

**Can gender come to the rescue of foreign policy?  
An exploration into the ways in which the (mis) understanding  
of gender influences the making of foreign policy**

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**Abstract:**

This paper attempts to provide a broad theoretical background of the ways in which gender has informed the making of foreign policy. It examines the various types of feminism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how they complement each other, criticize each other and have contributed to critical political debate. Realism as the dominant political paradigm of the 20<sup>th</sup> century comes under scrutiny and it is shown how it abets and supports male domination by cloaking it in neutral language and institutions that appear neutral. Foreign policy objectives are often linked to the national interest, which in itself is a problematic and contested concept. Foreign policy makers face new challenges today as the political landscape changes, often driven by multinational corporations who dictate the rules of political engagement. Not only has the international political arena changed drastically in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but so has the domestic arena. Studies in foreign policy attitudes show marked differences along gender lines. Most studies focus on the pacifist attitudes of women, but this paper goes on to show how gendered theories of security, globalization, the environment and human rights could inform foreign policy makers and others who shape foreign policy agendas.

**Abstrak:**

Hierdie tesis poog om 'n breek teoretiese agtergrond te skep van die wyses waarin gender (geslag as 'n konstruksie) die skep van buitelandse beleid beïnvloed. Dit bestudeer die verskeie tipes feminisme in die 20ste eeu en hoe hulle mekaar komplimenteer, mekaar kritiseer en bygedra het tot kritiese politieke debat. Realisme as die dominante paradigma van die 20ste eeu word noukeurig bestudeer en daar word gewys hoe hierdie paradigma manlike dominasie ondersteun deur dit te vermom in neutrale taal en instellings wat neutraal voorkom. Buitelandse beleid word dikwels gekoppel aan die nasionale belang wat op sigself 'n problematiese konsep is. Weens die veranderende internasionale politieke arena staan makers van buitelandse beleid nuwe uitdagings in die gesig, veral omdat multinasionale maatskappye dikwels die reëls van die spel bepaal. Studies toon dat gevoelens en houdings oor spesifieke buitelandse beleidskwessies dikwels verskillend vir mans en vrouens manifesteer. Meeste studies fokus op die ondersteuning van vrouens van vrede in kontras met geweld en oorlog. Hierdie tesis gaan verder deur te wys hoe 'gendered' teorieë van sekuriteit, globalisering, die omgewing en menseregte moontlik die skeppers van buitelandse beleid kan beïnvloed.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

It is the aim of this paper to ask a few uncomfortable questions. Questions that will hopefully be unsettling to both International Relations theorists as well as feminists and all those who have a vested interest in the rethinking and remaking of international relations. The 'reconstructive theoretic project' is then precisely that: to (albeit humbly) attempt new insights and suggestions in which to improve foreign policy from a gender perspective, to reemphasize suggestions and critiques that have collected dust, that have been sidelined, that have been viewed as too 'soft', too idealistic, too subjective, too subversive and too dangerous.

International Relations has been one of the disciplines in which feminist thinking has made the least amount of inroads. Foreign policy as a subject of International Relations and political theory even less so. Foreign policy issues and debates don't seem to be the priority of the main stream media, with a lot more time and money spent on domestic issues, lending to foreign policy a certain kind of 'mystery', and the only emphasis on foreign policy suggested in IR literature is of a technical nature, hardly accessible to the average person. In Realist terms, foreign policy forms part of that arena called "high" politics, where the authority of the state and state-makers is taken as a given, as the 'word of God'. What is meant by Realist, by 'high', will be discussed in detail later in the section on orthodoxy.

But why do International Relations scholars need to take gender seriously? What suggests that gender plays a significant role in how we view the world? When we think what international relations is supposed to be about, the prevention of war, optimizing of the global economy, the mutual dependence on the physical environment, the trade in knowledge, etc., it does not seem that gender really plays a role here. It seems absurd that we need to give attention to something that is not there to begin with? Well, in a sense, that is precisely the point: feminist scholars have repeatedly pointed out the visible lack

of attention to women and their experiences in international relations. What I would like to avoid in this paper, however, is the total equation of 'women' with 'gender'. In fact, it is one of the aims of this paper to bring to our attention the subversive effect of focusing on gender instead of just women. It will show how many men's experiences are also ignored, not seen as significant. This will have bearing on the reconstructive project in terms of including all these experiences, but also problematizing the assumptions long held within the field - the assumption that the international arena is anarchic, that war is always imminent and that sovereignty is absolute. Feminist scholarship in this sense overlaps with other critical stances that suggest that this is not the only world to be known, that there are possibilities of cooperation, of multilateralism, of international organization.

But to understand how we have come so far without taking gender seriously, it will be necessary to study the impact of Realism on the practices of international relations, in this case specifically the making of foreign policy. It will therefore also be necessary to go and look how history has shaped our understanding of the world we live in. This paper explores in particular the possibility of having gender-based theoretical frameworks inform the making of foreign policy.

In order to get to the point where we can discuss the intersection of gender and foreign policy meaningfully, it will be necessary to give an overview of the major theoretical developments in International Relations theory, and also how feminist theory has developed alongside this, or even as some kind of reaction. International Relations has long been dominated by the Realist paradigm, and although many theorists and policy-makers would like to believe that this is not the case, a quick look at the 'state of affairs' and the size of military budgets around the world will tell otherwise. This paradigm has had some very dire consequences for human security. What exactly is meant by human security will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper. There will also be a focus on how feminist theory attempts to critically inform the area of International Relations, how a gender-sensitive perspective may make it possible to not only take seriously the lives

and experiences of women, but also those who have traditionally been marginalised as a result of a gender-, race-, and class-blind paradigm.

Foreign policy is also problematic in itself. According to William Wallace (1971:7) “foreign policy is that area of politics which bridges the all-important boundary between the national and the international environments - the boundary which defines the nation-state, within the limits of which national governments claim supreme authority”. It all seems quite innocent and relatively straightforward. However, some words that have been so “innocently” chosen, can be viewed as highly contentious. The “all-important boundary” demands an inquiry into the ontology of the writer; by claiming it to be so important, even *all*-important, he is giving it a certain kind of ‘power-over’ and puts it beyond criticism. “National” and “international” as two distinct environments are also problematic, and I will return to this in greater detail in the section on gender and foreign policy. According to Chomsky (1978: 1) “it is a good idea to begin by investigating the domestic social structure: Who sets foreign policy? What interests do these people represent? What is the domestic source of their power? Is it a reasonable surmise that the policy that evolves will reflect the special interests of those who design it?” This adds on to the idea of the dichotomy created by Realists and many other International Relations theorists - national/ international. The domestic has influence over the international, and as I will illustrate later, the international also has influence over the national. They are in fact, inseparable. Foreign policy and the making thereof will also be analyzed to establish its various theoretical underpinnings, and some examples will be used to illustrate this better. This will be done in order to highlight the impact of policy-makers’ epistemologies, and that policy is not necessarily only ‘pragmatic’. Closely linked to this is the idea of the ‘national interest’, which is often used by an elite group of policy makers to justify their policies. A closer look at the propaganda-machine, and the accompanying mystification of foreign policy making will highlight how states succeed in maintaining the status quo, and successfully ignore voices from the margins.

Drawing on the above-mentioned discussions, there will be specific focus on how gender can highlight inequalities perpetuated by foreign policy-making, and in doing so also inform policy-makers of the value of gender-perspectives on the general well-being of all the peoples of the world. Four areas will be focused on, namely security, development, the environment and human rights. Section two of this paper will deal with the theoretical background of both feminism and International Relations whereas section three will deal more specifically with Realism as the dominant paradigm in International Relations. Section four focuses on the issues at stake in foreign policy and section five looks at four specific and important foreign policies and how gender impacts on them.

Security does not only entail the absence of war, the strengthening of the military, the safekeeping of our borders and ties with allies. I aim for a much wider notion of security, and even at times a notion of security that radically questions the state's ability to provide the necessary conditions for our general well being. There will also be discussion on how the state actively destabilizes peoples, how the state is the cause of insecurity for significant numbers of people, and how this is caused by policy-makers impoverished knowledge on what exactly constitutes security.

Development will be discussed in close association with the phenomenon of globalization. The growing international trend of globalization has had serious consequences for the welfare of people around the globe, especially women and people from developing countries. I will discuss how foreign policy-makers have failed (in the developed as well as the developing world) to protect their peoples from the harmful effects of economic globalization, specifically in terms of the increasing feminization of poverty, unfair trade practices (usually by the developed world) and the negative effects of colonialism with the subsequent importation of narrow imperial ideas on development. This also had severe implications for the social reality in many of these former colonies, specifically in terms of gender relations.

It seems ludicrous to talk about the harmful effects of globalization, considering the destabilizing effects on tradition and culture, and then also to try and put the idea of human rights as universal rights onto the map, but that is precisely what I will attempt to do. Yet I would like to show that universal human rights are as much a possibility as the possibility for women across the race and class divide to find issues that will unite them, irrespective of their differences. Without this, there can be no emancipatory project, not for women, and not for mankind as a whole.

Lastly I would like to explore some theoretical and practical implications of taking gender seriously. In doing so, I am not attempting to create a new theory or a new paradigm. I do this rather in an attempt to steer clear of the same falsehoods that have been created by the dominant paradigms of the twentieth century. In so doing, I am highlighting the power that knowledge construction has over a very real world. Worlds are created, and then we act within the paradigmatic constraints that have been placed upon us. We do not consider that there might be other ways of looking, and therefore other solutions to things that we have viewed as dilemmas, or that we haven't even seen at all.

The viability of the state in a world where globalization has become more than a buzzword needs some consideration. If there is to be an emancipatory project, then the ability of the state to provide will have to be looked at more closely. Given the fact that the state has in many instances been the tool that (some) men have used to further their own agendas, doesn't make the state an evil per se. There are feminisms that claim that the state is inherently patriarchal, and while this view has had benefits for the feminist movement as such in highlighting the power plays taking place within the state apparatus, it cannot be said that this is always the case, or that women and marginalised peoples have not in any circumstance benefited from the workings of the state. As Kofi Annan (2000: 13), secretary-general of the United Nations says: "Notwithstanding the institutional turmoil that is often associated with globalization, there exists no other entity that competes with or can substitute for the state."

## CHAPTER 2

### **Gender and International Relations**

As already mentioned, International Relations is one of the disciplines that have been most resistant to gender and feminist theory. Only recently has there been some kind of concerted effort to listen to voices from the margins, but this has in many instances stayed at the level of abstract theory. Jacqui True (1996) quotes R.B.J. Walker as saying, “the absence of a moment of critique in International Relations (IR) is its distinguishing feature”. (1993:7) Some feminist theories have striven to highlight the unfair discrimination of international relations practices against women, but still employing the language of the orthodoxy. More importantly, recent theorizing on gender and International Relations has brought to the foreground not only the absence of women and their experiences, but also how the very discourses have silenced those voices that take gender seriously by positing the experiences of men as neutral, specifically experiences of Western, white, middle-class heterosexual men. To better understand where the meeting point for feminist theory and International Relations exist today, it will be necessary to look at different feminist theories, and how feminisms come to be not only as a reaction to the orthodoxies, but also to other feminist theories. It is dangerous and misleading to speak of one feminism, there are many views, some of them complimentary, and some of them hostile to each other. I shall group different feminist theories under four broad headings, namely liberal feminist theory, radical feminist theory, critical theory and postmodern feminism. Not all of them fit so easily within anyone of these categories, but as far as possible, I will bring attention to this.

#### 2.1 Liberal feminism

For these theorists, the goal of liberal feminism is the equal rights of men and women. This also entails equal opportunity. They see the state as the provider and protector of such rights and opportunities, and actively campaign through various pressure groups and political parties for the advancement of such rights. “Neither patriarchy nor capitalism are identified as the enemies of women, rather the restricted reach of liberalism is identified

as the problem.” (<http://datadump.icaap.org/cgi-bin/glossary/SocialDict/SocialDict?term=LIBERAL%20FEMINISM>)

These feminists have been criticized because they have an ‘add women and stir’ approach. They neglect to see how the very nature of the state is gendered, and to expect the state to safeguard certain rights, without challenging the gendered nature of the state, is to be blind to the hyper-masculinity of the state. How the state has come to have this gendered nature will be addressed in the discussion of radical feminism below. Liberal feminist agendas also tend to be driven by Western feminist interests, as they tend to ignore other forms of oppression. The assumptions of liberal feminism correspond to the assumptions held by contemporary liberal society. It holds individual freedom in the highest regard and are usually blind to how the state and capitalist society itself hinder this freedom, that there exists a contradiction in the way the free market operates and the pursuit of freedom in the way liberals perceive of it. Susan Brown makes the following argument:

Friedan’s ‘solution’ to women’s inequality is no solution at all. Women who enter the competitive marketplace do not become free, but simply join men in chains. As Noam Chomsky points out, ‘in a perfectly functioning capitalist democracy, with no illegitimate abuse of power, freedom will be in effect a kind of commodity; effectively, a person will have as much of it as he can buy.’ Some will be able to afford more freedom, some less; many will not be able to afford any freedom at all, but instead will be forced to ‘sell’ their freedom as property in the person of others. Not only is this strategy a problem because it supports a system of domination and subordination, but it also contradicts Friedan’s own existential individualism, which insists that women be autonomous and self-determined. An employee is neither autonomous or self-determined. (Brown:1993:69,70)

Liberal feminists hold the naïve view that the political arena is a neutral one and that women can join it as impersonal beings. Yet men do not act as impersonal beings in this arena – it is very much informed by gender and traditional ‘masculine’ traits (traits ‘hijacked’ by men) such as rationality, individualism and autonomy.

