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Engendering international relations: What
difference does second-generation
feminism make?

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Abstract

A first-generation of feminist scholarship on international relations challenged the implicitly gendered foundations of mainstream IR, including its masculine conceptual bias and state-centricity and the reliance on positivist ways of knowing. These feminist theoretical challenges cleared the path for new thinking and for the development of distinctly gendered approaches to international relations. A second-generation of feminist IR scholarship is now emerging, in which empirical research is strengthening and expanding on those earlier theoretical advances. Here, I explore these second-generation efforts to combine gendered theory with close empirical study of global/local processes. These efforts offer a number of lessons for how we might conduct our future scholarship. By showing—not telling—how gender is relevant to global politics, the insights from these studies can build upon one another in impressive ways. As such, they promise to speak to major concerns of feminist and ‘mainstream’ IR scholars alike.

Engendering international relations: What difference does second-generation feminism make?

JACQUI TRUE¹

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade or so feminist scholars have sought to transform the conventional study of international relations (IR). Initial efforts of this kind were undertaken so as to critique realist international relations. These efforts are now termed first-generation feminist research. Because this critique was developed primarily at the meta-theoretical level, the question remained open as to just what a feminist perspective on world politics would look like substantively, and how distinctive it would be from the perspectives that feminist scholars were opposing.² These previous efforts to establish a feminist approach to international relations cleared space for new thinking. But too often that thinking has gone on at the margins of the discipline and has not engaged the mainstream. Consequently, this important and potentially path-breaking work has tended to be misunderstood or ignored by many who could benefit from its insights.

¹ Department of Political Studies, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand, email: j.true@auckland.ac.nz. This paper was presented at the Gender and Globalisation in Asia and the Pacific Workshop, Australian National University, Canberra, 23–25 November 2001, and at a seminar in the Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 13 December 2001. I wish to thank the participants in both forums for their willingness to engage with the ideas presented in this paper and for their insightful comments that have been very helpful in revising the paper. Special thanks also to Greg Fry, Heather Rae and Chris Reus-Smit for prompting me to write this paper and making my stay in the IR Department at the ANU extremely stimulating and pleasant as well. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the many conversations with Brooke Ackerly and Ann Tickner during my year at the Center for International Studies at the University of Southern California, that have shaped my sense of the development and future of feminist international relations.

² Marysia Zalewski, 'Well, what is the feminist perspective on Bosnia?', *International Affairs* 71(2) 1995, pp. 339–56, addresses this question.

This paper contends that a transition from a first to a second-generation of feminist international relations is taking place. Such a generational shift has been prompted by developments in feminist theory, the disciplinary politics of IR, as well as changes in world politics, including the globalisation of women's movements and the integration of a gender perspective in state and international institutions. Despite the growing market for international gender expertise outside academia IR and the flourishing of feminist scholarship on global politics, IR feminists regret the lack of dialogue between feminist and mainstream IR scholars.³

Seeking to move beyond this state of affairs, a second-generation of feminist researchers have sought to make gender a central analytic category in studies of foreign policy, security, and global political economy not at the level of abstract theory but through the exploration of concrete historical and geographic contexts. Whereas the first-generation of feminist scholars challenged the IR mainstream by asserting the potential of a feminist alternative to IR theorising, the second-generation now works within a new, increasingly inter and multi-disciplinary IR field that takes for granted the existence—if not the centrality—of feminist perspectives. Thus, while the first wave of feminist scholars demonstrated the need for an agenda in IR that takes gender seriously, the second wave looks for—and experiments with—ways to do that empirically.

There is a further marker of the transition from a first to a second-generation of feminist international relations. Whereas the first-generation of scholars came for the most part from the First World and its institutions, more and more scholars now come from the post-colonial 'Third World', although they may study or reside in the First. Part of a second-generation, these feminist scholars are simultaneously drawing on and transforming knowledge produced in First World contexts to illuminate post-colonial contexts and multiple intersections of social differentiation and oppression. This diversification in the production of feminist IR knowledge reflects a broader movement within feminist

³ For a discussion of the methodological and substantive differences between feminist and mainstream approaches to international relations, that often prevent common understandings or shared conversations, see J. Ann Tickner, 'You just don't understand: Troubled engagements between feminists and IR theorists', *International Studies Quarterly* 41(4) 1997, pp. 611–32.

