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FEMINIST THEORY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract:

Feminist theory is considered as one of the key theories went into the science of international relations in the eighties of the last century. It was reflected with other theories under the name of critical theory or post-positivist theories. With the passage of more than three decades and since its entry into the study of international relations, feminist theory remains one of the most important axes of controversy among the positivist and critical currents. Some consider it an outsider with knowledge of security, defense, war and diplomacy, while others see in feminist theory a major contribution because it sheds light on certain issues in the study of international relations. The essential one is the role of women, their reality and their position on issues that are studied and contribute to feminist theory with what its studies presented made a great contribution to developing the science of international relations and adding an important aspect to the issue of gender. As a social concept, it is also included in the concept of power relationship in international relations.

Introduction:

Feminist theory is one of the key theories that went into the science of international relations in the eighties of the last century, which was reflected with other theories under the name of critical theory or post-positivist theories. With the passage of more than three decades and since its entry into the study of international relations, feminist theory remains one of the most important axes of controversy among the positivist and critical currents. Some consider it an outsider with knowledge of security, defense, war and diplomacy, while others see in feminist theory a major contribution because it sheds light on certain issues in the study of international relations. The essential one is the role of women, their reality and their position on issues that are studied and contribute to feminist theory with what its studies presented made a great contribution to developing the science of international relations and adding an important aspect to the issue of gender. As a social concept, it is also included in the concept of power relationship in international relations.

Accordingly, a research problem appeared where the social problem lies in the debate about feminist theory and its role in international relations, while others scholars of international relations see that it adds a lot to this science by shedding light on a number of important issues. Accordingly, many questions are to be raised, namely: How did gender become a basis of the feminist project in international relations? What is the diversity in feminist theoretical approaches?

What are the most important discussions of feminist theory and the most important criticisms directed at it?

As for the research hypothesis, the current research hypothesizes that the approaches presented by the feminist theory and its foundations make it more capable of posing and highlighting many issues related to the participation of women and their role in public life in general and international relations in particular. The research methodology adopted is the deduction which indicates departing from theory to reality. We shall start from the basic assumptions of feminist theory and view its explanatory capacity and its validity in understanding, explain and predict the phenomenon in international relations. The research is divided as follows:

The first topic: Gender: the basis of the feminist project in international relations

The second topic: the diversity of feminist theoretical approaches

The third topic: ideas, discussion of feminist theory and the most important criticisms directed at it. The last one is the conclusion, the sources and references.

The first topic: Gender: the basis of the feminist project in international relations.

Within this topic, we deal with gender as a concept and its dimension, the basis for the feminist project in international relations.

The first requirement:

the concept of gender: it is a social structure of ideas that define individuals, belief systems, attitudes, images, values and expectations for men and women. It contributes greatly to power relations, not only between men and women, but also between groups resulting in many social problems in different cultures adopting different ideas about gender and about what is appropriate for a man and woman to do and what it should be. Gender does not differ from culture to culture only, but also can be so within time or it can change in a culture through a crisis situation ⁽¹⁾. When looking at how gender is related to power and justice, as many cultures refer to men's experiences and concepts as the natural thing. The masculine non-sexual behavior is taken as the standard behavior, and the exercise of power is also seen in particular and in public as a manly behavior. In most cultures, it is assumed that it is the man who is the family and community leader, while women are seen as subordinate and supportive. It can be assumed that women and girls have no role in shaping their decisions, and it may also mean that men who do not have traditional roles face public criticism. Since gender is a socially constructed idea, it can be identified by changing oppressive perceptions about males' and females' roles. This is what we call gender justice ⁽²⁾.

The gender doctrine is based on a strict separation between what is called "biological type" or "social type" which is a concept that is based on foundational categories that tend to precede existence over essence, or according to Simone de Beauvoir's expression: That one of them is not born a woman, but becomes so. It is a saying that may bear relatively acceptable interpretive perspectives that may be taken on to bear an extreme ethical connotation that human society in its cultural and historical contexts. According to this perspective, human society is what identify the male and the female or classifies them. So that, social type is independent of the biological type even though the social effect, cultural and historical, does not neglect the concept of masculinity and femininity or men and women, and the consequent positions and roles. Is this valid as a justification for an ethical denial of the social impact of what is called the biological type itself? Unless the biological, physiological, and psychological features and the like emerge as evident or potential effects on the human being, or to transfer (gender) whether past or present ⁽³⁾.

