like the feminist IR literature, these examples also show the various ways women were “agents of change” around the world. Showcasing agency helped to fight against what Mohanty and other non-western feminist scholars call the “savior complex,” in which western feminists (and westerners, in general) tend to think of women in developing nations as perpetually in need of liberation.

When switching from the initial UNDP text to the UNIFEM/UN Women texts, discursive shifts and changes were most noticeable in two ways. First, the way in which the UNDP text talked about the status of women was different. There was repetition of the statistic that “70% of the world’s poor were women,” which contributed to repeating the phrase “poverty has the face of a woman.” UNIFEM later pointed out this percentage was unfounded and no data was available that supported this number; it was simply a “guesstimate.” Furthermore, the UNDP report also depicted a more “downtrodden” image of women in the developing world. While the report did discuss women and agency, such discourse was also dampened by more extreme language, such as, “And the threat of violence stalks their lives from cradle to grave;” or, when discussing reproductive healthcare, the use of the phrase “Too often the miracle of life becomes the nightmare of death.” While UNIFEM/UN Women reports still attempted to accurately reflect some of the dangers women around the world faced, the organization was much more attentive to women’s agency and images it depicted of women in the developing world.
Summary and Comparison of the Discourse

In terms of the genealogical longitudinal analysis, these sets of sampled literature aligned on the inclusion of intersectionality over time. From 2006 and onward, intersectionality remained a major factor in the discourse and each of the texts after this year made continual note of the differences in women’s lived experiences which can be particularly affected by multiple marginalized identities. However, this is where much of the parallel development in their discourse ends. The feminist IR texts in this study used language that was well out of practice in the development literature, specifically in the use of terms such as Third World and modernization. Furthermore, when drawing on development literature, the feminist IR texts sampled were not as well-versed in the evolution of development literature and the various models of development. While not covered in-depth in this study, it is important to acknowledge that development literature has been aware of critiques on its “western-focus” for decades. Both academics and development experts have continually updated their scholarship to reflect such criticism. Additionally, it should also be noted that the women’s development policy texts sampled did not cite any feminist IR theory academic texts (neither the ones sampled in this study or in general). Thus, it is possible that the lack of parallel development in discourse between the sampled texts is due to the fields being siloed off from each other. Still, despite this lack of a genealogical alignment of language, the discourse of women’s development policy was connected and disconnected from the feminist IR literature in various ways and to varying degrees.

First, the feminist IR literature was pointed in its critiques of the “western” sociocultural foundations of the international system in a way that the selected policy literature was not. The source of the policy literature on global development was a multilateral institution (i.e. the
United Nations) that gained its power and leverage within the current international system. Thus, to critique the system is not only to critique such institutions, but perhaps to call into question their overall purpose. Perhaps straying from strong critiques of the heritage within the international system is a method of self-preservation, especially when considering a large portion of budget comes from western donor countries.

Second, the use of hierarchal dualisms and dichotomies was also a point of departure between the feminist IR and policy literatures. While both sets of texts used the dichotomies of “developed/developing” and “Global North/South,” the other dualisms were non-existent in the policy literature. There were no uses of “First World/Third World” or “East/West.” Instead, the policy literature, in many cases, opted for regional descriptors or the more stratified language of economists, such as “highly developed/more developed/less developed/least developed.” While the discourse within feminist IR lessened the use of dichotomies over time, it does seem that it is reasonably disconnected from policy literature and language in this instance. Despite these two noticeable discursive differences, there was visible intertextuality between the two sets of text, especially in discussing marginalized societies. When going through these comparisons and use of language, the overall question is: How did each discourse entrench and challenge the concept of the “third world woman?”

The literature problematized development in their respective ways. Both sets of texts used examples of women’s oppression and overall lower socioeconomic status—relative to men—from developed and developing countries to deconstruct and challenge preconceived notions about women and development. For women in developed countries, these examples were used to challenge the notion that no development is needed; the inaccurate notion that development should only—and explicitly—be linked to countries and people in developing
nations. Conversely, for women in developing countries, such examples were used to disrupt the idea that women in developed countries have no gender-based issues. These examples show that feminism and gender-based policies that may be constructed by a western-dominated theories and international system are also capable of recognizing their own issues. While feminist IR literature challenged the theoretical foundations of development, strongly critiquing it as a “western project,” the policy literature also called into question some of the previous policies and models of neoliberal economics put forth by development experts.