scholarship across the disciplines, recognising the multiple locations of theory and theorists.⁴

By arguing that there is a nascent second-generation of feminist IR scholarship I do not mean to imply that there has been ‘a break’ with first-generation approaches. Indeed, many of those who participated in the initial development of a feminist perspective on international relations have also contributed to the momentum for a second-generation of feminist IR scholarship that is both more empirical, and more global (that is, produced in more parts of the world). Second-generation feminists share the belief that in order to advance feminist perspectives in IR today, we must show *how* we can conduct research that uses gender as an analytic category and *how* that research makes a difference to our understanding of global politics. Ultimately, feminist contributions to the study of IR will hinge not only on discussions of its promise but also demonstrations of the range of possibilities opened up by the presence of gender among the myriad of analytic categories.

The challenge then, is two-fold: to improve our theorising and to improve our empirical studies of international relations.⁵ I contend that improvements of this sort will emerge from combining theory and empirical work. We need to produce more theory-driven empirical studies and more empirically grounded theoretical work. Second-generation feminist IR scholarship points us in this direction. Here, I discuss some of the ways in which this new scholarship is converging towards a distinctive approach to global politics. Through this discussion I seek to highlight approaches that we might build upon in future work. While appreciating Ann Tickner’s attention to the ontological and epistemological differences

⁴ See Brooke Ackerly, *Political theory and feminist social criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Chilla Bulbeck, *Re-orienting Western feminisms: Women’s diversity in a postcolonial world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Uma Narayan, *Dislocating cultures: Identities, traditions, and Third World feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁵ Brooke Ackerly and I suggest such a feminist critical methodology for international relations. In so doing, we argue that the major contribution of feminism to IR is its reflexive theoretical methodology. See Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True, ‘Transnational justice: A feminist development of critical international relations theory’, Paper presented at the Justice and Globalization: Conversations Across IR Theoretical Divides Workshop, Center for International Studies, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 21 April 2001.

between feminist and mainstream IR approaches,⁶ I contend that feminist IR has the potential to transform mainstream IR thinking. I believe that we should take this as our goal. I conclude the paper by suggesting how we might do that.

THE 'EMPIRICAL TURN'

Lately a 'second-generation' of feminist scholarship has emerged in which empirical research is strengthening and expanding the theoretical advances made in the past decade.⁷ Second-generation feminist scholars do not just assert the relevance of gender; they *show* how it is relevant in the analysis of global politics. Scholars such as Sandra Whitworth, Katherine Moon and Christine Chin have developed empirical cases where gender dynamics can be seen to be working simultaneously at local, national and global levels and with important political consequences for international relations.⁸ In this 'empirical turn', they are part of a larger group of international relations scholars, sometimes called 'constructivists', who are also seeking to empirically demonstrate how deeper, cultural processes of identity-formation and norm construction affect global politics.⁹

Contrary to what might be assumed given the emphasis placed on empirical research, second wave feminist IR scholars are not mere empiricists. In fact, in order to conduct empirical research, they need even

⁶ J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering world politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 8.

⁷ I have previously explored some of these ideas. See Jacqui True, 'Feminism', in Scott Burchill, Richard Devetak, Andrew Linklater, Christian Reus-Smit, Matthew Paterson and Jacqui True, *Theories of international relations*, second edition (London and New York: Palgrave, 2001).

⁸ Sandra Whitworth, *Warrior princes and the politics of peacekeeping: A feminist analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, forthcoming); Katherine Moon, *Sex among allies: Military prostitution in US-Korea relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); and Christine B.N. Chin, *In service and servitude: Foreign female domestic workers and the Malaysian 'modernity' project* (New York: Columbia University, 1998). See also Jan Jindy Pettman, *Worlding women: A feminist international politics* (New York: Routledge, 1996); and Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, beaches, and bases: Making feminist sense of international politics* (London: Pandora, 1989).

⁹ For a discussion of 'constructivist' approaches to IR see Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, 'Dangerous liaisons?: Critical international theory and constructivism', *European Journal of International Relations* 4(3) 1998, pp. 259-94; Christian Reus-Smit, 'Constructivism', in Burchill, Devetak, Linklater, Reus-Smit, Paterson and True, *Theories of international relations*; and Cecelia Lynch and Audie Klotz, *Constructing world politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, forthcoming).

greater conceptual clarity than is necessary for theoretical critique. To make abstract concepts and relationships amenable to empirical exploration it is necessary that you first take the time to carefully delineate which concepts and relationships you consider to exist, and which you consider the most important for the purpose of closer study. Having achieved this initial translation, second wave feminist scholars reflect continually on their research methodology and its potentially exclusionary effects.