The importance of liberal theory should not be underestimated however. It draws attention to the inequalities and injustices in societies, and to the belief that women should be treated differently because they have a different biological and psychological

nature than men. This is where liberal feminists have the same interest in gender as other feminist theories: to show that gender is a social construction, constructed to keep those who have the power in power, namely men, and specifically men who exhibit specific masculine traits. Liberal feminist groups have also done a lot towards the betterment of women in societies around the globe, their work is the most visible in agencies of the United Nations for example, and also International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) with women-specific agendas. On domestic as well as international levels, liberal feminist organizations usually campaign for the empowerment of women at corporate and governmental levels. Some examples of organizations like these are the Ms. Foundation in the United States as well as most of the organizations that have come about as a result of the adoption of the Equal Rights amendment.

## 2.2 Radical feminism

This feminist discourse has been the most successful in giving the movement a bad name, especially during the 70s and 80s, mostly in the Western world, and specifically in the United States. But this theory has also revolutionized the idea of gender, and has also injected the debate with the idea of power. The state used social, gendered 'realities' to provide men with positions of power and marginalise women. Radical feminism is powerful in the sense that it criticizes the liberal feminist's love affair with the realm of men, and that the world of masculinity is the world women should aspire to join, and they can do so, given equal rights and opportunities. It radically questions the 'neutrality' of this world, and in fact talk of the patriarchal state, and that state-making is a masculine enterprise where women and their experiences are made insignificant and powerless. The state is also a process and is constantly being 'made' in order to maintain the power status quo (men powerful, women powerless). This very unequal distribution of power has its roots in the history of state-making, and was institutionalized and given an air of neutrality through the powerful workings of state propaganda, but also reached into the most intimate areas of human existence, therefore the radical feminist creed that *the personal is political*.

The theory of a patriarchal state has since been criticized by feminists who have roots in the radical feminist movement and view their work as radical. A substantial amount of critique has developed because of a sense that the 'state' is in fact not such a monolithic entity and that it proves increasingly difficult to suggest change and reform when dealing with the state as a vague abstract entity. Moreover, in many instances around the world, the state has played a key role in changing laws and customs that have been viewed as oppressive by feminists, such as abortion, domestic abuse, rape, equal wages etc. It therefore seems that the 'state' could be a much more contested concept than either being an institution that regulates society through laws and regulations (a very abstract and neutral view of the state) or an institution that is inherently patriarchal. So there is a danger in adopting the Realists rational and abstract version of the state as well as adopting the notion that the state only serves men and male interests. In fact, to treat the state in this monolithic manner

...fails to conceptualize the state as an arena in which capital's or men's interests are actively constructed rather than given. It also fails to address the notion that the interests of capital or of men may not necessarily be unified. The political objectives or demands of women upon the state presuppose a coherent set of interests outside the political and bureaucratic arenas which can be met, rather than recognizing that these interests are actively constructed in the process of the demands being made and the state's responses. (Watson, 1990: 8)

Theorising patriarchy may also in fact strengthen it – Rosemary Pringle suggests that women and feminists who invest too much in describing how male and patriarchal the state is may shoot themselves in the foot: “By overstating the coherence and stability of men's power women may project their psyches onto the social world in ways that are not always appropriate” (Pringle in Caine and Pringle:1995:207) By attributing too much power to the state and men women may portray a picture in which it seems impossible to change or alter the state of affairs. Poststructuralism provides fresh approaches to how we deal with the state by highlighting that it is a site of contention and power struggle and that not all men are privileged at all times through the workings of the state nor are all women undermined by the state at all times and that “power is not simply a finite quality to be fought over in battles.” (Pringle in Caine and Pringle:1995:210)

Radical feminists have been criticized for essentializing the female experience. This is to say that there is something essential about female nature that makes women prone to peaceful, nurturing acts and drawing on this, people can have an alternative to the status quo, namely a world where the 'solution' to disputes often lies in the making of war. "However, by associating women's nature with different, more peaceful, ethical, and cooperative ways of being than men's, these positions tend to reinforce oppressive binary gender identities and structures as opposed to explaining how gender hierarchies and other forms of super-ordination are reproduced and how they can be transformed." (True: 1996: 215) Yet not all radical feminists have subscribed to this 'essentialising' feminism and this feminism can indeed be labeled 'pacifist' or 'maternal' feminism. For radical feminists who take seriously the empowerment of women it is more important to show the ways in which institutions are gendered and how these institutions act in silencing women. The greatest contribution radical feminists have made is in fact in developing theories of patriarchy. They have attempted to show how men have concertedly developed social theories and institutions that 'normalize' gender relations and allow them to exploit women without it being seen as exploitation at all. Radical feminists have also always attempted to suggest other ways of establishing the world we love in, starting with a sustained theoretical analysis of patriarchy. An emphasis on women's lived experiences through their bodies have opened up new understandings of how patriarchy "is an all-encompassing set of power relations aimed at securing male control of women's bodies: our sexuality, procreative power and labour." (Weedon, 1999: 27)

The danger of merely reversing the dichotomy of man/women is imminent in radical feminist theory. That's why it has come under sustained attack from critical theorists and postmodernists alike. However, radical feminism is a broad term covering many sub-branches of feminism from maternal and eco-feminism to black feminism: The radical feminist emphasis on women's bodies as the locus of both patriarchal power and women's difference has often been read as essentialist, particularly in those influential texts - such as the work of Susan Griffin and other ecofeminists - which link women to

nature rather than culture. Yet degrees of essentialism within radical feminism vary from analysis which root patriarchy in biology - most often in the male capacity to dominate through rape and physical violence - to those which stress the social (as opposed to biological) nature of femininity and masculinity.” (Weedon, 1999: 31) The importance of radical feminism to the feminist project is not lost if one sees it as Ann Tickner sees it: “Although [Tickner] tries to avoid essentialising the ‘masculine’ or the ‘feminine’, she does seem to accept the argument that women have developed cultural characteristics that make them more amenable to mediation, co-operative solutions and caring for others. But this is not based on any inherent superiority on behalf of women, simply on the fact of their experience of inequality” (Griffiths, 1999:228).

### 2.3 Feminism as critical theory

The 1980s and 1990s have been characterized by a move away from attempts to group all women and their experiences under one umbrella, and has seen a rise in feminism that take into account the various identities of women, whether it be class, race, history etc. “Feminist critical theory attempts a complex analysis of why and how the construction of gender has served to legitimize the subordination of women and of how hegemonic structures are imbued with patriarchal ideology” (Steans, 1998:174) It is therefore primarily about theory: how domination practices are perpetuated by theory making. Feminists have showed how gendered relationships subordinate women, and this is where the link exists with critical theory. The specific focus on women is not to silence or marginalize others who are negatively affected by gender construction, but to still take part in the emancipatory project, as the psychological and material well-being of women are still the primary concern for these theorists: “... a focus solely on gender arguably has the potential to evacuate the feminist content of such scholarship.” (Zalewski, 1994:409) Her argument deals with the fact that a focus solely on gender might give equal weight to the concerns of men and women and thus nullifying the feminist goal of focusing specifically on the hardships women face as well as attempting to provide real solutions for women. A focus on the relationship of both masculinity with power and femininity

with the marginalised is important if we want to understand these practices of domination.

Critical theorists do not attempt to put a new theory 'out there', but rather challenges the assumptions of existing theories in the sense that they want to make theorists and others aware that theories are based on assumptions in the first place, and that it can only be ethical to remain aware of these assumptions: "Probably the greatest virtue of Critical Theory is that 'it invites all social analysts to reflect upon the cognitive interests and normative assumptions which underpin their research, without implying that from now on all research must be critical-theoretical.' The implication is that the normative purpose of social inquiry should be considered before all else." (van der Westhuizen, 1997:62)

What needs to be emphasized here, is that the emergence of Critical Theory vis a vis International Relations has much to do with the success Marxist, black feminist and radical feminist theories have had in bringing to the light how existing ideologies conceal the workings of power, and how these workings maintain the status quo, which has the effect of gross inequalities.

#### 2.4 Postmodernism

Critical Theory has much in common with postmodernism, although many analysts have drawn attention to the latter's pessimism and lack of emancipatory suggestions. In an attempt to move beyond this, Christine Sylvester distinguishes between post-modern feminism and feminist post-modernism: "The difference, simply put, is that feminist post-modernism represents an extreme posture of skepticism and radical doubt about everything, including gender and women, whereas post-modern feminism is not quite so extreme. For Sylvester, the subtle point of difference between the two is that post-modern feminism 'would tolerate the politics of self-assertion on the way to a politics of empathetic cooperation' (p. 53)" (Zalewski, 1994: 416) Sylvester therefore still supports some kind of emancipatory project, acknowledging the value of postmodernism in

undermining power-dichotomies: man/woman, soldier/mother, developed/developing, 'high'/'low'.

Postmodernists have a problem with the centrality of 'woman' as a concept of analysis. There is no 'woman' that can speak for all the diverse experiences of women worldwide. There is no 'woman' that exists outside a relationship with her race, her class and her culture. This needs to be considered, not just adding them to the gender equation, but also investigating whether these variables are not perhaps constitutive of the 'woman'. It is therefore necessary to decenter this Western model of 'woman' as a concept of analysis, but in doing so, still considering the importance of feminist theories as strong critiques of totalizing theories. Care must be taken not to replace orthodox theories with new totalizing feminist theories, and the value of feminist theorizing must rather be felt in the spaces created by critical discussions: "While postmodern feminists reject *meta-narratives* - privileged discourses which inevitably silence competing discourses and deny the possibility of other forms of knowledge - feminist discourses can still offer *sites of resistance* to hegemonic discourse and power and provide a space for the voices of women to be heard." (Steans, 1998:179)

Postmodern feminism challenges the idea that there is a "truth" that lies beyond lived experiences and situated power relations. This notion has threatened feminists from other schools of thought, especially radical feminists who strive for emancipation and the dismantling of patriarchy. They see this as theory collapsing into relativism where there can be no talk of liberation, emancipation or empowerment on the basis of a shared experience or 'being'. Postmodern feminists have replied by stressing once again the particularity of experience and that it can mean many things for different people to be a woman. For postmodern feminists, the struggle continues not so much on a material level where meaning is derived from biology and commonality but on the level of language and subjectivity: "The fundamental poststructuralist idea that discourses produce meaning and subjectivity, rather than reflecting them, makes language and subjectivity ongoing sites of political struggle." (Weedon, 1999: 102, 103) Identity does not exist

outside discourses and is constantly changing. Postmodernism's positive contribution is precisely in the idea that identity is constantly changing - it (potentially) frees women and men to identify with others on a wider range of experiences and identities. Postmodernism, much in the same way as radical feminism, shows how binary oppositions are sites of power struggles and highlights the way in which context and history have given these oppositions their unique characters. But it warns against all meta-narratives, and is therefore at odds with other feminisms' view of a world and truth beyond these ongoing struggles.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The Orthodoxy**

“Theory is always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective. Perspectives derive from a position in time and space, specifically social and political time and space.” (Cox, 1981:128)

The paradigm that has prevailed for the greater part of the 20th century in International Relations is that of Realism. This has influenced how state-makers look at the world and has informed their decisions. Two world wars and immense advances in the development of sophisticated weaponry have had tremendous impact on the nation-state system as a whole. For many this has meant the increasing instability of this system, precariously kept in check by the Cold War which came to an end with the fall of the Berlin Wall at the end of 1989, and the subsequent dismantling of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

The appearance of International Relations as an independent discipline developed alongside astounding technological and scientific progress. The virtue of science in terms of International Relations was to be applied in the examinations into the causes of war and peace, especially following two devastating world wars. Of all the International Relations theorists, Hans Morgenthau left the biggest legacy, and is still regarded as one of the great thinkers on this subject, if only for the fact in how his thinking has shaped American foreign policy. Morgenthau attempted a comprehensive theory of ‘power politics’, because to him it was all about power. Later Realist thinkers would however criticize Morgenthau for his idiosyncratic view on the role of ethics in politics. This ethical concern stems mostly from his experience as a Jewish person in Nazi Germany and his subsequent fleeing to the United States.

Morgenthau’s theory rests largely on his assumptions about human nature: man is essentially evil and selfish, untrusting of others and in pursuit of power. To him these qualities were contained within the domestic arena by the “legitimated coercive power of

the state, combined with a network of social norms and community bonds". (Griffith, 1999:37) But outside the domestic arena there was no guarantee that states would not resort to violent means in order to get what they want. Morgenthau therefore deduces state behaviour from individual behaviour, and since there is no "world government" per se, there is always the threat of war. He saw the collective security in Europe as it was in the nineteenth century as a much more stable system than the bipolar world during the Cold War in the 20th century. For Morgenthau, there were four reasons why it was difficult to manage a bipolar world: firstly, because of the deterrence create by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; the pursuit of power by either of the superpowers was a zero-sum game. Secondly, there existed no 'buffer' state that could act as a neutral mediator or deterrent state between the United States and the Soviet Union. Third, due to decolonization, there could be no territorial compensation to maintain the balance of power. And lastly, the advances of technology in the 20th century had created a situation of 'total mechanisation, total war, and total domination'. (Griffith, 1999:38)

Realism also came about as a reaction to the idealism in International Relations thinking during the first years of the 20th century, and specifically so due to the failure of the objectives of the League of Nations, which was founded to prevent war, especially one as devastating as the first World War. This would have been made possible by the adherence to international law and collective security, but unfortunately it didn't prevent the 1930s global economic depression, or the territorial aggression of a post-war Germany. Theorists were therefore not in touch with 'reality'.