The second requirement: the basis of the feminist project in international relations. Canadian psychologist Peterson says that in order to know how feminist approaches constitute a wide spectrum of political and analytical positions, it is necessary to publicly know three feminist knowledge projects intertwined in international relations that appeared in succession through the different scientific branches, where the first feminist project is an attempt to display the degrees and effects of male bias. ⁽⁴⁾

The field of international relations in terms of scientific and professional practice is dominated by males in the Western world (Anglo-European). We hardly find a female name mentioned among the pioneers and most important thinkers who contributed to the emergence and development of international relations, whether as a field of knowledge and thought or as a scientific or academic field. According to feminist thinkers, it is obvious that the absence is not due to the fact that women are minors and unable to provide an addition and prove their capabilities in this field. Rather, it is due to the male monopoly and exclusion practiced against women. In terms of the intellectual and scientific product, it has been marked with a purely masculine mark reflected in concepts such as sovereignty, national security and military power. The public sphere (politics, power, foreign policy, war).

The second step: In the project was an attempt to correct the organized exclusion of women and neglecting the meanings of femininity on the part of male centralism by adding women to the existing knowledge frameworks. Focusing on women's lives and activities in the private sector includes new sources and topics. We have previously seen how an important section of feminists tried and claimed to challenge the prevailing approaches and cognitive frameworks, rationality as an example, from within and not to reject and present them. Peterson argues that most of the feminist works coincide with the second project when I wondered where women are in the context of mainstream topics in international relations ⁽⁵⁾.

The third step was to restructure and rebuild the theory, and here the distinction between sex and gender becomes decisive. On the contrary to the empirical view, and the positivism of sex as biology whether a binary male / female, gender is a historically contingent social construct that is divided on the basis of identities, behaviors and expectations as masculinity and femininity. Gender as a historical construct is not a given naturally, that it is not a characteristic of individuals, but an institutional structural characteristic of social life and as a result all social life is a gender ⁽⁶⁾

Feminists have used the gender analysis to reveal the bias present in basic concepts in international relations such as power and security and considering that this bias did not determine its theoretical applications only, but rather had specific results in terms of the practice of international relations, where they focused to a lesser extent on gender as an empirical variable and its degree and focused greater on gender as an analytical pattern. The importance of gender lies in providing us with knowledge of how to think in addition to how we act resulting in moving from the second project to the third one. That is, the transition from gender to gender is to ensure the shift from the addition of Africa to an analytical rethink⁽⁷⁾.

The second topic: the diversity of feminist theoretical approaches

In this topic, the researcher deals with the most important diversity of approaches to feminist theory and what are the opinions of some thinkers about feminist theory in international relations and how it was divided

The thinkers 'point of view in international relations:

The German scientist in the field of social sciences: Martin Griffich says that Feminist concepts represented at the end of the twentieth century a field of research in the study of international relations, characterized by richness, complexity and contradiction in many cases. Therefore, it does not present a single harmonious vision around the world, but rather it is multidimensional. Griffich considers it an umbrella that includes a wide range of critical theory aimed at studying gender in international relations⁽⁸⁾. Despite the recognition of the diversity of concepts and approaches that form feminist thought, there is no agreement about its classification, number, or even its nomenclature. Modernism ... etc., and there are those who classified it as Marxist feminism, liberal feminism, socialism and radicalism, while others have added to it black environmental feminism, existential culture.

As for Spike Peterson, it was classified and divided into liberal, Marxist, radical and post-colonial⁽⁹⁾

In turn, Silvestre presented an important classification of feminist approaches to international relations, drawing on her work on distinguishing between different feminist trends in her view of society to examine international relations.

This categorization was represented in experimental feminism, as well as in the postmodern feminist view. As for JackoyBromiz's view, he distinguished between three forms or classes of feminist thought on international relations:

1- Empirical feminism: It focuses on women and the exploitation of gender as an experimental dimension in international relations.

2- Analytic feminism: It uses gender as a theoretical pattern or category to reveal the masculine sexism found in the concepts of international relations, to clarify and to explain the essential features of international relations.

3- Normative feminism: It is a reflection of the theorizing process as part of the normative agenda for political and social change, and also presented a classification different from the above. It considers the existence of three basic feminist research currents in international relations at the present time:

Review stories that talk about international relations

- Reconsidering the major stories that were told about war and peace.

Focusing on re-evaluating the role and position of women and development in the international system and its components ⁽¹⁰⁾

The third topic: ideas, discussion of feminist theory and the most important criticisms directed at it.

The researcher considers such topic two requests: the first is for discussion of feminist ideas, and the second requirement is for the criticisms directed at it.

The first requirement: Discussion perspective of feminist theory:

What the followers of feminist theory dealt with issues and positions on the reality of women and their role in international relations clearly adds value in this field, but some of these ideas must be discussed from an epistemological and ontological point of view.

From an epistemological point of view, feminist theory relied on building its vision of its subject on the Western experience without distinguishing between the reality of women and their privacy from the world. The followers of feminism assumed that the experience of women in Europe and America applies to other countries. So, they did not take into account the difference between the social values of each society.