For example, in her research on the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cambodia, Whitworth is self-critical of herself as a feminist scholar and the ways in which she herself may have inadvertently 'othered' her subjects of research. She observes that the practice of doing feminist fieldwork and engaging in self-reflection may be inadequate in light of the unequal power relations at work between 'the feminist researcher' and 'the researched'.¹⁰ To address these exclusions and inequalities in their work, she and other feminist scholars incorporate their self-critical reflections on the process of doing research as a part of their findings so that the community of feminist IR scholars is continually aware of the limits of our scholarship and what has yet to be done.¹¹

Contextualising gender

Clearly a need exists for more studies of international relations and global political economy that pay careful attention to gender. However, seeing gender everywhere is almost as dangerous as never seeing gender at all. Within the new feminist scholarship, gender as a concept is not used to explain everything nor is it employed in isolation from other categories. To take just one example of feminist IR research agenda, let us look at the global sex trade, which now rivals the returns from illegal drug trafficking.¹²

¹⁰ Sandra Whitworth, 'The practice, and praxis, of feminist research in international relations', in Richard Wyn Jones, ed., *Critical theory and world politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001).

¹¹ For a further example of this self-reflexivity in the process and presentation of feminist IR research see Chin, *In service and servitude*.

¹² The trade in women and girls for sexual exploitation is estimated to be a US\$7 billion business. See United Nations Development Program, *Human development report 1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 5. Worldwide, approximately 1.2 million women and girls are trafficked

In order to understand the global exchange of sexual services, feminist scholars consider a range of contributing factors.¹³ They seek to explain the structural inequalities between men and women, that lead some men to desire women in degraded circumstances, as well as the unequal trade between rich and poor countries that results in some countries supplying migrant sexual labour and other countries demanding it. As Czechs often say when discussing the thriving sex trade on their western border with Germany: 'If the exchange rate between the German mark and the Czech crown were reversed all our problems would simply slip across the border.'¹⁴ Despite the simplicity of this Czech assumption, it serves to remind us that 'theories solely based on gendered dynamics cannot fully come to terms with the power relationships involved' in globalisation.¹⁵

Second wave feminist scholars are well aware of the complexity of global power relations. In the context of the sex trade, for instance, they explore the specific cultural and historical constructions of gender and sexuality in the sending and receiving countries, which in turn depend upon particular constructions of class, ethnicity, race, nationality and so on. Feminist scholars may begin their research on the sex trade with the observation that women are the core labourers in this multibillion-dollar global business. However, as they engage in further research, drawing on non-elite forms of knowledge and practice (such as that of the sex workers themselves), they are led to an understanding of the multiple and interlocking nature of oppressions, and of women's agency even in situations of physical coercion and other, more structural, forms of violence.

for prostitution annually. See United Nations Development Program, *Human development report 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4. These figures are only estimates given the unofficial, illegal nature of the transactions.

¹³ See Jo Doezeema and Kamala Kempadoo, eds, *Global sex workers: Rights, resistance, and redefinition* (New York: Routledge, 1998); and Pettman, *Worlding women*.

¹⁴ This was a statement made by the Prague Police Chief. Barbel Butterweck, Director of *La Strada*, Prague, expressed a similar view in a personal interview in May 1998. See also Hana Havelková, 'Transitory and persistent differences: Feminism East and West', in Joan Scott, Cora Kaplan and Debra Keates, eds, *Transitions, environments, translations: Feminisms in international politics* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁵ Vera Mackie, 'The language of globalization, transnationality and feminism', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3(2) 2001, pp. 180–206, at pp. 190–1.