Realism as an explanatory theory of international relations gained popularity largely because the United States, and in its wake many Western countries, adopted the principles of Realism into its foreign policy-making apparatus. 'National interest' became the goal of foreign policy, and the notion of 'national interest' was used to serve those in power. Coupled with this was the increasing popularity of Behaviouralism and it's emphasis on scientific, quantitative inquiry: "now the international system was seen to be no less a system than the human body 'and its transactions and processes could also be

quantified, weighed and dissected so that only empirically verifiable hypothesis would be produced'." (Van der Westhuizen, 1997:11)

Realism therefore is about states and the protection of the state against outside aggressors. War is always imminent, and all efforts by foreign policy-makers go into the obtaining or protection of power-interests, and in the prevention of war. All other objectives are secondary to these. Moral considerations in terms of foreign policy are dangerous and foolish, as these can interfere with the national interest. Realists also like to historicize state-making, and lend an inevitability to their view of the state-system as anarchical, specifically in terms of the natures of the wars prior to and during the formation of the nation-state.

It seems that the 'national interest' is an ill-defined concept by Realists, and in a later section on foreign policy in this paper, it will emerge that this concept is often used as a propaganda tool for murkier intentions of the state. Questions have to be asked like: who defines the national interest, whose national interest is spoken of, and what actions will be taken to defend the national security.

For Griffiths, Morgenthau 's theory also poses a level of analysis problem: "It's never clear whether his pessimism about the nature of international politics derives from his metaphysical assumptions about 'human nature' or the anarchical nature of the international system per se" (1999:39) Kenneth Waltz also has a problem with this specific aspect of Morgenthau's thinking; for Waltz, the state system, due to its historical formation, itself causes war.

Realism as it influences theorists today takes the state as its analytical focus and the pursuit of the national interest (defined in Realist terms as the pursuit of power?) through foreign policy as its political goal. As will be discussed later, this ignores many other ways of theorizing, and is silent about how many forms of oppression are overlooked and also how these oppressions are perpetuated.

### 3.1 Feminist critique of IR

All of the above-mentioned critiques of International Relations have overlapping interests with feminist criticism of the discipline. My concern with feminism has to do with the fact that an analysis of the construction of gender also highlights many other forms of oppression, whether it is race or class, and gives weight to the many emancipatory projects out there.

Feminist critique of International Relations has matured since the turbulent sixties that was marked by liberation movements. Feminism has also benefited from post-positivist theorizing in the field. Feminism has gained strong theoretical support from other movements that criticize the field on the basis of identity construction, notably those theorists concerned with class and race. The main focus of feminist IR theorists is Realism because it has been used time and again to explain the global environment. Feminists want to highlight the assumptions of Realists that obscures gender inequality and oppress women. There is however not 'one' feminism; this field is rich and diverse and often even conflictual, but it seems that what most feminist IR theorists have in common is the focus on Realism and the power that is derived from ignoring dissenting voices in the field, specifically those of feminists.

Realism's strong alliance with positivism brings to the foreground the way in which Realists depict their own theorizing: they take an 'objective, dispassionate' stance towards the world and can therefore not be blamed for favouring any one gender. However, objectivity and dispassion have been linked to masculinity and men. This has come about especially in the early parts of the 20th century with social 'experiments' where it was deduced that women are by nature more subjective, passive, yielding, even hysterical. Thus realism is aligned with this narrow definition of masculinity and therefore "reinforces the subjugation of women or, at the very least, sets the terms on which women will be admitted to social and political 'equality'" (Jones, 1996: 410) This has implications for the liberal attempt to simply add women to existing international

decision-making structures. This proves to be a fallacy if one considers the innate masculine nature of the institutions. Women will merely become co-opted into the oppression of women.

The unit of analysis for Realists is the state. According to feminist IR theorists, the state is a masculine enterprise that privileges men at the expense of women. The state is not an abstract value-less entity, but “hides social institutions that are made and remade by individual actions. In reality, the neorealist depiction of the state as a unitary actor is grounded in the historical practices of the Western state system: neorealist characterizations of state behavior, in terms of self-help, autonomy, and power seeking, privilege characteristics associated with the Western construction of masculinity.” (Tickner in Jones, 1996:411) The state serves to further the interests of men, specifically elite, white and rich.

The state, as opposed to the private sphere of the household, is, according to Realists, the only ‘place’ for politics. This leads to a dangerously false dichotomy of public/private that undermines the value of women’s work and their contribution to the welfare of the community. Therefore radical feminists deem the private to be political as well. Marxists have also pointed to the fact that the private sphere (the household, nuclear family) is used by the capitalist state to further its own agenda, namely its own enrichment, mostly at the cost of the poor. Women in their domestic role (taking care of children and cooking food etc.) make it easier for men to focus their attention on the public sphere, where they do work that are considered real and worthy of a salary.

Closely tied to the Realist idea of the state is that of nationalism. Nationalism draws upon cultural values that are often just accepted and not questioned, especially if these include the subordination of women. Cultural relativism has become a powerful tool in the hands of many male oppressors, especially in non-western countries to justify ongoing oppression of women. Yet the idea of nationalism and national honour is often so ingrained, that women themselves, even though they don’t benefit from the status quo,

are co-opted into nationalistic sentiments, many times to their own detriment. What also often happens is that women see a nationalist uprising as an opportunity to address grievances regarding their status. They are then promised that as soon as liberation is secured, gender issues will be addressed. This then hardly ever transpires, mostly because this so-called liberation is always in the making, never actually quite transpiring.

National rhetoric is often made in gendered language, and efforts made by women to address their situations as oppressed are seen as a direct threat to the state. Also interesting to note here is the fact that statesmen from non-Western countries often claim that feminism is a Western imperialist project that cannot be meaningful to the lives of women in their country. What they fail to note however are that many other ideologies that they deem worthwhile, like Marxism, is an intellectual product of the West. So the hypocrisy is blatant. However, the black feminist movement in the United States came to be as a result of black women feeling alienated by both the black liberation movement and the white feminist movement: “The purpose of the movement was to develop theory which could adequately address the way race, gender, and class were interconnected in their lives and to take action to stop racist, sexist, and classist discrimination.” (<http://www.mit.edu:8001/activities/thistle/v9/9.01/6blackf.html>) This argument takes us back to the earlier discussions on identity politics. Some black women saw feminism as a white, bourgeois, Western import and could not relate. So it is also clear that it is not just a matter of resistance to feminism by non-Western statesmen but also a matter of some women not being able to relate to the Eurocentric, middle-class values of certain white feminisms.

The Realist approach to security also holds very serious consequences for women: However ‘secure’ it might be in the international sphere, the state is complicit in the global phenomenon of violence against women, acting directly ‘through its selective sanctioning of non-state violence’ and indirectly ‘through its promotion of masculinist, heterosexist, and classist ideologies’. In the face of women’s ‘systemic insecurity’,

Peterson contends that “national security” is particularly and profoundly contradictory for women”. (Jones, 1996:414)

One would hope, given this very bleak picture, that there is some hope of integrating International Relations theory with feminism. Indeed, many attempts have been made to do exactly this. The one that stands out for me though is the work of Christine Sylvester. She talks about a feminist method of empathetic cooperation that strives to give voices to women despite the ‘third debate’s’ focus on the necessity to decenter everything. Sylvester’s answer to this would be that we can only speak of the construction of ‘women’, thereby not nullifying the whole political agenda of feminism, but rather focus on epistemological reconstruction. Sylvester sees a way out through postmodernism, but not in the sense of radically undermining everything, but rather as marrying the politics of self-assertion with that of empathetic cooperation, with the latter being the goal. Zalewski (1994) explains it like this: “... she means that those ‘women’ who wish to believe that they are women (despite the latter being ‘technically not real’ according to Sylvester) and want to use the category of women as a starting point for feminist politics, would be tolerated. At the same time, Sylvester’s preference would be to move away from women as the focus of feminist politics towards using the method of empathetic cooperation.”

Empathetic cooperation is concerned with a very intensive engagement with contentious others. The crux of the matter is to listen and to be transformed. While it is very true that Sylvester might and have been accused of being idealistic, her arguments strike at the very core of Realist politics. It is high time that IR theorists consider the ethical implications of their words and deeds, and therefore the relative power they have to bring about an intellectual revolution.

Recently there has been some focus on masculinity/ies in IR, partly because the very ‘masculinity’ of the field provides an ideal opportunity to study masculinity, but also because of the fact that feminist theorists have seen the danger of equating gender with women. Since ‘femininity’ and ‘women’ have been talked about as epistemological

constructions, one can therefore easily deduce that ‘masculinity’ can be constructed. By studying ‘masculinities’ and how they relate to men in the ontological sense, we can have a clearer idea of how theory-making not only have negative consequences for women, but also for men. This is not to lose sight of the privileged position held by men and ‘men’, but to engage more fairly with a discipline that has hitherto (maybe unfairly so) been criticized as being beneficial to all men and only to men. This necessitates a deeper understanding of postmodern feminist debates on fluidity and difference in gender identity. (Hooper (1998) in Zalewski and Parpart, (eds.) 29)

Hooper distinguishes between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, where “hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to a range of subordinate masculinities as well as in opposition to femininity.” (Hooper (1998) in Zalewski and Parpart, (eds.) 34) Constructions of masculinities are fundamental to our understanding of how the status quo is perpetuated to serve a select few. Hegemonic masculinity is kept in place in a number of ways, for instance by placing it in opposition to many other kinds of masculinities ( e.g. white assertive masculinity as opposed to Asian masculinity) or, and important for this paper, by placing it in opposition to femininity. Hegemonic masculinity adapts itself to time and trend, but does not give up its privileged position. It reinvents itself time and again, and does this by blaming other factions in society for the evils committed against women. These other masculinities are also demarcated according to class and race. So there is a hegemony in all aspects of identity, meaning that certain classes and races align themselves with the dominant power.

Masculinities are therefore another attempt at creating identity by excluding or demonizing the ‘other’. For instance, the specific kind of masculinity created to serve the military machine is very much created in opposition to what constitutes unmanly behaviour. Considerable effort is made by the military to ‘masculinize’ men: “... masculinity in the military is itself constructed as a gendered relationship between a ‘real’ man and other forms of both masculinity (i.e. queer) and femininity (i.e. girl) A tremendous amount of ideological work has to go into getting soldiers to behave as

required, and we can only begin to appreciate these complexities if we see masculinities as produced within very complex gendered relations.” (Smith (1998) in Zalewski and Parpart (eds.), p 65, 66). The argument that man is inherently aggressive is not proven or disproved, and that is not the issue here. However, it does create cause for considerable concern if one investigates the lengths the military establishment goes to ensure ‘manly’ behaviour in its troops. Language is gendered in order to play off the ‘good’ against the ‘bad’, the ‘citizen’ against the ‘terrorist’, ‘law’ against ‘anarchy’, ‘hard’ against ‘soft’ and ultimately then (though not verbalised) ‘powerful’ against the ‘powerless’. It happens often that American news programs would report on the cowardly behaviour of terrorists and also report on the heroic behaviour of ‘our boys overseas’. Although the above-mentioned are gendered constructions, they have very real effect on the lives of millions of people around the globe. The constructions inform the workings of the military and of civil society as a whole. It has dire consequences for anyone not co-opted into these constructions, mainly women and those not conforming to the ‘brave soldier’ image.

The final point I’d like to make on gender and IR is that I strongly believe that some sort of redemption lies not in a focus on women, or on men for that matter, but rather on how gendered identities are created, as this will expose the power-play behind these creations, expose those that it serves, suggest more just ways for going about international relations (making of foreign policy, international law, international trade and finance, human rights) and hopefully lead towards a more self-conscious, gender-sensitive discipline.

## CHAPTER 4

### Foreign policy

This area of policy has traditionally been defined as the set of rules and institutions that govern the relations a state has with other states in the international system. The making of the policy belongs to a chosen elite who decides what is in their country's best interest. This interest is better known as the national interest, and is very much a contested concept. Foreign policy-makers face a wide set of challenges today, not least among them trying to make sense of a 'new' world that has until very recently been defined mainly in terms of a nuclear arms race.

Foreign policy has also been seen in terms of an opposite, namely domestic policy. In Realist terms, these two policies can clearly be distinguished from each other, and should in fact be separated. Public input into foreign policy-making are kept at a minimum since, according to the elite, it is a matter for the experts. The persistency of this viewpoint has much to do with the fact that people are very much uninformed about the phenomenon of foreign policy, and that researchers have to deal with second-hand, sparse, and edited information. The argument for keeping the public out of the picture goes something like this:

...diplomats are unable to exercise their talent for compromise if the public is a participant in the negotiating process. When the public looks on, diplomats are subject to political pressures that require them to take extreme positions that become virtually impossible to back off from as negotiations continue. If the uninformed and moody public is kept out of the process, the wisdom and talents of professional diplomats can be given full play, and the result will be a better foreign policy and decreased probability of violent conflict. (Ray, 1992: 103)

It is ironic, however, if one looks at the numerous cases around the world where the public had been left totally out in the cold, or had been at the receiving end of the state propaganda machine and was fed lies about the foreign policy process. One example that comes to mind is South Africa's involvement in the Angolan war during the late seventies. According to Dan O'Meara the secrecy stretched so far that even the Department of Foreign Affairs at the time were held in the dark: "...in August 1975 the

DFA first became aware that South African troops had undertaken their then largest foreign intervention since WWII when it received a note from Portugal protesting South African military presence deep inside Angola!" (O'Meara, 1996: 25) If one analyzes the outcome of that operation, one wonders if the public and even the DFA had been left uninformed not so much as deliberation on the level of expertise necessary, but rather because the government was fully aware of the possible ambivalent results. So much for the national interest!