The reality of women in Arab countries, for example, differs from the reality of women in the United States or European countries, although there are some common points, such as the domination of men on many issues such as public policies and international relations. We cannot refer to the existence of universal values and rules about a woman is nothing, but the humanity of the woman, whose

freedom and emancipation from slavery deepened by social relations in every country around the world must be deepened.

With criticizing the epistemological and ontological foundations of positivist theories, feminist theory proceeds from assumptions similar to those positivist foundations such as: it starts from the observation of the phenomenon in societies and the belief of the feminists in the possibility of generalizing the results of their studies. These assumptions in essence mimic the positivist assumptions, as well as for the followers of feminist theory and their assumption of the existence of a patriarchal male society resembling an assumption of the new realism in the existence of an international system in which the central authority is absent which determines the behavior of the active units in International Relations. Even some studies presented by some adherents of feminist theory have adopted the methodology that was adopted by positivist theories such as field studies and studies that indicated participation rate of women in political life, especially positions of responsibility and decision-making that has used the quantitative approach addressing the subject of study.

Feminist theory is a post-positivist theory, that is, it focuses on the role of culture, identity values and feelings in the study of international relations. Therefore, this theory was based on the role of the individual and the values and rules that govern his behavior as an entrance to the study of the role of women in international relations. Feminist theory entered international relations like other critical theories at the end of the eighties of the twentieth century and soon occupied a prominent place in the literature in this field of science. It has become an integral part of the future of the study of international relations. The most important points of feminist theory are summarized by Jill Stains and Loyid Batford according to the following⁽¹¹⁾

- 1- Feminist theory is a broad vision and a multi-directional school that includes many points of difference and several meeting points.
- 2- The feminist theory does not focus only on the life of women. It is also based on a social vision and cultural issues that created the so-called gender and the role of women in society.
- 3- Some feminist currents highlight discrimination and discrimination against women, but they do not consider them as victims.

Feminist currents are also looking for ways to strengthen and improve the role of women.

4- Contemporary feminist currents do not focus on women or men as a unit, or classify or distinguish between two different types, but rather look at the concept of gender that reflects it on the position of men and women and their role in society, and the resulting types of authoritarianism and minorship against women.

5- Feminist theory entered the study of international relations as part of the third debate between positivism and post-positivism in the mid-eighties of the twentieth century.

6- Followers of feminist theory, with its multiple currents, point to an important issue in the study of international relations. Especially what followers of other currents claim that it is important or unimportant, basic or not essential based on presumptions reflecting power relations.

7- Feminist theories focus on the fact that what is local has a relationship with the external and the international, that is domestic issues in a particular country of exploitation and discrimination against a segment in society are inseparable from external issues ⁽¹²⁾.

The second requirement: Criticisms against feminist theory:

With what was presented by the feminist theory of the fourth debate in international relations, but it was the subject of many criticisms, namely:

1- The first criticism against feminist theory is its focus on women in particular, although some contributions go out on tradition to raise a more general and comprehensive issue, especially in recent years.

2- Feminist theory has not succeeded in developing a theoretical framework or an integrated theory along the lines of realism.

3- With the contributions made by feminist currents, however, it is taken against these currents that they did not differentiate between the women present in the sites and the wealthy classes and the women in the poor classes of the concerned societies.

4- The fourth criticism is that feminist theory talks about classifying gender and sexuality as being general. It includes all parts of the world and there is no difference between women in Latin America, the West or the Middle East.

Criticism of this theory does not mean that it does not contribute to the current debate in the study of international relations or that these contributions are insignificant. On the contrary, what the followers of feminist theory presented constitutes a qualitative leap in this field, especially the topics and issues forming

the core of the study, such as: the exploitation of women and their absence from public life. Some of these criticisms may reflect the opinions of some academics, but not most of them (13).

Conclusion:

Feminist theory is a post-positivist theory that has taken a stance different from positivist theories, especially with regard to the epistemological, ontological and methodological foundations of the subject of the study regarding international relations. Feminist theory rejected all the foundations and assumptions upon which positivist theories were based on leading to a model of knowledge that feminism calls into question its validity and relevance in the human liberation project. Feminist theory raised many issues that were absent from the study of international relations, especially the role of women. The concept of gender that adherents of feminist theory view is the social meaning of the role of the sexes (Male and female) to society is one of the most important contributions to feminist theory.

With the beginning of the twenty-first century, and controversy between currents usually in the field of international relations, it is necessary putting women's issues on the priorities in academic work, because that means returning half of society to normal. There are no human rights without the rights of neither women, nor human liberation and their emancipation without freeing the woman. Hence the contributions of feminist theory to academia and political activism in society and the world is necessary to refer to a set of research questions that may form the beginning for other research in the field of feminist theory; Example: How political upbringing can play a role in women's emancipation? What efforts and legal aspects should he work on in order to develop the reality of women? Other research issues must be addressed to empower women in the world.

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