Examining masculinities

Critics contend that *gender* is just another synonym for *women* in feminist international relations.¹⁶ Adam Jones¹⁷ charged that the implicit 'feminist standpoint' of first-generation scholars led them to focus exclusively on women and therein to neglect important aspects of the gendering process in global politics. Contrary to these criticisms, feminist scholars have long defined gender as a *relational* concept based on the analysis of masculinity and femininity. But it is true to say that feminist scholars have only recently begun to systematically study men and masculinities in international relations.¹⁸ Toward that end, Charlotte Hooper has sought to analyse 'the relatively unexamined differences' among men.¹⁹ Building on Ann Tickner's earlier application of the concept of hegemonic masculinity to international relations,²⁰ Hooper distinguishes hegemonic and subordinate masculinities in the context of global power relations. In her book, *Manly states*, she shows how *multiple* masculinities are produced in and through the competing discourses of business and technological globalisation.²¹ In so doing, she sees herself as part of a 'new stream of feminist scholarship examining the multiple and changing intersections of identity construction'.²²

The study of men and masculinities in international relations need not leave behind the study of women and femininities. For example,

¹⁶ For an alternative view see Terrell Carver, *Gender is not a synonym for women* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

¹⁷ Adam Jones, 'Does "gender" make the world go round? Feminist critiques of international relations', *Review of International Studies* 22(4) 1996, pp. 405–29.

¹⁸ Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart, eds, *The 'man question' in international relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

¹⁹ Charlotte Hooper, 'Masculinist practices and gender politics: The operation of multiple masculinities in international relations', in Zalewski and Parpart, eds, *The 'man question'*, p. 32.

²⁰ J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in international relations: Feminist perspectives on achieving global security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

²¹ Charlotte Hooper, *Manly states: Masculinities, international relations, and gender politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), conducts a fascinating (inter)textual analysis of masculinities in *The Economist* news magazine over a ten year period.

²² Hooper, *Manly states*, p. 7.

Whitworth has examined men and masculinity in international peace-keeping missions building on Cynthia Enloe's critical feminist insights about military bases as sites of gendering. Whitworth's analysis would have been one-sided and incomplete had she not interviewed the sex workers who service the male peacekeepers and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) activists working with these sex workers as well as the policymakers and peacekeepers themselves in the United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Likewise, any analysis of post-war reconstruction in Bosnia-Herzegovina would be inadequate if it failed to explain how and why UN peacekeepers stationed there have become a lucrative and ready market for brothels containing women illegally trafficked for prostitution from the former Soviet Union and other parts of Eastern Europe.²³

LINKING MACRO AND MICRO PROCESSES

An important contribution of feminist IR has been to show how gender is constructed at the global level in diplomatic practices and through the diffusion of institutional norms and regulations, as well as more direct international interventions. Critically assessing the epistemological costs of locating her research about home-based workers in a global governance institution, Elisabeth Prügl writes:

On the negative side, my geographical research location at the headquarters of [the International Labour Organization] removed the analysis from the experiences of individual home-based workers and limited the degree to which I could investigate the interactions of constructions at different levels. The issue carries deeper implications in the context of feminist debates about epistemology.²⁴

A 'global' feminist approach may be appropriate for the study of many IR issues but it can also lead to the overgeneralisation of women's experiences, neglecting diversity as well as sources of resistance and change. As Erin Baines argues with reference to her study of refugee

²³ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'UN mission to Bosnia to fight trafficking in women', *Newsline* 5(141), Part II, 27 July 2001.

²⁴ Elisabeth Prügl, *The global construction of gender: Home-based work in the political economy of the twentieth century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 147–8.

women in United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) camps in Guatemala, focusing on what happens at headquarters underestimates 'the interplay of the global and the local in the construction of gender relations'.²⁵ In this regard, historian Francesca Miller²⁶ is critical of Whitworth's study²⁷ of the International Planned Parenthood Federation as a powerful force in shaping gender relations around the world. Miller contends that Whitworth should have augmented her study by analysing historical debates about reproduction in particular local and national settings. Had this strategy been adopted, Miller suggests that Whitworth might have come to question the assumption that birth-control policies often serve as part of a foreign or imperial agenda imposed upon a client population. Thus, the critique to be made here is that by focusing primarily on international institutions as instruments of gendered state interests, feminist scholars run the risk of seeing only the *obvious* players in international politics. But to end up in that position, is to make us no different from mainstream IR scholars who typically focus their analysis on First World policymakers.²⁸ More importantly, the headquarters orientation—what anthropologists call 'studying up'—leads us to ignore the agency that women might exhibit at the local level, as they seek to negotiate the terms on which institutional and policy changes will affect them.

