

**THE STRUCTURE OF FEMINISM AS A THEORETICAL BASE FOR
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS RESEARCH**

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Abstract

Feminism has become an essential theoretical lens in International Relations. Feminist as a critical lens offers critical insights that challenges and expands traditional paradigms by emphasizing and elucidating its foundational principles, theoretical underpinning and diverse classifications. This comprehensive exploration delves into the multifaceted concept of feminism and its classification within international relations research by examining the evolution of feminist theories and their application to global political phenomena. This analysis challenges the traditional International Relation paradigms by emphasizing gendered perspectives and advocating for gender equality and highlighting the transformative impact of feminist perspective on understanding power dynamics in global politics. The study employs a qualitative approach, reviewing existing literature to delineate the various feminist theories applied in International Relations. The literature review identifies key feminist strands, including liberal, radical, postcolonial, and constructivist feminism, each offering unique insights into global power dynamics, security, globalization, governance, conflict resolution, and policy-making. The findings reveal that feminist International Relations theories contribute significantly to understanding the role of gender in international affairs, and the necessity of integrating and transforming the potential of feminist perspectives in fostering more inclusive, equitability and the reshaping of the International Relations theories and practices. Ultimately contributing to a richer and more nuanced field of International Relation scholars. Conclusions underscore the necessity of integrating feminist insights into mainstream International Relation research, while recommendations suggest avenues for future scholarship to further enrich the fields.

Introduction

Feminism generally refers to the political, social and philosophical movement intended at achieving equality between genders, challenging the structures and system of patriarchy and supporting the rights and liberation of women. Feminism theory offers critical insights that challenge and expand the boundaries of International Relations by foregrounding gender as a fundamental category of analysis. Feminist International Relations seeks to unveil and break down the patriarchal system that perpetuates inequality and marginalization within the international systems (Tickner, 1992; Enloe, 2000). By integrating gender perspectives, feminist IR not only broadens the analytical scope of the discipline but also advocates for more inclusive and equitable global governance (True, 1997). Feminist theory challenges the conventional state-centric, realist and liberal frameworks that primarily focus on military power, sovereignty and international conflict, all of which have historically marginalized or ignored gender dynamics (Peterson, 1997).

Feminist IR also questions the male-dominated construction of power and security, noting how traditional theories have often equated masculinity with leadership, rationality, and strength, while associating femininity with weakness, vulnerability and domestic sphere. As such, feminist perspectives seek to unveil and challenge the gendered assumptions embedded in international Relations theories and practices (Sjoberg, 2007). Feminist scholars argue that international Relations cannot be fully understood without analyzing global power structures, including the institutions and policies of states and international organizations, perpetuate gender inequalities and reinforce patriarchal norms (Tickner & Kronsell, 2012). This paper aims to elucidate the concept of feminism, its theoretical foundations and classifications within International relations Research by highlighting its significance in enriching, diversifying and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of international dynamics and global interactions. This study elucidates how feminist approaches enrich our understanding of security, power and justice in international politics.

Materials and Methods

This paper applies a qualitative methodology, scholarly articles, journals, books, and seminal works in the field of feminist International Relations. The sources were selected considering their significance and relevance to the advancement of theories in the field of International Relations (IR). The examination focuses on recognizing and classifying perspectives while delving into their theoretical foundations and assessing their influence on both scholarly research and real-world application, in IR.

Literature Review

During the late 20th century is when the Feminist international relations theory surfaced in response to mainstream International Relations theories overlooking gender perspectives. Initially feminist scholars criticized the absence of women's experiences and the gender bias in political power dynamics (Ticker 1992; Enloe 2004). They pointed out how traditional IR models ignored the economic aspects of power that impact women and marginalized communities therefore requiring a reassessment of ideas, like security and sovereignty.

Classification of Feminist in International Relations

The IR Feminist thought in International Relations is diverse, covering several theoretical approaches, theories like liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist and socialist feminism, postcolonial feminism, poststructuralist feminism, and ecofeminism. All these theories offer distinct perspectives on gender and global politics. This section delves into each classification, highlighting their unique contributions and theoretical underpinnings (Tickner, 1992; Enloe, 2000).

Liberal Feminism: The progressive liberal feminist focuses on promoting gender equality through changes in institutions and supports including women in decision making processes such as implementing gender quotas and removing discriminatory laws and policies. Liberal feminists advocate for initiatives that support the advancement of women's rights and their meaningful participation in decision making processes like the United Nations security council resolution 1325 concerning women's rights in conflict zones. They stress the significance of incorporating gender viewpoints into organizations such as the United Nations (UN) world bank (WB) and international monetary fund (IMF). They push for enhancing women's opportunities in education, financial assets and influential positions to boost their involvement in politics (True, 1997). While liberal feminism has been important in advocating and promoting women's participation in international politics, it has been critiqued for focusing primarily on rich, opportune and elite women and failing to address deeper structural inequalities and intersectional issues.

Radical Feminism: At the same time, radical feminism in IR contests patriarchy as the broader, global structure on which the international system is predicated. It argues that to achieve real equality between men and women we must abolish patriarchal systems of oppression and re-envision global power relations. The violence and masculinity of militarism is essential, radical feminists assert, calling for the closure of military institutions and for efforts to redirect money to more peaceful ends. They demand a profound restructuring of international institutions to root out patriarchal prejudices. For instance, radical feminists tend to emphasize social justice and equity, and see liberation from gender oppression as tied to the fight against all forms of oppression (Peterson, 1997). Radical feminism is often criticized for its perceived utopianism and lack of practical solutions for achieving systemic change within existing international frameworks.