Noam Chomsky is quick to point out the pathology of secrecy that surrounds foreign policy making. He argues that this mystification is a concerted effort by the policy-making elite so that they will be able to do as they like. He points to the fact that in democratic societies this is not so much achieved by force, but through a propaganda machine that "combines highly effective indoctrination with the impression that the society is really 'open'" (Chomsky, 1978: 10, 11) This is combined with the idea, as previously mentioned, that policy-making is a complex process, safe only in the hands of 'experts'. This very phenomenon has come under attack with the collapse of communism and the growing need to redefine what foreign policy is all about. Some has (maybe idealistically) suggested that all that is necessary is that the public should be more involved. What is lacking however are suggestions on how this should be done, clear ideas on exactly who the public is, and the liberal weakness of trying to change a system by merely adding on to it and working within the original intellectual parameters. Foreign policy is very much an aspect of International Relations that is in dire need of some critical thinking, and as I will attempt to show later, feminism has a lot to offer in this regard.

Historically speaking, foreign policy is very much an inevitable by-product of the formation of the nation-state. It is the "all-important boundary between the nation-state and its international environment - the boundary which defines the nation-state, within the limits of which national governments claim supreme authority." (Wallace, 1971: 7) Foreign policy and the narrow definition thereof came about as a result of a very specific

set of historical events, and can therefore be challenged on grounds of contemporary legitimacy. This also leads us to think about the distinction made between the domestic and the international. These two spheres are often represented as if they are quite autonomous from each other and mislead one to think that it is unproblematic and easy to distinguish between the two. This has further ramifications in the sense that foreign policy decisions are often made (and vice versa) to the detriment of the domestic sphere.

Governments are also much more sensitive regarding attacks on its foreign policy than it is about domestic policy. The treatment of protesters during the Vietnam War comes to mind - rough tactics by the police, and even rumours that those who complained the loudest were drafted into the war. One can speculate on the reasons for this sensitivity, but it is my opinion that states still very much subscribe to a Realist world, where anarchy rules in the international arena and order within secure borders. Governments feel much more in control of what happens within their borders than outside of it. Opposition to foreign policy is therefore seen in a very serious light. Yet the 'clear' distinction between the 'domestic' and 'foreign' becomes quite murky under critical inquiry. Not only does the monolithic concept of the state suffer (since various foreign policy-makers can be detected) but the permeation of the international by the domestic and vice versa becomes clear. The secrecy surrounding foreign policy-making (that borders on paranoia) indicates the insecurity felt by the ruling elite, informed by a Realist ontology.

The necessity for foreign policy-making to become more transparent and accountable cannot be stressed more. Let us heed these words of Robert Cooper:

Understanding the kind of world we live in is important. The costs of intellectual errors in foreign affairs are enormous. Wars are sometimes fought by mistake. Suez was a mistake, at least for Britain: it was fought against a threat to order, but neither the threat nor the order really existed. Algeria was a mistake: it was fought for a concept of the State that was no longer sustainable. Vietnam was a mistake: the United States thought it was fighting the Cold War, when in practice it was continuing a French colonial campaign. These conceptual errors had heavy costs. Clarity of thought is a contribution to peace. (1996:9)

#### 4.1 The National Interest

The 'national interest' is used by policy-makers as a device of mystification. Policy-makers and academia alike seldom analyze what this national interest entails. Policy-makers like clear definitions, and because the 'national interest' does not lend itself easily to this, they tend to gloss it over and use it at the same time as justification for their various policies. This is also very convenient when one considers the sometimes devastating effects that foreign policy has. It seems that the public is told that foreign policy is conducted in their interest, but this is where information stops. The rest of the 'action' happens behind closed doors and somewhere far far from home. It seems fair to say that what is conducted in the name of the national interest often only serves a few elite interests. Let us take the United States military-industrial complex for example:

In the United States .... a range of powerful interests clearly favors larger defense budgets (the military, industrialists, universities, labor unions, and Congress) and thus makes it difficult to control the budget. This seems especially true when one considers the groups that typically oppose larger defense budgets. A few liberal members of Congress, supported by a small number of college professors, students and other people who believe that money should be diverted from military budgets and devoted to social welfare programs, would not appear to stand much chance against the juggernaut in favor of increasing defense budgets. (Ray, 1992:114)

The people who are opposed to bigger military budgets and consequently not in favour of heavy international military involvement are still made out to be wimps and not respectful of the national interest. It is in the elite's favour to make these dissidents out to be marginal, small in numbers and delusional. It is however then glaringly obvious that not everybody's interests are served. And there is no easy way of telling what the interests are, but it would be safer and fairer to assume that there is more of a diversity of interests than the public is led to believe.

Samuel Huntington (1997) raises some interesting points in this regard. He examines the American national interest as an identity in opposition to a Communist threat. Since the Cold War is over, the American people are at a loss as to what their national identity should be. He assumes that the multicultural realities of the United States are grounds for instability and tension. While his assumptions are not outrageous, it is still not impossible

to conceive of a reality where people can identify equally well with their country and their ethnic or racial group. The old ideology might have positioned itself in opposition to communism, but that does not mean that this ideology has disappeared. Capitalism and all the values that it promotes is still very much alive and kicking, and those people that it serves will continue to look for ways in which to strengthen this ideology, whether it will be through uniting against a common enemy or through education and nation-building efforts. Although Clinton might have been the first American president to actively promote ethnic diversity within the United States, this might not be a trend.

The more important question in this instance is to ask whether ethnic differences in themselves cause conflict, chaos and violence, or is elite political manipulations of these differences to blame? The other extreme is that the elite also disguises differences, thereby rendering many voices silent, voices that do not necessarily shout for the dismantling of the state or anarchy. Jill Steans says that the “idea of the ‘national interest’ as a central organizing concept in International Relations relies upon the assumption that our identification with the nation overrides all other dimensions of social and political identification.” (1998:62) If one brings gender into this equation, and given the masculine identity of the state, then one can see that “identification with the state” is not as unproblematic as one is led to believe. The same in the case of racial identities: as long as the state sells itself in terms of male, white, heterosexual interests, it will continue to alienate a large proportion of its electorate. This will in turn have influence over how secretive or non-secretive the foreign policymaking process will be. It is therefore clear that the state will have to gear itself to the needs and realities of the population, instead of the other way around, where national interest is pursued, no matter what the cost. There is therefore not so much a need for the dismantling of the state, but a need for a more responsible, representative state. However, if foreign policy-makers and their offices are really at the mercy of the electorate, then culture may play a more important role in the future.

The United States has struggled to find its national interest after decades of Soviet threat have come to an end. The Commission on America's National Interests identifies five vital national interests: "prevent attacks on the United States with weapons of mass destruction, prevent the emergence of hostile hegemony in Europe or Asia and of hostile powers on U.S. borders or in control of the seas, prevent the collapse of the global systems for trade, financial markets, energy supplies, and the environment, and ensure the survival of U.S. allies." (Huntington, 1997: 36) The U.S. government has indeed done its best to prevent the collapse of the global system for energy supplies by its continuous involvement in the Middle East. This threat was made concrete with the energy crisis in mid 2000 when fuel prices rocketed and adversely affected countries' economies around the world. The U.S. also sees a vital national interest in terms of globalisation. Foreign markets are becoming more and more important to the financial health of the United States, and the government's sensitivity in this matter is clear in the recent clampdowns on anti-WTO protestors. The Cold War may be over, but the very nature of the international arena provides the U.S. with ample material to (re)define its national interest.

If domestic interests such as commercial and ethnic interests are gaining prominence in the United States and other Western countries, then the Realist assumption that there is a clear distinction between domestic and foreign policy does not hold water: "For an understanding of American foreign policy it is necessary to study not the interests of the American state in a world of competing states but rather the play of economic and ethnic interests in American domestic politics." (Huntington, 1997:42)

Policymakers often emphasize the human rights aspect of foreign policy, and justify their government's involvement in another country's affairs by listing human rights abuses as the reason for 'strong' action. Chomsky points out that the U.S. intervention in Iran, Cuba, Guatemala and Chile was not motivated by concern for human rights and the espousal of liberal, pluralistic democracies. (Chomsky, 1978:33) The state plays upon the moral inclinations of the population, and if it can't do so (for obvious reasons), every

attempt is made to keep the population in the dark. It is no coincidence that a country with such dirty hands as the United States also has some of the world's most sophisticated human rights organisations. They can and do sometimes serve as propaganda machines to justify to the populace but also to the world that the U.S has acted in a just and moral manner.

This does not however mean that human rights should not be a factor when it comes to foreign policy. On the contrary, it should be one of the cornerstones of foreign policy. The point made is that when something is allegedly done in the name of the protection of human rights, there should be closer inspection into the motivations of the intervening country and its political elite.

#### 4.2 Foreign policy, globalisation and the new world order

There is speculation that the nature of foreign policy is changing. The rise of the multinational corporation has changed the nature of the international arena. Instead of bringing economic wealth to the world, these corporations have succeeded in exporting poverty and enriching a handful of already powerful individuals and countries. The source of cheap labour in developing countries, partly as a result of beneficial exchange rates and partly due to the weak economy of the given country makes for a highly exploitative situation. The irony of the globalisation phenomenon is that while it has such a destabilizing effect for many workers around the world, it also forces governments and non-governmental actors to be more trusting of each other and work closer together: "The impact of globalization does not stop in the domain of the economy but also extends to the political and security domain." (Fukushima, 1999:20) In the section on gender and foreign policy to follow I will point out how these negative effects of globalisation are highly genderized. Globalisation offers a very real challenge to foreign policy-makers to be sensitive to the plight of those who are adversarially affected by this phenomenon.

This change in foreign policy and the end of the cold war has brought about what Robert Cooper calls a 'new world order'. He uses the European Union as an example of a new

kind of order that defies Realist logic: "... a new form of statehood, or at least states which are behaving in a radically different way from the past. Alliances which survive in peace as well as in war, interference in each other's domestic affairs and the acceptance of jurisdiction of international courts mean that states today are less absolute in their sovereignty and independence than before." (Cooper, 1996:8) This prepares the stage for non-governmental actors. Too often non-governmental actors come to mean big business, and care should be taken that this faction does not dominate foreign policy-making, as has so often happened in the past. Security is being redefined and non-governmental actors seem to be taking matters into their own hands. This does not mean some kind of vigilantism, but rather the articulated wish to deal with security matters in a non-violent and non-aggressive way. Not all security issues are suitable for old Realist solutions anyway, and feminists have been emphasizing this for quite some time. What this exactly means will become clearer in the section on gender and security.

Globalisation has also given rise to non-governmental actors because it (globalisation) has "unsettled the construction of collective identities." (Krause and Renwick, 1996:xii) These are collective identities in terms of the nation-state, in other words an identification with the nation above ethnic and cultural identities. Today there are actors and organisations across national borders that identify more with each other and have more of a common goal than they would have had in terms of their respective states, meaning government and territory. This is not to imply that these actors are 'new' in any sense, but that the post-cold war order has made these actors more visible and has given them a louder voice and bigger clout. This is also perhaps a case of where the state does not, can not and even should not provide for the material and security needs of its population.

Is there still place for foreign policy in a globalising world? Yes, but the focus has changed. To emphasize the challenges foreign policy-makers face today I think it is worth it to quote Janis van der Westhuizen here at length:

Initially the paradoxical processes of fragmentation and integration were not seen to be related, but they were. With states ever vulnerable to the flow of capital, traditional means of maintaining stability in the world economy proved to be an anachronism. Production constantly moved where labour was cheapest, creating a “permanently unemployed sector” even in the “advanced” societies, where some inflated the size of political movements operating at the margins of society - the ethnically inspired neo-Nazi movement and other xenophobic groups. Events such as the bombing of the Federal Government Building in Oklahoma or the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico demonstrated that the number, size and the nature of dispossessed groups were on the rise. These sentiments were not unrelated to the unprecedented growth of refugees - reaching a record high of over 27 million in 1994, including almost five and a half million “internally displaced” refugees who have been forcibly exiled within their own countries. In short, it was one of history’s great ironies that when South Africa was rid of the scourge of apartheid in 1994 it became more acceptable to practice it on a global scale! (1997:57, 58)

The answer to these problems is not necessarily stronger government; the era for big government has passed. The answer may lie more in the kind of transnational relationships people from different countries can foster. Yet this could be criticized if one considers the millions of people for whom foreign affairs are not a reality in the sense that they are battling just to survive on the material level. But it is exactly those that have the privilege to nurture non-governmental organisations that can bring about more just international regimes and lobby states to hasten change.

Those who stand to gain the most from it often laud the virtues of globalization. But we still live in a very unequal world today:

Let us imagine, for a moment, that the world really is a “global village” - taking seriously the metaphor that is often invoked to depict global interdependence. Say this village has 1,000 individuals, with all the characteristics of today’s human race distributed in exactly the same proportions. What would it look like? What would we see as its many challenges? Some 150 of the inhabitants live in an affluent area of the village, about 780 in poorer districts. Another 70 or so live in a neighbourhood that is in transition. The average income per person is \$6,000 a year, and there are more middle-income families than in the past. But just 200 people dispose of 86 per cent of all the wealth, while nearly half the villagers are eking out an existence on less than \$2 a day. (Annan, 2000:14)

Those concerned with foreign policy will have to take note of this very real global situation when deliberating on how to spend their budgets.