To be sure, the social, political, economic and cultural practices that construct gender are now increasingly global. But they are altered at local levels and in specific historical and discursive contexts. Consequently, even though feminist IR scholars are concerned with global politics, their applications of gender must be grounded in local analysis and understanding as well. Gender identities and relations are constantly being

²⁵ Erin K. Baines, 'Gender construction and the protection mandate of the UNHCR: Responses from Guatemalan women', in Elisabeth Prügl and Mary K. Meyer, eds, *Gender politics in global governance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p. 251.

²⁶ Francesca Miller, 'Feminisms and transnationalism', *Gender and History* 10(3) 1998, pp. 569–80, at 572–7.

²⁷ Sandra Whitworth, *Feminism and international relations: Towards a political economy of gender in interstate and non-governmental institutions* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994).

²⁸ Miller, 'Feminisms and transnationalism', pp. 574–5.

renegotiated and transformed, especially in light of local and national responses to globalisation. It is well recognised in feminist political economy studies, for instance, that there are diverse national 'gender regimes' that shape the global integration of national political economies.²⁹ The challenge for second wave feminist scholars then, is to find ways to link the micro-politics of gender with macro aspects of international relations and global political economy. One way to do this is to combine close ethnographic study attentive to local discourses with broader analysis of global economic and foreign policies. In this regard, Chin and Moon's analyses are exemplary.

Utilising a neo-Grainscan theoretical framework, Chin shows how Malaysian political elites maintained the legitimacy of their export-oriented economic development strategy by importing female domestic servants from the Philippines and Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s.³⁰ These migrant women provided for the daily reproductive and childcare needs of the Malaysian 'middle-classes', freeing them for leisure and consumption activities. As such, this use of migrant women helped to shore up middle class consent to an elite vision of capitalist modernity underpinned by systematic inequalities and injustices. Analysing the narratives of female domestic servants and their—typically female—employers, Chin notes how the development model adopted in Malaysia, mirroring a broader, global neoliberal agenda, offers new opportunities and new forms of dependence for both 'classes' of women.

²⁹ A 'gender regime' in any given state/society consists of varying labour market structures, social policies, historical divisions of production and reproduction as well as differences in cultural norms and discursive practices concerning gender roles which derive in part from the success with which various groups of men and women are able to articulate their interests and hegemonise their claims in any given state and society. See Ilona Ostner and Jane Lewis, 'Gender and the evolution of European social policies', in Stephan Leibfried and Paul Pierson, eds, *European social policy: Between fragmentation and integration* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1995), p. 161; and Rosemary Pringle and Sophie Watson, 'Women's interests and the post-structuralist state', in Michele Barrett and Anne Phillips, eds, *Destabilizing theory: Contemporary feminist debates* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 63. See also Diane Elson, 'Micro, meso, macro: Gender and economic analysis in the context of policy reform', in Isabella Bakker, ed., *The strategic silence: Gender and economic policy* (London: Zed Books, 1994).

³⁰ Chin, *In service and servitude*.

In her analysis of military prostitution on American bases in South Korea, Moon shows how gender and international relations are inextricably linked in two key ways.³¹ First, she observes how the unequal, sexual alliances between Korean prostitutes (*kijich'on* women) and American soldiers defined and supported the similarly unequal, interstate alliance between the United States and South Korea in the post-war era. For instance, under the Nixon Doctrine, *kijich'on* women as personal ambassadors became the main indicator of Seoul's willingness to accommodate US military interests. Second, Moon asserts that the Korean government's 'weakness at the international level abetted its authority and sexist control at the domestic level'.³² In other words, when the government was unable to control the external environment shaping its foreign policy it resorted to controlling domestic social groups that it *could assert power over*—poor, socially-outcast, *kijich'on* women.

The detailed studies of specific cases undertaken by Chin and Moon are designed and conducted to show how the particular relates to the general. This research strategy is based on the belief that 'the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one lunges into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically-located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a "special case of what is possible"—that is, as an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations'.³³ Taken together, studies like these that interpret abstract, large-scale processes through concrete practices, constitute a distinctive feminist approach that addresses and extends the core concerns of international relations.

'GLOBALISATION IS LOCALISATION'

Many scholars have argued that forces of 'globalisation' are increasingly constraining and overpowering nation-states and democratic governments by 'de-nationalising' and 'homogenising' economies and cultures worldwide. Some feminists predict women's victimisation by states and global

³¹ Moon, *Sex among allies*.