Marxist/Socialist Feminism: The intersection of gender and class in a world capitalist system has been the concern of Marxist and socialist feminists. They contend that capitalism and patriarchy are mutually reinforcing systems of exploiting women and the working class. It foregrounds the overrepresentation of the negative effects of global economic structures (neoliberalism/globalization) that are being placed on women and in more particular, women of the Global South (Einsenstein, 2004). Marxist feminists emphasize the exploitation of women workers in the formal and informal sectors, and on that basis, provide economic policy recommendations to eliminate gender-based disparities. They criticize the international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF for implementing economic policies that deepen gender imbalances. On the other hand, Marxist and socialist feminism can also be critiqued for placing too much importance on class, viewing gender struggles as intricately tied to economic factors, which can overlook varied experiences and aspects of gender and culture.

Postcolonial Feminism: Postcolonial feminism conceptualizes the effects of colonial histories and imperialist practices on the gender relations within the current international system (Tickner & Kronsell, 2012). It critiques the Western feminist approach that often tends to neglect marginalizing the experiences of women in the Global South. Postcolonial feminists encourage zooming out from solely Western Europe to be able to dissect feminist analysis using universalization of experiences. They insist that race, ethnicity and cultural identity are central to women's experience and modes of resistance. Postcolonial feminism disputes Western feminism's inclination to universalize, ensuring a more localized and contextualized frame of reference on gender issues (Perterson, 1997). Postcolonial feminism may be critiqued for potentially fragmenting feminist solidarity by emphasizing regional and cultural differences, making it challenging to form cohesive global feminist movements.

Poststructuralist feminism: It emphasizes the importance of language, discourse and representation in the construction of gender identities and power relations (Krahmann, 1993). Its aim is to dismantle binarism and expose the patriarchal assumptions within IR theorization. Poststructuralist feminists focus more on language and analyze the role narratives within the international, international media and discourse play to create, fundamentalism, or eliminate gender norms. They argue that identities are fluid, not fixed, and socially constructed rather than essentialized along sex lines. This lens interrogates how power works through discourse and how it creates notions of what security, leadership and cooperation means. Poststructuralist feminism is sometimes criticized for its abstract and theoretical nature, making it difficult to translate its insights into concrete policy recommendations or practical actions.

Ecofeminism: This phrase summarizes the goal of ecofeminism, linking the exploitation of women with that of the environment through common pieces shared through patriarchal and capitalist systems. It supports and pushes for policies that are both gender and environmentally just while also being sustainable and fair globally (Sjoberg, 2007). Female ecofeminists provide specific information showing how ecological destruction (the current trend toward this) affects women who live in Third World countries or developing countries, they explain that these women suffer much more than men. They advocate for policies that link gender equality with environmental sustainability, including renewable energy and sustainable agriculture programs. Ecofeminists condemn capitalists for their motives of resource extraction and economic growth and call economic models that prioritize nature preservation and egalitarianism instead. Ecofeminism may be critiqued for its broad scope, which can dilute the focus on gender-specific issues by intertwining them with environmental concerns.

Theoretical framework: The study's theoretical foundation is based on the theory that suggests various social identities, like gender, race, class and sexuality intersect to form distinct experiences of oppression and privilege. The use of this framework is crucial, for examining how gender dynamics function in the arena of relations.

Finding and Discussions: The introduction of Feminist IR theories have profoundly enriched the field of international relations. Gender equality has a critical variable in the analysis of global politics. By challenging the androcentric focus of traditional IR theories, feminism broadens the scope of inquiry to include issues that were previously marginalized or overlooked. The following points highlight the key contribution and implications of feminist perspectives in international

relations: Broadening the analytical scope; Challenging traditional paradigms; Promoting inclusive methodologies; Highlighting intersectionality; Influencing policy and practice **and** encouraging transformative change. However, the field also faces several challenges, such as Integration with mainstream IR, Diversity of Feminist perspectives, Empirical research Gaps **and** Global representation.

Conclusion: The incorporation of Feminist International Relations into the field of International Relations is key in enhancing a fair comprehension of the systems dynamics and structures. Its integration into International Relations research is crucial for developing a more holistic and equitable understanding of the international system. Feminist International Relations contributes significantly to our insight into relations by advocating for an inclusive and just global order. This integration ensures that international policies and actions prioritize justice, equality and sustainability for all individuals. Various theoretical frameworks within Feminist International Relations. Such as radical, Marxist, postcolonial, poststructuralist and ecofeminist theories. Play a role in shaping this discourse.

Recommendations: To further enhance the integration of feminism in international relations research and practice, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Integrate Gender Perspectives into International Policies,
- ii. Embrace Diverse feminist Voices,
- iii. Provide funding and resources: research grants and allocations,
- iv. Promote open access publications and disseminations,
- v. Promote interdisciplinary Research,
- vi. Promote intersectional approaches in research and practice,
- vii. Expand empirical studies,
- viii. Enhance Women's Participation in Global Governance,
- ix. Foster Collaboration between Feminist and Other Critical Theories,
- x. Advocate for Sustainable and Equitable Global Policies,
- xi. Enhance educational curricula by incorporating feminism theory and gender analysis into IR educational programs to cultivate generations of scholars and practitioners equipped with exclusive perspectives.

By implementing these recommendations, the field of International Relations can continue to evolve towards a more inclusive and equitable discipline.

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