### 4.3 Gender and foreign policy

Do women have different foreign policy attitudes than men? Empirical studies show conflicting results, but the recent trend had been that gender is a weak indicator of foreign policy attitudes. Gender in these studies usually refers to the sex of a person. The main assumption researchers have when testing for a gender gap in foreign policy attitudes is that women will show more pacifistic attitudes due to some kind of inherent nurturing and peace-loving quality that women supposedly share ('gender gap' refers to a difference in men and women's voting patterns). Because it is so difficult to control for this variable, researchers still find it hard to say why gender differences occur in terms of foreign policy attitudes.

Reasons for the gender gap may also be the salience of foreign policy in a community at any given time, the political mobilization of women and the available political alternatives. Irrespective of these reasons however, it seems that there are consistency in women's attitudes towards violence and military action as solutions to political crises around the globe. Women oppose these measures in general, and this gap has been widening since the late 70s and 80s. Researchers would like to think that this change has come about largely as a result of women's exposure to feminist ideas, especially since the 1960s. When research controls for the feminist variable, it seems that there is proof for this idea. Foreign policy research done in the Middle East, specifically in Israel, Egypt, Palestine and Kuwait has increased "confidence in the generalizability of the finding that gender is not related to attitudes about international conflict, perhaps in general and at least about the disputes affecting one's own country and region." (Tessler and Warriner, n.d. :273) The same study then controlled for support of equality between men and women and found that both women and men who were more supportive in this regard "are also more favourably disposed toward diplomacy and compromise in the Arab-Israeli dispute, whereas those who are less supportive of gender equality are in each case less likely to favor resolving the conflict on this basis." (Tessler and Warriner, n.d. :275) Studies like these have so far made the strongest link between pacifism and feminism: "Some scholars also describe this perspective as one of "global feminism," arguing, as

does one analyst, that there is a connection between feminism and international relations because ‘a world committed to domination at its intimate core in the home more readily accepts ever-escalating levels of domination and imperialism between peoples.’” (Tessler and Warriner, n.d. :276)

Research that have proven the link between feminism and pacifism may aid foreign affairs offices and policy regimes by encouraging them to incorporate more women in decisionmaking processes, but more importantly, to listen more carefully to feminist voices.

“The most provocative question about the gender gap is: What aspects of the socialization of women and their role in society lie behind these issue differences?” (Howell and Day, 2000:858) The issues referred to here and mentioned by the authors are called ‘compassion’ issues and issues that deal with the use of force. The authors identify four major theories as to why this gap exist and they can be briefly summed up as follows: firstly, there is the notion that women are inherently more nurturing and caring and will there therefore lean towards more pacifist political solutions – these ‘feminine’ qualities are either inherent or socialized, and the proof of that is not which is at stake here. Secondly, women might have different political attitudes than men because of their different socioeconomic status. Yet studies have proven this to be a very weak indicator (Cook and Wilcox 1991; Fite, Genest, and Wilcox 1990; Gilens 1988; Wilcox 1990 in Howell and Day, 2000:860) Lastly, another reason for the gender gap could be women’s education regarding feminism and their insight into the oppression and disadvantages that are shared by women around the world.

A notion that is shared by many academics who do research into the possible causes of the gender gap is that not one single reason can be isolated, nor are reasons, if they do appear, consistent from one issue to the next: “In sum, explanations for gender differences in political attitudes are complex and interrelated. However, it seems that they

are all rooted in the contrasting social roles of men and women, roles that are reflected in different economic positions and different basic values.” (Howell and Day, 2000:860)

A more interesting study into the dynamics of the gender gap comes from Karen Kaufmann and John Petrocik where they research the hypothesis that the gender gap might in fact be caused by changing attitudes in American men, and that political attitudes of American women have changed very little since studies have been made into causes for the gender gap: “The continuous growth in the gender gap is largely a product of the changing politics of men. Men have become increasingly Republican in their party identification and voting behavior since the mid-sixties while the partisanship and voting behavior of women has remained essentially constant.” (Kaufmann and Petrocik, 1999:865) Both of the above-mentioned studies however have found that the cutback on welfare spending in the 80s by the Republican Party have turned women against the party since women are by far the greatest dependents on the welfare system: “,,,changes in the objective circumstances of women had made them more dependent on the welfare state and increasingly at odds with much of the conservative, “anti-statist” rhetoric of the Reagan Republicans.” (Kaufmann and Petrocik, 1999:872) and in Howell and Day: “The Reagan administration’s attempts to roll back some of these programs in the 1980s and subsequent attempts by the Republican party to cut social, health, and educational programs in order to reduce taxes have had more appeal to males. (Howell and Day, 2000:871)

In the introduction to this paper I have expressed the hope in the possibility of having gender-based theoretical frameworks inform the making of foreign policy. What I would like to explore first however is how the process of foreign policy-making and its causes come from specific notions of masculinity and how this perpetuates gendered constructions. Foreign policy can therefore become a powerful tool to break the cycle of oppression of women.

#### 4.4 Foreign policy and the construction of identity

“Identities are constructed by others who have a stake in making up certain social categories and in trying to make people conform to them.” (Steans, 1998:65) Such is the case with men or anyone that stands to benefit, materially or psychologically, from a ‘man’s world’.

The constant, perceived threat that the world is going to lapse into chaos at any moment has been an inspiration to policy-makers and others in power to contribute to the masculine/ feminine dichotomy by masculinizing the world of the military and all aspects of foreign policy. It has been an explicit goal of the United States for example to construct and maintain an American identity. This they have attempted to do through the feminization of all undesirables that stood in opposition to the United States, whether in terms of ideology, oil interests or territorial aggression. But masculinities are threatened from time to time, specifically hegemonic masculinities. It has been the rule to rectify this situation with even more force, as can be seen in the Gulf War: “The “emasculatation” of American men following the defeat in Vietnam and the desire to reverse this helped to provide support for both the politics of the Reagan era and the Gulf War” (Hooper in Zalewski and Parpart, 1998:40)

For those who see the world through Realist lenses and who see the construction of masculine/ feminine identities as vital to the survival of the state, feminist criticism of these constructed identities pose a real threat. Some analysts have gone as far as saying, “feminist concerns, even liberal feminist concerns may make IR, as currently defined and practiced, untenable.” (Smith in Zalewski and Parpart, 1998:60) Feminists point out that the state and the institutions responsible for foreign policy-making are deeply gendered. This, in my opinion, does not spell disaster for the discipline, but poses challenges to bring to light this gendered nature and to attempt to ungender these institutions.

The ‘masculinity’ of foreign policy-making is reinforced through an emphasis on masculine decisionmaking qualities (qualities that have so to speak been hijacked by men

and masculinized) like rationality, logic, certainty, cause and constraint. (Smith, 1998:60) This brings us closer to an understanding of how identity construction structures global affairs and marginalizes those that do not conform to the hegemonic masculinity. A glaring example of how this masculinity works in conditioning men's thinking on foreign policy-making was a comment of a fellow-student of mine in a post-graduate seminar led by Jane Parpart. What he said boils down to the fact that one can not trust women with foreign policy decisions, because how can one trust anyone to make life or death decisions who are so ruled by their hormones!

The construction of masculine identities is maybe the most acute in the military: "American military families are more prone to violence and more prone to try to create extremes of masculine identity than the average American family" (Murphy, 1998:105). This is not only an American phenomenon, but happens everywhere if one considers how often rape is accepted as one of the spoils of war:

"It is because women embody the symbolic values of chastity and motherhood that incidences of rape in the armed conflicts that frequently accompany independence struggles have to be seen as political acts through which the aggressor attacks the honour of other men and through this breaks the continuity of the social order which it is women's responsibility to uphold." (Steans, 1998:67)

Identity in the making of foreign policy informs both content and structure of policy. If international relations is "understood as relations between him (the state) as the central actor and a series of marginal and displaced 'others'" (Krause, 1996:104), just as the relationship between masculinity and femininity is manifested in social life, it is imperative that policy-makers are conscious of this process and work to deconstruct this through informed policy-making. The idea of the sovereign state in opposition to "images of a disorderly and threatening 'state of nature', identified with the feminised 'other'" (Krause, 1996:105) undermines attempts by state and non-state actors to cooperate and draw strength from differences. Building relationships that necessitate interdependence will become more and more prominent in a world where borders are becoming more arbitrary, and to hold on to Realist views of anarchy and disorder do not only serve to

destabilize relationships among states, but also serves to perpetuate the masculinization of the state and subsequent gendered relationships.

For a state to have legitimacy and support in its international endeavours, it stands to gain from people who see their primary identity as that of nationality: "...identity is not just a question of self-identification. Identities are constructed by others who have a stake in making up certain social categories and in trying to make people conform to them." (Krause, 1996:107) The same is true for relationships between countries: in order to gain power over other countries for whatever reason (mainly clothed in the language of 'national interest'), these countries are compared to great Western powers and are labeled weak, underdeveloped, chaotic, and dangerous and are therefore 'feminized'. It then becomes easier for aggressor countries to interfere or preach, given that they now have the 'moral' right to do so.

Global influences that are the result of states exporting their economic cultures are increasing reshaping and also, in some cases, perpetuating specific gender identities: "The expansion of capitalism as an economic and social system to global proportions has transformed social orders and created the conditions for different forms of alliances. This is changing the nature of feminist politics. For example the feminisation of poverty is a global phenomenon and is intimately connected to the wider processes of global economic restructuring. The same processes are producing many and varied sites of resistance." (Krause, 1996: 111) Globalization also in some instance poses a threat to rights of women that have been like that for centuries. For the global capitalist system to work properly in the eyes of the big industrialists and multinationals, a redefinition of women's places in traditional societies is crucial:

The optimal labor force for capital...is the socially constructed consumer-housewife: In the West, she does unpaid work in order to lower the costs for the realization of capital... while women in the periphery do underpaid or 'informal' work just to get by, both groups trapped by the social assumption that women are dependent on male wage earners and therefore have the luxury of not working outside the home.(Sylvester, <http://csf.colorado.edu/isa/ftgs/femir.html>)

One of the most devastating ways in which identity was created was through the US bombing policy in Indochina: “With the stroke of a pen, people can be transformed into friends or enemies, while their villages are turned into targets or free fire zones. Some words are even able to make things disappear, so that entire bombing operations (as in Laos and Cambodia) are rendered silent and invisible. In short, the words that we propose to discuss *were* the world of the officials who uttered them, and those words helped create the world in which millions of other people lived, suffered, or died.” (Milliken and Sylvan, 1996: 323) The targets of the US bombing campaign had no choice in the creation of their identities by the Americans, and the US did this to justify their aggressions. The targets were either the ‘enemies’, or of ‘strategic interest’.

US policymakers labeled people in various ways and ascribed different (gendered) identities to them. The labels ‘Northerners’ and ‘Southerners’ for example helped the US military to strategize accordingly:

...a principle distinction between ‘Southerners’ and ‘Northerners’ was that the former had female characteristics attributed to them, whereas the latter were marked as male. This distinction was important for policy-makers, since, by definition, they considered female persons and places to be irrational and amorphous. Men could not reason with females; men could not fix the boundaries of female objects. Thus ‘conventional’ explosives were of little use in ‘communicating’: there were no vital zones to harm and there was no brain to learn from what was harmed, For such ‘threats’, the most appropriate thing for men to do was to burn and destroy in broad sweeps.

The situation of the Northerners is explained like this:

By contrast, ‘hard’ and ‘tough’ ‘fighters’ could be ‘hurt’ by ‘precise’ ‘applications’ of ‘military power’. Such ‘enemies’ had ‘assets’ they wished to ‘protect’; harm or threats to such assets could be useful in ‘convincing’ the ‘adversary’ to negotiate. If men did not use ‘enough’ force in ‘dealing’ with ‘Northerners’, the latter might ‘take advantage’ of them by sodomising them. US policy-makers were thus engaged in a ‘contest’ with the ‘North’. (Milliken and Sylvan, 1996:344)

Gender was thus used by policy-makers to construct their world. What seemed to the policy-makers as normal and justifiable, appeared to others as horrific and senseless. Critics of policies like these should be careful not to be co-opted into the same language and terminology, since they will then not be able to contribute anything meaningful. The language has to be deconstructed so that the assumptions and ontologies of the policy-

makers can become clear. It is necessary for the critic, and in fact anyone that ponders on the bombing campaign in Indochina to attempt to alienate themselves from the world created by the policy-makers. The authors of “Soft bodies, hard targets, and chic theories” suggest the use of irony, satire and alienation: “It is the details of the policy-making that render it both appalling and amusing: the idea of ‘jungle rice paddies’; of doctors as succeeding by shedding blood; of bombing as seduction.” (Milliken and Sylvan, 1996: 349)

Observers and readers of foreign policy documents are often posited as policy-makers themselves. The uncritical employment of contentious terms such as ‘aggression’, ‘persuasion’, and ‘strategy’ blinds the observer to the loaded meanings of these terms. It does not suffice to criticize foreign policy in its own terms, because that implies that the assumptions that are used to make the policy are left unchecked. One has to seriously question when scrutinizing foreign policy whether the world created by the foreign policy-makers is the same world that the observer lives in.

## CHAPTER 5

### Specific foreign policy considerations

#### 5.1 Security, violence and the military

Security in traditional Realist terms have always been defined in terms of the military, defense and the protection of national borders. Tickner argues that “realism is heir to a long tradition of thought that associates nationhood and citizenship with military service and with male characteristics.” (Tickner in Griffith, 1999:228) Although women are increasingly being allowed into the military, they still have subordinate positions to men and are daily being subjected to the misogynist attitudes of fellow soldiers. If one considers the masculinism of the military it becomes easier to understand the discomfort felt with women in the military.