Both sets of literature not only challenged development, but also challenged feminism. They made a point of not only highlighting women’s movements around the world, but also showed that such activism has been occurring for decades. While the terms “feminist” and “feminism” may have originated in the west, its foundations have global roots. These examples also directly challenged the idea that women in the developing world have no agency and are waiting to be liberated by their counterparts in the “western” world. Women—in all parts of the world—have been responsible for creating movements and influencing socioeconomic polices in their respective societies.

Most importantly—and to the overall research question—in relation to the discourse in the policy literature, is feminist IR entrenching western hegemony? If so, how? Conversely, if not, how is it challenging western hegemonic discourse? The research found both sets of texts invoked each other in various ways, directly and indirectly. Multiple strands of oppositional discourse were found throughout each of the twelve texts. Feminist IR, while attempting to challenge the western hegemony and the images of women in the developing world, could not escape the use of hierarchical dichotomies. These construct and (re)produce the world in ways that inherently disprivilege one half of the dualism. The perpetual use of these dualisms
implicitly entrenches the *overall* way in which people in developing/Third World/Global South societies are viewed, including women.

**IMPORTANCE AND LIMITATIONS**

What does this mean? What does this research add to the field? What are the opportunities for similar research in the future? In Foucauldian terms, the knowledge/power nexus that exists in discourse and the use of language is deployed both implicitly and explicitly to (re)produce the world. The research found that the discourse in feminist international relations literature and women’s development policy literature is aligned in some ways and disconnected in others. In terms of importance and relevance to the field of feminist IR—and, perhaps, mainstream international relations—this research contains the following three key takeaways.

*The hegemony of western discourse has led to inherently biased ways of describing the world.*

The language and discourse that is used to describe the world and its peoples is inherently biased. It is constructed in a way that, at best, presupposes hierarchy, and at worst, implies a good/bad relationship. The use of dualisms and hierarchical dichotomies is all but natural in academic texts (even this study), given that in terms of western discourse, there exists no other way to describe the world. Even if one takes into account the more stratified and complex description in policy literature, there is still order and ranking. The existence of language which does not ascribe value/s to regions and people around the world either needs to be created and/or centered and made visible.

*Feminism has been in practice around the world.*

Another takeaway form this research is that feminism has been in practice around the world. Feminism may have been “branded” in the “western” world, but that does not mean that it was not enacted elsewhere, even if under a different name. While this is not necessarily a new
development in terms of research, it does mean that there is much work to do in terms of uncovering and recovering the histories of women everywhere. Furthermore, this research could also mean that feminism itself was responsible for creating some of this invisibility. Perhaps feminism’s task is not to be more inclusive, but to be more accurate. Inclusivity is an inherent byproduct of recounting stories of women’s movements and lived experiences around the world. Allowing the space for all women to tell their stories is not a benevolent act of inclusion, but a matter of correcting the record.

*Development is for everybody.*

Black feminist author bell hooks has a popular book, *Feminism is for Everybody*, in which she discusses the purpose of feminism and how it could help all genders, not just women. I am reminded of this text and its title when thinking of how the feminist IR and policy literature sought to problematize and create new ways of thinking about development. When looking at the discourse, it was clear that a common thread of purpose was to imply *development is for everybody*. The concept of human development and gender emerged in the policy literature to create a more complex picture of the socioeconomic status of women in the world. Each of the reports highlighted that in no society do women enjoy the same rights as men. Adding this to the feminist IR literature, which described the many ways in which feminism has succeeded and failed in “developing” countries, and that when taking into account intersectionality, not even all women are equal within a given society. This creates a more complex view of gender development, importantly noting that the need for equality and justice exists everywhere. While each of these takeaways is important, it is equally important to be cautious of overstating these conclusions. Necessary considerations must be given to the limitations of my research and what that means for the prospects of future studies.
The most obvious constraints of this research were brevity and resources. Given that there was limited time and only a single researcher (myself), there was a considerable threshold on the amount of documents that could be researched. Expanding the amount of texts to be researched allows for: greater variety in the types of documents (reports, speeches, interviews, etc.); and/or, different mediums (print, digital); and/or, a larger timeframe to sample. Each of these options lend themselves to a more conclusive study. While it is always important to stray from broad generalizations and sweeping statements, larger data sets do increase accuracy and confidence in the results.

