

MJC 7, Semester 4

## Feminist Perspectives on International Relations

### Introduction

Feminist approaches to International Relations challenge the dominant masculine and patriarchal structures that shape global politics. Feminist scholars argue that traditional International Relations theories have ignored the experiences and perspectives of women, and that this has led to a narrow and incomplete

understanding of international relations.

## Key Assumptions

1. Gender Matters: Feminist scholars argue that gender is a critical variable in international relations, shaping the experiences and opportunities of individuals and groups.

2. Patriarchal Structures: Feminist scholars argue that international relations are shaped by patriarchal structures, which privilege masculine interests and perspectives.

3. Intersectionality: Feminist scholars argue that gender

intersects with other forms of oppression, such as racism, classism, and homophobia.

## Key Concepts

1. Security: Feminist scholars argue that traditional notions of security are narrow and masculine, focusing on military power and state interests. They advocate for a broader understanding of security that includes human security, economic security, and environmental security.

2. Global Governance: Feminist scholars argue that global governance structures, such as the United Nations, are patriarchal and

exclude women's voices and perspectives.

3. Empowerment: Feminist scholars argue that empowerment is critical for women's participation in international relations, and that this requires addressing the social, economic, and cultural barriers that prevent women from participating.

## Key Proponents

1. Cynthia Enloe: Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (1989) is a classic work that challenges traditional International Relations theories and highlights the importance of gender.

2. Sandra Whitworth: Whitworth's

Feminism and International Relations (1994) is a seminal work that explores the intersection of feminism and International Relations.

3. J. Ann Tickner: Tickner's Gender in International Relations (1992) is a influential work that challenges traditional International Relations theories and highlights the importance of gender.

## Critiques and Limitations

1. Essentialism: Feminist scholars have been criticized for essentializing women's experiences and perspectives, ignoring the diversity of women's lives and

experiences.

2. Cultural Imperialism: Feminist scholars have been criticized for imposing Western feminist values and perspectives on non-Western cultures and societies.

## Conclusion

Feminist approaches to International Relations offer a critical perspective on the nature of international relations, highlighting the importance of gender, intersectionality, and empowerment. While there are limitations and critiques of feminist approaches, they continue to shape our understanding of international

relations and inform policies and practices that promote gender equality and justice.