The hypermasculinity of the military has dire consequences for global security, and severely limits the identities that both men and women can subscribe to at a national level. Men have no choice but to appear ‘tough’ and ‘manly’ on foreign policy issues and women have no option but to be supportive of this role. Questioning the military’s handling of foreign affairs is met with hostility, and one can find oneself quickly out of the comfortable national fold. But how has the military come to play such a huge role in foreign policy issues? “Many observers have remarked on the peculiar American contemporary political culture that equates military experience and/or military expertise with political leadership. It is this cultural inclination that has made it very risky for any American public figure to appear less “manly” than a uniformed senior military male officer. It is a culture - too often unchallenged by ordinary voters - that has given individuals with alleged military knowledge a disproportionate advantage in foreign policy debates.” (Enloe, <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org>) Foreign policy has been and is a site for macho politics, and political leaders fear losing face if they appear too soft on security issues.

National security as a justification for violence is ingrained in Realist thinking, and most of the modern world operates according to its principles. The example that I would like to use extensively here is the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip and how the masculinization of the military has added violence to a region and to people's lives already drenched in bloodshed. The insights gained from using this example are however not only limited to the Middle East but finds echoes in almost all of the countries of the world.

Simona Sharoni says "there is a strong connection between violence against women and violence in the Occupied Territories. A soldier who serves in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and learns that it is permissible to use violence against other people is likely to bring that violence back with him upon his return to his community." (quoted in [www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html](http://www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html)) She is quick to add that she does not necessarily see violence as inherent to males, but rather as a complex set of practices that are reinforced through socialization and other forms of propaganda. In her analysis of the hypermasculinity of the military, she draws attention to the complex relationship between sexism, militarism, and violence against women. Her main argument is that violence begets violence, and this resonates around the globe in the high degree of violence in military families, the domination of foreign policy decisions by military solutions to conflict, and the nature of the actual conflicts themselves, where rape of the 'enemy's' women are often seen as part of the victory over the 'other', the weak, the foreign, the chaotic, the feminine. Rape is often used as a method of terror by an invading army or aggressor in times of war: "the effect is indubitably one of intimidation and demoralization for the victim's side." (Brownmiller, 1975: 37) Women during wartime are seen as icons of the nation and as those in need of protection. Since women are so closely linked with nationalism during these times, "men of a conquered nation traditionally view the rape of 'their women' as the ultimate humiliation, a sexual *coup de grace*" and "rape by a conqueror is compelling evidence of the conquered's status of masculine impotence" (Brownmiller, 1975: 38).

The Israeli army, as well as the American, the British, the French and numerous other armies, is always eager to portray itself as a “humane army that has tried at all costs to prevent women and children from suffering (Gal 1986) (Sharoni, [www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html](http://www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html)) But the reality has been that of “military occupation which has been sustained through an indiscriminate use of violence and oppressive practices against Palestinians as a whole, including women and children.” (Sharoni, [www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html](http://www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html)) Most women in war situations have to endure violence directed at them both as members of a specific nation (their national identity) and as women. They become twice the ‘other’. Armies that have to rely so much on masculinity to carry them through conflicts will have to be held responsible for the violence it reproduces inside communities, and ultimately lacks legitimacy.

An interesting and disturbing aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been the sharp increase in violence against women in Israel since the outbreak of the Intifada. Women are becoming increasingly aware of this and are starting to challenge this on all levels, but mainly through NGOs. New women’s groups are Women in Black, Reshet (The Israeli Women’s Peace Net), Women’s Organizations for Women Political Prisoners, Shani Women against the Occupation, and the Women and Peace Coalition. What is even more interesting is that substantial percentages of women are in fact, consciously or subconsciously challenging ingrained nationalist rhetoric and are raising the safety of men, women and children above territorial concerns. It is a twisted priority that land is more important than human life.

The threat that the Israeli military has felt because of the political mobilization of women has been met with the suppression of demonstrations, declaring the Palestinian Women’s Working Committees illegal, and by arresting women; they could not only be interrogated about their own political activities, but also forced to incriminate friends and family. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are also used to intimidate and silence

women. Israeli men have not taken lightly to the political mobilization of Israeli women, largely due to their (Israeli men) stake in the masculinity of the military.

National security in terms of Realist thinking basically translates into national interest for all intents and purposes. First of all, this very obviously points to the gendered nature of the national interest, but it then very specifically “contributes to gender inequities and legitimizes violence against ... women.” (Sharoni, [www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html](http://www.evergreen.edu/users2/sharonis/chapter1.html)) This is not a uniquely Israeli case, but sadly echoes situations like these around the globe.

Foreign policy does not only have to be about war making. It can pro-actively engage in peace building and peacekeeping. Through education and institutionalization, political leaders should rather feel compelled to gain their status by wanting to volunteer as peacekeepers, diplomats, negotiators, mediators, and should also restructure their foreign policy departments to aid them in this quest. Becoming aware of the masculinity and the entrenched violence in military training programs may also steer them on a more pacifist course.

Perhaps the most radical consideration would be that security does not only involve military security. In fact, the security of vast majorities of people around the world are daily threatened not so much by war and physical violence, but by domestic, environmental and financial disorder:

Older definitions of national security are perhaps becoming increasingly obsolete and dysfunctional, enhancing rather than reducing the insecurity of individuals and their natural environment. Thus attaining peace, economic justice and ecological sustainability, she suggests, are inseparable from the project of gender equality. For example, as subsistence providers in the Third World, women must work harder when food, water and fuel resources deteriorate. (Tickner in Griffith, 1999:228)

Globalisation, structural adjustment programs, the degradation of the environment, creation of refugees due to civil wars and the failure of the international community to

curb the violations of women's basic human rights have all contributed to the insecurities women face today.

Another situation worth investigating is that of the United Nations sanctions against Iraq as well as the continuous bombing of Iraq by the United States. Countries of the Middle East have reputations for treating its citizens, especially its women, abominably. Yet prior to the Gulf War and the sanctions regime, women in Iraq saw an increase in their political and socio-economic rights. The war and the sanctions put an effective end to this.

The US continues to bomb Iraq at a rate of once every one or two days. This bombing continues in the face of overwhelming international opposition. The United Nations were not consulted in this and the US timed its first attack to coincide with an opening sitting of the Security Council. This shows blatant disregard for international law and proves that the US is the world's biggest bully. But what is the US's motivation for these bombings? What are the consequences of both the bombing campaign as well as international sanctions for the women of Iraq?

Prior to 1991 and the Gulf War, Iraq was one of the world's wealthiest nations, not only in terms of crude GDP, but also in terms of per capita income and general living standards. Some of the statistics are shocking: "By September 1995 the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs estimated about 4 million Iraqis (about 20%) lived in extreme poverty. ... The purchasing power of the local currency has been greatly reduced, ... from US\$3 = 1 Iraqi Dinar (ID) in 1990 ... to about US \$1 = ID,500 in 1997." (pg. 9)" ([www.ngos.net/iraq.html](http://www.ngos.net/iraq.html))

The sanctions have affected all aspects of Iraqi daily lives, especially severely felt in the areas of health, sanitation and food security. The international world sought to remedy this through what is commonly referred to as the "Oil-for-Food" plan, where limited amounts of oil were sold and food and other daily necessities bought with this money for the Iraqi people. This project has not had the desired consequences, and people in Iraq are

living under the worst conditions ever. Children are especially vulnerable: "Malnutrition was not a public health problem in Iraq prior to the embargo. Its extent became apparent during 1991 and the prevalence has increased greatly since then. 18% in 1991 to 31% in 1996 of [children] under five with chronic malnutrition (stunting); 9% to 26% with underweight malnutrition; 3% to 11% with wasting (acute malnutrition), an increase in over 200%. By 1997, it was estimated about one million children under five were [chronically] malnourished." ([www.ngos.net/iraq.html](http://www.ngos.net/iraq.html)) This is a picture that countries like the United States and Britain don't want to face or be reminded of. The unwillingness of the United States to review the "Oil-for-Food" program and its stubborn attitude on maintaining sanctions against Iraq casts a gloomy shadow over the health and future of foreign policy as an instrument for world prosperity.

According to Hans von Sponeck, the former UN Assistant General and the former UN Humanitarian Coordinator of Iraq, the Oil for Food Program has failed: "Von Sponeck explained that the maximum amount of money generated by the "Oil-for-Food" Program is only \$252 dollars per person per year. According to figures from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, this amount put Iraq into a category known as "Least Developed Country", a stark contrast to its pre-Gulf War status as one of the most healthy countries in the world." ([www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html](http://www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html))

Basic supplies are withheld from the Iraqi people because, according to the sanctions committee, these items can be used for war purposes. This covers a wide range of products and has successfully crippled a lot of industries in Iraq. Building supplies for schools and hospitals are in strong demand - even pencils, for example, are not allowed into Iraq, according to sanctions, because the graphite could be used to coat missile heads. ([www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html](http://www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html))

The US gives Iraq's non-cooperation with the weapons inspectors as one of the main reasons for the continued sanctions against Iraq. Yet UN statistics has shown that a significant amount of weapons and materials to make weapons have been destroyed. But

obviously no guarantee can be given, given "the size of Iraq and the lengthy list of objectionable items and materials" ([www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html](http://www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html)). Furthermore, it is now known that the weapons inspectors were withdrawn by Richard Butler, the head of UNSCUM at US behest. ([www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html](http://www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html)) Noam Chomsky also points out the double standards involved in demanding the destruction of all nuclear weapons. The US has more nuclear power than the rest of the world combined, and current president Bush has roundly been criticized for his country's recent missile tests. Yet the US, through its foreign policy, continues to impoverish a country, ruin its infrastructure and cripple its economy and as a result millions of innocent people suffer every day.

In order to understand better why the US is acting in such a brutish way, it is necessary to gain insight into the US's real interests in the Middle East. These interests are mostly not linked to foreign policy statements regarding the sanctions and bombing campaign, since it would be hard to explain to an American public the need to kill innocent people so the US could have access to cheap fuel, for example. The US media also serves as a powerful tool of the US government and those that stand to benefit from US foreign policy, and here we think specifically of the big oil companies. In order for continued support at home, it was and is necessary for the US to continue to lie to its people:

the Gulf War we saw a radical demonization of a relatively unknown quantity. And it was demonization by either exaggerating or fabricating atrocities. Like the baby incubator story. The press jumped on this story that the Iraqi soldiers went into Kuwait, threw babies from their incubators on the ground, on the floor to die. And they jumped all over that. It ended up being a fabricated story. And I think that that's really the story of what we've seen in the press coverage of Iraq in microcosm. ([www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html](http://www.radioproject.org/transcripts/0037.html))

Chomsky also draws attention to the fact that there is no real public awareness in the US of the situation in Iraq and this is fuelled by a mainstream media that largely ignores the US's actions in Iraq, or if any coverage is given, it is extremely biased and blatantly wrong. The US government has also shown its callousness towards the situation through statements made by both George Bush and Madeleine Albright: "he [Bush] announced his famous New World Order in four simple words - 'What we say, goes.'" This

highlights the US's paternalistic and condescending attitude towards the rest of the world, a world where the US rules through terror. The US is in fact the biggest terrorist state that the world has yet seen. In a question posed to Madeleine Albright in 1996 on US national television, she was asked "for her reaction to reports from the United Nations that half a million Iraqi children has died from the sanctions. Her answer was, 'Well, this is a price that we feel we are willing to pay.'" ([www.zmag.org/chomsky/interviews/9901-frontline-iraq.htm](http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/interviews/9901-frontline-iraq.htm)) Chomsky has called this a form of genocide.

The main interest of the Western powers, especially the US, in Iraq is oil. Oil is a scarce and valuable resource, and the US economy is gluttonous and relies heavily on fossil fuels for a wide range of industries. So the interest in the Middle-East in this regard is clear. Statements regarding these interests can be found in state documents, yet the link between interests and the US actions in the Gulf are denied and at the very least tremendously underplayed by politicians. Thomas Noonan and Lee Johnson, respectively a retired US Navy captain and the Navy Director for Naval Matters write in an article in the San Francisco Chronicle that the "nation's prosperity and security depend on unrestricted access to global commerce. Thus, our strategy must guarantee access to world markets and trade to protect the interests of our nation and our allies." And "The U.S. military is a tool of that strategy; one of several our country must use skillfully to defend its interests." ([www.sfgate.com/c/s.dll/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2001/05/24/ED237810.DTL&type=printable](http://www.sfgate.com/c/s.dll/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2001/05/24/ED237810.DTL&type=printable)) It is sad to see that the result of such 'skillful' strategy is the loss of thousands of innocent lives.

The US foreign policy is "guided by the 'national interest' as conceived by dominant social groups, in this case, the primary goal of maximizing the free access by American capital to the markets and human and material resources of the world, the goal of maintaining to the fullest possible extent its freedom of operation in a global economy. At the same time, ideologists labor to mask these endeavors in a functional system of beliefs." (Chomsky, 1987: 253, 254) To lay the US's interests and motivation bare in this

fashion emphasizes the inhumanities committed in the name of 'free-market economy'. It will appear as if dollars and cents are far more important to the US government than the lives of millions of people far from its shores who die each day in horrible circumstances.