³² Moon, *Sex among allies*, p. 151.

³³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical reason: On the theory of action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 2.

markets. They frequently view globalisation only in terms of its regressive effects, as a dominating set of processes that will almost certainly reduce women's relative social and economic power and shrink the public space available for them to exercise their democratic rights.³⁴ They have overlooked women's agency and the aspect of local negotiation in the global political economy. Like some contemporary Marxists, some feminists have overestimated the power of global structures—patriarchy and capitalism—at the expense of observing local actors and discovering emancipatory potentials.

Conventional IR accounts of global economic transformations have relied either on neoliberal theories or Marxist and neo-Marxist theories. Broadly speaking, neoliberal accounts have emphasised the freedom that comes with liberalisation and marketisation. Meanwhile, alternative accounts have been much more pessimistic about the local implications of this restructuring. I find both sorts of accounts inadequate. In particular, their macro-orientation and their focus on economic aggregates leads them to overlook local complexity. In contrast, gendered approaches highlight the interplay between macro-level forces and micro-level relationships. They show that men and women can be simultaneously empowered and exploited, and that what distinguishes one from the other can only be fully understood and theorised by scholars who are prepared to engage with local practices.

Our understanding of globalisation and its consequences could be seriously advanced by a new generation of feminist scholarship in two key ways. On the one hand, the focus on gender relations provides a unique way to trace the lines of influence between the global and the local in political economy, culture and civil society. Non-feminist theoretical perspectives have not satisfactorily linked these levels of analysis. On the other hand, gendered perspectives make visible relationships that constitute the core of everyday life, yet are ignored by macro-focused theories of change. They reveal new sites of power and sources of change at the interstices of local and global structures. In so doing, they overcome some

³⁴ Amrita Basu, ed., with C. Elizabeth McGrory, *The challenge of local feminisms: Women's movements in comparative perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995); and Rita Menon, 'Beijing's lessons', *Women's Review of Books* XIII(12) 1996, pp. 15–16.

of the shortcomings of neoliberal, neo-Marxist and realist perspectives in theorising the local processes inherent in global change, and open the way for studying the political significance of culture and identities, and their interplay with global forces. But aside from these pay-offs, an even more profound insight emerges from second-generation feminist IR. That is, a general theory of globalisation is not viable; hence, the big returns to new theorising about globalisation will come through work that is grounded in knowledge of local social, political, and cultural forces. The global and the local must be viewed as inseparable.

Highlighting women's agency

Women's agency is highlighted when connections are drawn between changing gender identities and practices at the micro level to institutional processes and structures at the macro level. Transformations in the global economy have reshaped local gender relations and women are not only victims in this process; in some cases they are empowered by it.³⁵ For example, new employment and credit opportunities have brought cultural changes in the lives of poor women in rural, developing areas.³⁶ Further, the local impact of globalisation and its' restructuring of public and private, states and markets, and international boundaries has opened up spaces for new collective identities and for women's movements. These changes underscore the importance of pursuing gendered approaches to studying globalisation. Whereas conventional approaches measure cross-border transactions and flows, gendered approaches trace deeper changes

³⁵ For feminist analyses of the potentially transformative agency of Filipina female overseas contract workers in Hong Kong and post-socialist Czech women respectively in the context of powerful global economic and cultural forces, see Katherine Gibson, Lisa Law and Deirdre McKay, 'Beyond heroes and victims: Filipina contract migrants, economic activism and class transformations', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3(3) 2001, pp. 365–86; Jacqui True, 'Expanding markets and marketing gender: The integration of the postsocialist Czech Republic', *Review of International Political Economy* 6(3) 1999, pp. 360–89; also Aihwa Ong, 'The gender and labor politics of postmodernity', in Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, eds, *The politics of culture in the shadow of capital* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); and Saskia Sassen, 'Toward a feminist analytics of the global economy', in Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and its discontents* (New York: New Press, 1998).