Furthermore, one researcher also means there was no inter-coder reliability while conducting the discourse analysis. Part of this research includes a level of subjectivity and interpretation, which can obviously change from person to person. Using a group of researchers could provide differing opinions and viewpoints on the extracts. In addition, there could be language in both sets of texts that I overlooked that could have stood out to someone else. This also takes into account the sociological concept of reflexivity. As the researcher, looking for hegemonic and oppositional discourse in relation to “western” culture and norms means that I may have my own “epistemic blank spots.” As someone who grew up in the United States, it is an almost certainty that I missed and/or interpreted some of the text differently than someone who would consider themselves “non-western.”

However, it should be noted that both of these concepts are designed to provide the research with a degree of objectivity. Given that this is a qualitative analysis rooted in postmodern theory, the notion of objectivity is, to a certain extent, irrelevant (or, at the very least, impossible). The research design and methodology is such that the concept of reflexivity can only be mitigated, but not fully negated. The background and experiences of the individual—
any individual—would have to shape their view of the world. So, while multiple researchers and more texts would enrich the research and provide deeper meaning, there would not necessarily be “right” and “wrong” conclusions.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the research limitations and that feminist IR literature is still relatively marginalized within the field of mainstream international relations scholarship, this leaves various avenues for further research. One could narrow down their research to focus on a specific area of feminist IR, such as security studies, feminist political economy, or feminist development studies, given that there was a departure in discourse conceptualizing development. There is also the potential to delve into research based upon the various subgenres of women, gender, and sexuality theories, such as the newly emerging Queer IR theory. Similarly, the analysis of policy literature has many avenues.

As noted, this research was conducted using documents from two United Nations development agencies, with four out of five documents from one agency and its successor. With more time and resources, policy texts from different multilateral institutions could be used, such as the World Bank or International Monetary Fund. Given the criticisms of development and neoliberal economic policies by both feminist IR and the UN texts, analyzing the discourse of these two financial institutions would be incredibly interesting. If the discourse has changed, how so? Have policies changed? Is there a disconnection between their gender development policies and feminist economists’ critiques?

Also, the UN texts were chosen because multilateral institutions have a wide range of scholars and experts from various countries around the world working on reports. Thus, the assumption underlying this choice is that certain “epistemic blank spots” would be negated
and/or mitigated. However, given that these institutions were born out of—and still answer to—an international system that continues to be western-dominated, a more in-depth analysis of this discourse could be done to see if this is, in fact, an accurate assumption. Perhaps, instead of comparing this discourse to western literature, the policy literature could be compared to the field of non-western IR. As outlined in the literature review, this sub-field of International Relations does exist and there are scholars that—like feminist and gender theorists—are calling for the decentering of western hegemonic discourse in mainstream IR. Given that these are non-western scholars, it would be both interesting and important to see how their discourse compares to that of multilateral institutions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Given the breadth and depth of international relations and international policy, the opportunities for discursive comparisons seem endless. Despite limitations, this research sought to highlight the discourse of feminist International Relations and how it has developed since its inception in the late 1980s. The study concluded that while feminist IR discourse has kept focus on decentering western hegemonic masculinity, the pervasiveness of western hegemonic language has led to some pitfalls, most notably, the unconscious and inescapable use of hierarchical dichotomies and dualisms. However, the research also found that feminist IR scholars were increasingly aware of the “western-origins” of this language and employed discursive techniques to mitigate its use. Moving forward, this study has highlighted the overall need for international relations as a whole to integrate language that describes and constructs the world in different terms. This is a version of the world which could (although not necessarily) acknowledge the various economic, geopolitical, and sociocultural positions of individuals, but does not create/define them in hierarchical relations to each other. This thesis concluded that not
even western feminist IR scholars, whose focus is to be critical of hegemony, were able to escape such use. However, these were scholars educated in western institutions, in a western-focused discipline. Thus, given that the western-gaze of IR has continually led to the (re)production of such dualisms, perhaps the answer lies with scholars outside the west to determine such language, and indeed some already have. Perhaps, even within feminist IR, this still shows the urgent need for listening and creating the necessary space for such inclusion. Otherwise, in the popular words of Black feminist scholar Audre Lorde, “The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.”
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