Not only do the sanctions and war against Iraq disrupt the lives of millions of women (who traditionally bear the biggest brunt of war and violence) but it also shows the lack of insight into the gendered nature of power and how the demonization of countries such as Iraq by the US perpetuates the binary oppressions of male/female, weak/strong, rational/irrational and right/wrong.

### 5.2 Globalization, development and foreign policy

The global restructuring of the economy has had consequences for the social- and economic security of women around the world. The recent protests at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Bank meetings in Seattle and Washington indicate a growing awareness of the effects of globalization and a critical stance towards the dogma of free trade and profit above all. The media treated the protesters as a spectacle, thereby making them the 'other', people who try and undermine the glory of capitalism. Yet they challenged the secrecy under which trade talks take place, they challenged the legitimacy of an organization like the WTO, and they did this from a number of issue platforms. It is one of the most direct attacks on the secrecy of foreign policy-making that the world has ever seen. "... the protesters were in Seattle to insist that globalization has become another word for capitulation to the worst excesses of capitalism, a cover for eliminating hard won protections for the environment and worker's rights." (Lacayo, 1999:29)

One of the ironies that the WTO delegation, as a response to the protesters, were quick to point out is that developing countries are in fact in favour of the trade agreements with developed countries, contrary to the belief of the protesters: "Demonstrators who want justice for poor nations were reminded last week that Third World delegates to the WTO don't want developed nations to force them to allow union organizing. Cheap labor is their competitive advantage." (Lacayo, 1999:30) What *Time* fails to inspect are the

motives of the 'Third World delegates'. Are they not perhaps in cahoots with First World capitalists? What the article and perhaps the protesters also fail to acknowledge is the impact of globalization on women and also on gendered relations, specifically in countries with cheap sources of labour. In another *Time* article dated June 26, 2000 by Rick Little, the author, founder and president of the International Youth Foundation, spoke to workers who work in assembly line manufacturing, and mentions that 80% of them are women. Yet he fails to mention how this contributes to the increasing feminization of poverty. He says, as others who praise the virtues of globalization, "these young women have life choices today that would have been inconceivable even a decade ago." (Lacayo, 1999: 41) What real choices do they have if labour practices remain unfair, wages are ridiculously low and not many prospects exist for promotion?

What is even more disconcerting is that political leaders come to conclusions such as this: As British Prime Minister Tony Blair told the Davos gathering, while Seattle was an undeniable setback, 'our conclusion should not be that open markets and free trade are wrong, but that we have to make a sincere effort to convince the world of their benefits.'" (Wallace, 2000:52) It is not my contention that open markets and free trade are without benefits, in fact, with better management and critical analysis, fair trade and accessible markets may provide the developing as well as the developed world with substantial benefits. The crucial issue is that there should be a re-assessment of the bottom-line of business: much can be done to address the social security of millions of women around the world.

Kofi Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations in his Summit 2000 speech to the General Assembly summarizes the problems created by globalization as follows: "First, the benefits and opportunities of globalization remain highly concentrated among a relatively small number of countries and are spread unevenly within in them. Second, in recent decades an imbalance has emerged between successful efforts to craft strong and well-enforced rules facilitating the expansion of global environment, human rights or

poverty reduction, has lagged behind.” (Annan, 2000:10) Women were some of the first to suffer in this sense at the hands of big business:

In the 1980s big business also invested more and more in high-tech research, automation and computer-integrated manufacturing systems. This investment was aimed at replacing skilled labour. However, where labour-intensive and skilled-work aspects of production predominated, it was not always cost-effective to invest heavily in machinery. This was particularly the case where there was a supply of cheap female labour, because women made the most flexible robots of all. (Steans, 1998: 135)

Although globalization can not be viewed as a force that produces global unity and homogeneity, it has definitely contributed to the international political mobilization of women. Globalization by very definition is a global phenomenon and has very real consequences for women in particular localities. The effect of structural adjustment policies and ‘development aid’ on developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America is but one example. It seems strange at first glance that people in developing countries would actively resist commodity farming and cash crops, since capitalist rhetoric has it that these agricultural methods are sure to bring prosperity to all. Development aid is then specifically linked to these two methods, and agricultural experts are often sent to developing countries to assist in the transition to private, commercial farming with an emphasis on scientific methods. The effect on women is as follows: “In many developing states, agricultural produce is often the first thing singled out for increased exports. Produce grown for export use land, which could be used to grow food for domestic consumption. Therefore, increased *cash-crop* production for export frequently leads to increased domestic food shortages. Since women are usually responsible for providing food for children and adult men, women have to deal with the problems of food shortages.” (Steans, 1998: 42) Policy makers in developed country too often see progress only in terms of GDP, ignoring the harsh insecurities caused by development programmes. It is almost a rule that development and structural adjustment programmes cause more problems, especially in terms of social unrest (even war) than not.

A good example of exactly how negatively structural adjustment policies can influence developing countries is that of the coffee industry in Kenya in the 1980s. The paper by Turner, Brownhill and Kaara has at its heart the illustration of the “centrality of gender to foreign policy”. (p. 3, [www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm)) The study is an example of how rural women have identified and resisted the negative impact of the development policies on them in the face of great odds embedded in culture and masculinity: “The success of women in sustainable, sustenance agriculture is linked to their own labour power, in the face of efforts by husbands, the state and private firms to retain control.” (p. 3, [www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm))

During the last half of the 70s and the early 80s, coffee lost a lot of its export value, and this coincided with women becoming disillusioned with merely being the coffee-pickers and not seeing any of the money generated. To keep women in this submissive role and as virtually ‘free’ labour on their husbands’ coffee plantations, many coercive methods were practiced:

... forced ‘husbandization’ and housewifization’ that had at its core land enclosure and the replacement of women’s collective work groups by husbands’ command over wives’ individuated labour power. The demise of the ‘Kenyan miracle’ in turn is partly the result of women’s refusal of these relationships so essential to export crop production and their corollary insistence on food production through communal, self-organized women’s work courses. (p.9, [www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm))

Kenyan men were co-opted into these practices by the state, private firms and international development agencies. The authors call this the ‘male deal’. When this relationship between Kenyan men and women started to threaten production, international agencies responded by pushing more money into the coffee industry. The International Monetary Fund even went as far as “introducing incentives in the form of loans to the state on the condition that social service spending be cut in favour of ‘cost-sharing and second, by requiring the state to pay higher coffee prices to men.” (p. 11, [www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm)) This was also a cause of increased violence against women. By this time women were threatening to stop picking coffee. As the situation became more and more unbearable, and women found it hard to

provide their families with food, they took matters into their own hands. They started uprooting coffee trees:

This process of nullifying the one-party dictatorship's authority in the crucial matter of coffee was part of the process of mobilization for democracy and social justice that began to gather force in Kenya in the mid-1980s. By late 1986, most women farmers in Maragua had planted bananas and vegetables for home consumption and local trade instead of coffee for export (p.11 & 12, [www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00htm))

The banana industry grew, and today it is largely dominated by women. ([www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm)) Men started to accept their wives rejection of coffee, largely for their own food security, and thus helped to dismantle an exploitative regime that was centered in the corrupt cooperatives, coffee union and the Coffee Board of Kenya. Unfortunately, although women have gained power over their own labour, they still remain largely landless. They also have to contend with international development institutions that want to push their neo-liberal agendas and target the men specifically for this:

The state and transnational corporations continue to regulate women's labour by giving credit to male title deed holders to encourage horticulture. Foreign and local capitalists entice landowning men in Maragua into labour-intensive and chemical-dependent export production. The seduction's coercive edge is the hunger for cash which neoliberalism feeds. Husbands of women who have rejected coffee may view horticulture as a means to reassert command over women's labour. To be successful in 'evading male control' women need laws that insist on the registration of women as owners of parcels of land' according to the Kenya NGO, Women and the Law. (p.14, [www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/genderinfo/genderfarmersmar00.htm))

Foreign policy-makers will have to be more sensitive to the very real effects their 'economic aid' and structural adjustment policies have on women. This ultimately asks for a re-evaluation of what economic progress means, and also for more research into the social realities of countries considered for economic assistance. The academic community, activists and analysts should highlight the neo-liberal agendas of international trade and financial institutions in order to address the injustices committed against developing countries.

### 5.3 Foreign policy, gender and the environment

Environment as a platform for mobilizing women politically around the globe may prove to be very effective, since natural disasters as well as man-made environmental disasters know no boundaries. Women are usually the most affected by environmental disasters, since they bear the brunt of the social cost that it brings. What has to be heeded against is essentializing woman's nature by linking it to the 'natural', the ecological and portraying women to be more caring about the environment than men. This tends to reinforce stereotypes and doesn't do much in terms of breaking the power of dichotomies, e.g. nature/ culture, soft/hard, high/low etc. There may also not be any urgent desire to care for the environment, not by anybody, especially if what is at stake is the day to day material survival of people: "Whether men or women are innately predisposed to care more or less is to an extent beside the point, because most of us are able to learn to cultivate a state of consciousness given a conducive environment, education and psychological assistance." (Thompson and Swatuk, 2000)

Why do we need to bring gender into the equation when talking about the environment? Precisely because gendered female values emphasize caregiving, compassion, intuition, trust and interdependence as opposed to the ruthless exploitation of nature and the violence committed against nature. Although one would like avoiding essentializing what it means to be a man or a woman, essentialist feminisms leave us with a powerful image of the earth being raped and conquered.

Development projects that are sold to be beneficial to all, often only serve rich capitalist men and their interests and affect the environment in such a way so that it becomes unsustainable for rural people, especially women, and thus add to poverty levels. Thompson and Swatuk use the examples of land and fresh water use in Sub-Saharan Africa: "where nodes of 'development' occur in semi-arid areas, continued 'growth' is dependent on moving water from point A to point B. Hence the current fashion for water transfer projects in the region." (Thompson and Swatuk, 2000) These water transfer projects interfere with rivers and divert water away from rural dwellers. It also upsets

historical agricultural practices. One of these practices is to plant crops after flood waters subside. This practice has severely been threatened by diverting rivers and also contributes to further environmental damage when people plant on the riverbanks that in turn causes soil erosion.

What role does the state play in all of this? Sadly, it is the state's adherence to neo-liberal policies that interfere with the environment for the 'bigger' cause of industrialization. This is exacerbated in developing countries where there is pressure on them to catch up with the industrialized developed world, and the growing debt problem severely limits policy options. The continued masculinization of the national security also contributes to the problem, as policy-makers do not want to appear 'soft' on any issue, and the environment has been seen as less of a priority. This very phenomenon has shown that people can organize at grass roots level, and does not wait for the state to provide the security. In fact, the state is the actor that usually provides the "insecurity": "In other words, irrespective of state (in)action, humans are and will continue to search for their own security." (Thompson and Swatuk, 2000)

The social, political and economic realities that women find themselves in may prevent them from making sound environmental judgments. These realities are often the result of policy driven by the male elite who do not consider gender sensitivity when they make policies: "...as women rarely own land they cultivate there is little incentive for them to make environmentally sound decisions, while their lack of access to credit hampers them from buying technologies and inputs that would be less damaging to natural resources. These negative factors set up a cycle of declining productivity, increasing environmental degradation and food security for the future." ([www.fao.org/gender/en/env-e.htm](http://www.fao.org/gender/en/env-e.htm))

Foreign policy-makers face the challenge of carefully studying the social and environmental realities of their region, and also remote regions that will be affected by capital restructuring, privatization drives and development programmes. Even more crucial is a rethink of the influence of neo-liberal institutions on foreign policy

departments and the 'gendered' nature of interference in foreign markets. In fact, the atomization of the market make foreign policy-makers blind to social and gendered realities.

#### 5.4 Foreign policy, gender and human rights

Human rights as a foreign policy objective are often one of the best articulated objectives within foreign policy documents. It is also one of the most controversial of objectives, mainly because of the principle of sovereignty and also one of cultural relativism. It is also one of the objectives that fall greatly short in practice. What should countries actions be regarding the treatment of women in the Middle East, the genital mutilation practices in Africa, the plight of female refugees? When countries try and incorporate the rights of women, people of colour and the poor into their foreign policy statements, they are often accused of trying to universalize specific Western notions of human rights.

Cultural relativism advocates argue that human rights cannot be universal, since they are based on Western culture-specific notions of the rights of individuals. Cultural relativism does not allow the idea that ethical principles can hold across cultures, they are indeed culture-specific. This 'axiom' have been dominating the debate for over 30 years, and only recently has it started to come under sustained attack by those who acknowledge the hidden dangers in it: "This view is unacceptable, as Salmon points out, since it relies on a notion of culture which we anthropologists have ourselves rejected over the past few decades, namely, that culture is a bounded and internally coherent whole." (Fox, <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v2/v2i3a2.htm>) The powerful, who have a vested interest in the status quo, often use the relativist argument to prevent the outside world and their own people from questioning their human rights practices. Cultural identity is not static, nor is identification with the state or nation a given. People do not live in a cultural or moral vacuum, and "a society's norms emerge out of a conglomeration of interwoven ideas obtained through a complex array of processes which include various forms of historical and/ or contemporary contact with 'outsiders'." (Fox <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v2/v2i3a2.htm>)

The opposite of ethical relativism should also be critically dealt with. Although proponents of relativism have made 'universality' to be the enemy, the argument of this paper is that moral absolutism should be considered the opposite of relativism. It is indisputable that preaching a narrow set of values to the world and claiming it to be the only human rights standard is wrong. Western human rights approaches have tended to promote civil and political rights and have neglected social and economic rights. It is also exactly in this sense that the human rights regime remains gendered. Men are more often the focus of these rights, and historically were the only benefactors of civil and political rights. Although most countries today have extended these rights to women and minorities, it is still within the gendered linguistic framework of the 'political man', and the accompanying masculinity/ies. It is only when we consider the so-called second-degree rights as spelled out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that the plight of women, minorities and the poor around the world is more visible.