³⁶ Naila Kabeer, *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought* (London: Verso, 1994).

in subjectivities and social relations within and across nation-states as a result of globalisation.³⁷

Second-generation feminist IR scholars have garnered theoretical and political insight from the activism of marginalised, poor, and vulnerable women in a range of local and global sites: whether in networks of sex workers, home workers, mothers or civic activists, in counter-cultural campaigns and performances. As Hooper points out, 'local, small scale feminist interventions armed with knowledge of the gendered micro politics of particular situations may have accumulative effects as powerful as large scale [global] campaigns'.³⁸ As well as highlighting local activism, however, feminist scholars have observed new forms of cross-border solidarity and identity formation.³⁹ Cynthia Enloe and Marysia Zalewski give the example of 'a Mexican woman travelling to Canada in the 1990s to form a group calling for an end to sexist international trade agreements [who] was acting out of not only her sense that she was Mexican, but also out of her newly politicised sense that she was a woman'.⁴⁰ Noting how new subjectivities, including feminist subjectivities, create the momentum for new forms of collective action, second wave feminist scholars trace the growth of transnational women's networks, the alliances forged between women's organisations, governments and inter-governmental actors, and the development of international feminist legal and policy mechanisms.⁴¹

³⁷ L.H.M. Ling, 'Sex machine: Global hypermasculinity and images of the Asian woman in modernity', *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 7(2) 1999, pp. 277–306.

³⁸ Hooper, *Manly states*, p. 230.

³⁹ Sassen, 'Toward a feminist analytics', p. 85. See also Christina Gabriel and Laura Macdonald, 'NAFTA, women and organising in Canada and Mexico: Forging a "feminist internationality"', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23(3) 1994, pp. 535–62; Deborah Stienstra, *Women's movements and international organizations* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994); Sonia Alvarez, 'Advocating feminism: The Latin American feminist NGO "boom"', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1(2) 1999, pp. 181–209; and Mackie, 'The language of globalization'.

⁴⁰ Cynthia Enloe and Marysia Zalewski, 'Questions of identity', in Ken Booth and Steve Smith, eds, *International relations theory today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 280.

⁴¹ See Martha A. Chen, 'Engendering world conferences: The international women's movement and the UN', in Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker, eds, *NGOs, the UN, and global governance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); Geertje Lycklama à Nijeholt, Virginia Vargas and Saskia Wieringa, eds, *Women's movements and public policy in Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean*

CONCLUSION

I began this paper with the question: what difference does second-generation feminist IR theorising make? I can now answer that question directly. *It makes a huge difference.* Further, this second-generation work suggests a number of lessons for how we might go about our future scholarship. We need to get better at showing *where* and *how* gender matters, doing so in a manner that combines theory with close empirical study of international processes. In addition, we need to get better at articulating and empirically demonstrating the ways that gender relations interact—and are mutually constructed—with other social relations. We can gain a lot of analytical leverage through the careful empirical investigation of specific cases. Incidentally, this approach underscores that the focus need not be specifically on women or relations among men and women in order for conceptually important insights to be gained from gender analysis. So long as studies of specific cases are designed and conducted in ways that show how the particular relates to the general, then insights from these multifarious studies can build upon one another in impressive ways that speak to concerns that feminists share with scholars who would typically construe themselves as mainstream.

The first-generation tended to assume fixed institutional settings that placed women at a disadvantage relative to men. Obviously, that approach has a great deal of relevance. However, if we take the time to engage in close studies of institutions, comparing across them, or watching their development through time, then we come to see that there is nothing inherent in institutions that make them biased towards advancing the interests of one social group over another. From a gender perspective, this view leads us to recognise the agency of women. And we might learn why some have achieved greater agency than others. Through sufficient studies of this sort, and appropriate efforts to explore similarities and difference

(New York: Garland Publishing, 1998); Prügl and Meyer, eds, *Gender politics in global governance*; Elisabeth Friedman, 'Women's human rights: The emergence of a movement', in Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper, eds, *Women's rights, human rights: International feminist perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 18–35; Hilary Charlesworth and Christine Chinkin, *The boundaries of international law: A feminist analysis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); and Jacqui True and Michael Mintrom, 'Transnational networks and policy diffusion: The case of gender mainstreaming', *International Studies Quarterly* 45(1) 2001, pp. 27–57.

across them, we might learn how the institutions could be changed to advance a feminist agenda. Moving from the first-generation to the second-generation of scholarship holds risks. In particular, we might be accused of losing the uniqueness of our perspective in an effort to speak to a broader audience. But if we really have something worth saying, then we should accept that risk, and recognise that the payoffs for IR scholarship—not just feminist scholarship—could be considerable. Constructive, transformative, engagement with other IR scholars strikes me as a goal worth seeking.

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