"An adequate account of women's rights as human rights must reveal women's oppression as culturally, socially, and historically situated; that is, it must pay attention to the particular kind of oppression that women suffer in situation..." (Fox, <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v2/v2i3a2.htm>) It does not suffice to treat human rights only on the abstract level; this serves to conceal the many real violations of their rights that women suffer daily, mainly because they are women. Women in both Western and non-Western countries are daily subjected to verbal, physical and emotional abuse. While it may appear subtler in many Western states, human rights abuses in these countries still take place due to the nature of the masculine state and its practices. Gender thus informs and influences all spheres of women's lives.

While differences do exist, the commonalities should be emphasized if there is to be any manifestation of emancipatory practices. Commonalities are "generated both through shared experiences and through independent development of similar conclusions." (Fox

at <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v2i3a2.htm>) The marginalization of women's rights in all walks of life through all cultures serves to unite women in a shared experience. The simplistic notion that Western and non-Western women's experiences cannot overlap because of cultural differences is a fallacy and can also be used to conceal the flaws of both the Western and non-Western take on human rights:

Howard does point out that while women and men have more formal rights in post-colonial Africa, the western model has essentially deprived women of the political influence they had in many societies. Her example of the 1929 "Women's War" in Nigeria is a case in point, in which tens of thousands of Igbo women attacked chiefs appointed by the British, as a protest against the abrogation of their traditional power. Moreover, Howard also insists that there can be no adequate analysis of the human rights of African women, or improvements made for their effective implementation without understanding the sociohistorical context of women's lives. Legislation that does not recognize the influence of culture and tradition on male and female perceptions of each other will be ineffective. (<http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v2/v2i3a2.htm>)

Colonization has done much harm to the human rights regime of today by countries who attempted to export moral absolutism, hand in hand with neoliberal economic policies, not only to their own detriment, but also to the thousands of women in the colonies that still suffer at the hands of reactionary policies of their own governments. Policies that supposedly benefit the 'group' and simultaneously harm the human rights of women are also often adopted by those in power who want to protect their own interests. The rights of women are often not considered in the makings of such policies, and the relativist argument subsequently rings hollow. Human rights should be upheld on the grounds that we are human. A universal human rights regime should be possible since there is no other way of articulating human rights that are applicable to all. Where cultural differences do exist, these differences shouldn't be attacked per se, and cultural variances that do not violate basic human rights should be viewed as enriching to the world. The powerful should not be allowed to hide behind arguments of cultural relativity, because this effectively silences those who feel their human rights have been violated. This dangerous abuse of the cultural relativity argument should be highlighted and targeted in order to create pressure on governments that have in the past gotten away with murder.

But what foreign policy options do states have in curbing human rights violations? It is important that a state is clear on its human rights agenda, and that it decides ahead of time, in other words, well articulated in policy documents, what is considered human rights abuses and what steps will be taken to ‘punish’ another state for its violations. More importantly however, a state should lead by example by scrutinizing its own human right practices and question the gendered assumptions it makes as to what constitutes human rights. The growing support for interference in domestic affairs when human rights abuses are suspected should enjoy even greater support and an attempt at establishing some kind of international “interference regime” should be considered. This should however occur hand in hand with a continued investigation into the motivations of state action to try and curb the trend of states that interfere only when it is in the national interest. Critics like Chomsky and many others have persuasively argued that the national interest is in many cases only the interests of a tiny elite.

Institutions like the United Nations and various women- and human rights NGOs, however flawed, should be supported in the work they do, especially in terms of states allowing them unhindered access to information and access to national populations. This will help generate the legitimacy of the human rights regime for Western and non-Western states alike.

### 5.5 The Internet as a site of resistance

The development of information technology has a potentially revolutionary effect on foreign policy. The Internet is increasingly being used by people who are disillusioned by their government’s inability to govern effectively and to voice their grievances about anything from concerns for the environment to human rights violations. The example that I would like to use here is that of the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, and how the internet was used not only to inform the world of the situation, but also to create a space where people and organisations could suggest solutions, offer advice and put pressure on policy makers: “In the last few years concern with the ability of such non-governmental networks to undercut national governments and international agreements has grown. This

concern has derived, in part, from the growing strength such networks have derived from the use of international computer communications. The extremely rapid spread of the computer “Net” around the world has suggested that such networks and their influence may grow apace.” ([http://flag.blackened.net/revolt.../cleaver\\_zap\\_effect\\_dec97.htm](http://flag.blackened.net/revolt.../cleaver_zap_effect_dec97.htm))

An example of how the internet can break the secrecy surrounding foreign policy is when the Zapatista movement communicated to the rest of the world that they sought autonomy, and was not in fact trying to destabilize the whole of Central America as they were portrayed to be doing by the Mexican government. The information that is circulating on the Internet, put there by the Zapatista movement as well as international observers undermines the propaganda used by the Mexican government to demonize the Zapatistas. There are today numerous other examples on the Internet that echoes what has happened in Mexico.

The power of the Internet to spread the word in this particular instance took everyone by surprise: “The breadth of participation in these discussions and the posting of multiple sources of information has made possible a degree of verification unusual in the history of the media. Questionable information can be quickly checked and counter-information posted with a rapidity unknown in either print or radio-television.” ([http://flag.blackened.net/revolt.../cleaver\\_zap\\_effect\\_dec97.htm](http://flag.blackened.net/revolt.../cleaver_zap_effect_dec97.htm)) People from different countries can find commonalities and therefore also question their own national identities as the only political identity they have.

An objection that some might have is that this technology is not available to everyone, and while this is certainly true, it does take politics out of the domain of the state. Furthermore, so-called developing countries are making technological leaps, as can be seen with the relative easy integration of ‘high’ technology such as cell phones in Africa. Exactly because of their relative territorial and ideological remoteness from the core countries, countries on the periphery stand to gain the most from these technologies. In terms of the connections different interest groups are making around the globe, Marx

would probably turn in his grave if he knew that this kind of technology might bring about the workers' revolution that he envisioned!

Gender issues are also addressed through this technology, and can serve the emancipatory project of feminists well: "A third realm of international discussion that seeks the elaboration of positive alternatives to contemporary is that of feminism and the diverse array of women's movements. Although in the early years of the Internet concern was expressed that computers were proving to be "boy toys" and cyberspace a boy space, subsequent developments have shown that women and women's organizations have been quick to adapt the Internet as a vehicle for their self-organization and public policy interventions." ([http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/.../cleaver\\_zap\\_effect\\_dec97.htm](http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/.../cleaver_zap_effect_dec97.htm))

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Conclusion**

This paper does not attempt to create a new theory of International Relations, yet it fundamentally questions the validity and legitimacy of a theory such as Realism to adequately explain the world today. It also highlights the powerful effects of theory on practice.

Gender-informed foreign policy making is not only potentially beneficial to women, but to all groups who are marginalized. The specific power play at work within the gendered relationships in a state proves to highlight the plight of those who do not find themselves at the 'right' side of this relationship. This is also true in terms of the relationships the state has with other countries. Gender informs the state of the status of these countries as 'foreign'. Gendered relationships do not allow for complex understandings of identity; the state protects only the citizen and is hostile towards the outsider. The state also allows only limited protection to its female subjects, as they resemble outsiders, foreigners, the 'other'.

The state today, grounded in Realist thinking is ill equipped to deal with the many new challenges it faces today. Challenges include an increasingly unstable world economy, environmental degradation, civil wars, human rights violations, refugees and, despite the Cold War being at an end, the possibility of nuclear annihilation. The reasons for the state being so ill equipped to deal with these challenges can be traced back to its formation, those that the formation of the nation-state favoured (men) and the subsequent impoverishment of theory to deal adequately with a changing world. Those in power would like to maintain the status quo, because they fear losing their privileged position. But they do this not only to the detriment of millions of marginalized peoples, but also to themselves. The devastation of a nuclear war and the inability of the environment to sustain the quality of human life for much longer threaten all. It is time to look for alternatives.

We need the stories of those who have been ‘silenced’ and marginalized, because a world that is run on the partial experience of elites is bound to run into trouble: “Not only feminists, but theorists of other marginalized groups - e.g., colonized populations, racial and ethnic minorities, the underclass - argue that knowledge claims about humans that are based upon only the partial experience of elites are simply inaccurate: they in fact distort our understanding of actual social relations.” (Peterson, 1992: 11) The knowledge of gendered relationships opens our eyes to the oppressive workings of the state and provides us with an opportunity not only to address this through policy, but also makes us question what it means to be men and women, and how we can subsequently celebrate our differences without falling into the binary trap.

This paper has addressed the issue of security by highlighting how traditional notions of national security have failed to address the ‘insecurities’ experienced by people around the globe. The substantial focus of foreign policy on military issues often creates more violence and insecurity, as explained in the example of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Military solutions are increasingly becoming obsolete, and the possibility for diplomatic solutions that rely on interdependence is increasing. The military as a socialization zone for hypermasculinity is problematic as it often increases violence in civilian communities, and is thus counter-productive.

Globalization and the practices it involves is a double-edged sword when viewing it as a bringer of prosperity to all. While it has opened up borders, brought remote cultures and populations into contact with each other and contributed to some extent to global wealth, some of its more adversarial effects are devastating. It destabilizes traditions that have historically empowered people, for instance the agricultural practices of rural women in Kenya and has created unknown poverty in areas where subsistence living has been a way of life. These practices of globalization are gendered in the sense that they reinforce patriarchal governmental systems through the export of the “nuclear family” model to countries (although patriarchal) where women still have political power and autonomy. Western states and multinationals sell neoliberal policies to the periphery and thus create

gendered relationships that are detrimental to the status of women. Foreign policy-makers, through influence in multinationals and international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, must stress the need for intensive investigation into the social and political realities of countries that are targeted for investment.

Environmental degradation, often fuelled by industrializing initiatives, poses a serious threat to the security of millions of people, especially those who find themselves in a subsistence relationship with the environment. Women form a substantial percentage of these people, especially since they are not always co-opted into the formal economy and have to 'stay at home' in a caring capacity. They rely on the quality of soil and water to sustain them and their children, and are thus sensitive to changes in the environment. The state has a responsibility to these people by gearing its domestic and foreign policy to actively campaign for the protection of the environment. The state can also create the opportunity for business to want to contribute to the protection of the environment: "Government, through creative tax incentives, and civil society, through a combination of confrontation and dialogue, must push business in the direction of sustainability." (Moloto, [www.wits.ac.za/fac/ir/dpjohn.htm](http://www.wits.ac.za/fac/ir/dpjohn.htm)) The government must be consistent in its efforts to curb environmental degradation because above-mentioned government interference will not work if international business adds pressure to local business through policies that sees profit as the bottom line, irrespective of the environmental costs.

For nearly three decades, the theory of cultural relativism has succeeded in paralyzing the human rights debate. Human rights organisations were blamed for promoting narrow, Western notions of human rights and interfering in the domestic politics of states against the absolute international principle of sovereignty. Yet there has been a growing amount of literature that specifically deals with this tension between moral absolutism and cultural relativism. Academics and activists alike see the need to move beyond this tension to a universalism that is flexible enough to accommodate various cultural

expressions of human rights while at the same time providing space for a discussion of what basic human rights should be and how different cases of human rights violations should be approached in different ways. Cultural relativism as an argument is often used by states guilty of human rights violations to justify their actions or at least silence their critics. It is too often used to serve the interests of the ruling elite at the expense of the national population. A changing, globalising world provides oppressed communities with the opportunity to share information and put pressure on governments to adhere to the respect for human rights. Foreign policies should articulate the human rights concerns of states, and should stipulate what steps will be taken against violators of human rights.

The distinction between domestic and foreign policy is fading. International issues have direct impact on the domestic situation, and domestic issues are gaining significance as information is more widely shared.

Governments have to be careful in terms of the international alliances they make. The alliance should not only serve the elite, but also the majority of the population. Foreign policy makers in South Africa have been blamed for doing exactly this: “the impetus toward fund-raising combined with an overwhelming public relations thrust - not to solve problems, but to look good to the outside world, which incidentally, is more sympathetic to white fears than black aspirations is also presenting itself as a challenge for the government.” (Moloto, [www.wits.ac.za/fac/ir/dpjohn.htm](http://www.wits.ac.za/fac/ir/dpjohn.htm)) Governments who court neoliberal development programmes face the same challenge.

Developing countries often do not have adequate resources to deal with regional insecurities. By pooling resources, interdependence can prove to be of particular value to these countries. It also provides these countries with an opportunity to develop co-operative institutions that can serve as an example to the rest of the world. The time is ripe for new solutions to old problems; Realism has failed to address the insecurities felt by people as a result of rapid changes in the global environment.

Unilateral solutions to foreign policy challenges are foolish. It is therefore imperative that foreign policy makers appreciate the necessity for information development, institution building, and international co-operation. This implies both more cooperation between countries, and also closer cooperation between foreign policy-makers and feminists. It is time to ask: “Which notion of manliness is shaping this policy discussion? and “Will the gap between women’s and men’s access to economic and political influence be widened or narrowed by this particular policy option?” ([www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/br.../v5n36masculinity.htm](http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/br.../v5n36masculinity.htm)) It is imperative, not only for the lives of women, but for all those who are marginalised due to the masculinisation of foreign policy, that we incorporate feminist investigation as an analytical tool when assessing any foreign policy.

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