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Critically evaluate the most important contributions of Feminist theories to the study of global politics.

The mainstream International Relations have had a skewed portrayal of gender roles in international politics. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century did not see much in regards to gender collaboration towards the geopolitical agenda. Indeed, Feminist theorists have made significant contributions to the IR by carefully reassessing the roles that men and women play in international politics. Meanwhile, considerable biases have been noted to permeate the prospects of having equal gender roles in IR. The prevailing social and political circumstances have favored men, and they hold and wield the political power at their discretion over the female gender. Indeed, feminist theories have made significant strides in unraveling the impacts that both genders play on international politics by considering concepts like hegemony, social power structures, sovereignty, and security. Several other factors are critical in the analysis of feminist theories to the study of global politics.

Feminist theories are anchored on the definition of the social construction of men's and women's identities. Thus, gender and patriarchy are two considerable terms that will help understand the roles of Feminist Theories to the study of global politics.<sup>1</sup> Gender, as reiterated, is

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<sup>1</sup> Ruiz Tricia. Feminist Theory and International Relations: The Feminist Challenge to Realism and Liberalism. P.2

not based on biological differences, but is bent on the social construction of female and male identities. Under Feminist theory, society is constructed to certain skewed beliefs about the roles of men and women in society. The underlying notion of gender is the dominant power and power play, which influences the orientation of global politics. The general social construction accords males of higher power than their female colleagues, which influences the management and control of global politics. Indeed, most decision-making roles have mainly been a male-dominated area, with women either playing second fiddle or watching from afar.

The second most crucial term under Feminist Theory refers to patriarchy, which is a social system where females play subordinate roles to males. Thus, men but not women will handle every critical role. Feminist theories reiterate that patriarchal roots have been part of the community, and even today, women do not dominate as many positions as males. In global politics, patriarchy and gender determine who holds what position. Thus, men mostly hold influential roles such as diplomats, heads of governments, academic scholars, and policymakers, and power positions.<sup>2</sup> Besides, the existence of the patriarchal roots creates a firm ground of male dominion and influence over women.

Principally, Standpoint Theory, which is part of the Feminist Theory, is purely based on the gendered construction of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Thus, standpoint theorists such as Martin Griffiths believe that gender has an impact on our reasoning over international politics and power play. Besides, Griffiths believes that the human mind is already distorted even before learning the values of these theories. Such preconceived mindsets adversely affect the way the social reasons, and its willingness to treat its members equally. The Standpoint theory lacks the female

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid: Ruiz Tricia. P.1

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: Ruiz Tricia. P.3

perspective since it was compromised right from its framing. Meanwhile, the gendered belief that sidelines women into the general thinking and framing of the society contribute to partiality in power allocation between the male and female genders.

Consequently, IR is gendered and only work to marginalize the space and voices of women in society. Ann Tickner is one of the most significant Feminist theorists and argues that women's voices have been silenced by the dictates of the IR, which stresses power inequality. For instance, security is one of the main topics that feature under IR but has been constructed to mean protecting states from external aggression. Intuitively, IR fails to ratify the rights of women from excesses by men; the point of security must start at the household level. Women should be secure from men's aggression instead of focusing on international security and cross-border protection. In this case, Feminist Theory explains the gendered construction and security and power play in the pretext of promoting the global agenda.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Ann Tickner adopts a very radical approach to weigh into the global politics concerning the roles each gender plays. According to her theory, Tickner reiterates that global politics or what she terms as international relations is mostly a masculine domain.<sup>5</sup> On the same note, many scholars support Tickner's points. They believe that a change is necessary for the global political arena since men seem to control the direction that society is taking while disregarding the presence of women. Notably, significant assumptions about the operation of global politics are dependent upon the experience of men who hold critical decision-making roles in society. Also, the gendered way of thinking limits human experiences and impedes the potential of developing a wide range of solutions to

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<sup>4</sup> Lascuarin Fernandez, Mauricio, and Villafuerte Valdes. The international relations theory under a feminist approach. (2016, vol.11), p.51

<sup>5</sup> Lascuarin Fernandez, Mauricio, and Villafuerte Valdes. The international relations theory under a feminist approach. (2016, vol.11), p.49

global problems. Women must be part of the solutions, according to Tickner and other feminist theorists. There is a need to open up new possibilities and ideologies on interstate practices, but this is only possible if all genders are directly involved in the global decision-making process. Women must be part of global politics and development.

As reiterated above, the feminist theorists' approach is not a single epoch but encompasses various theories and perspectives that explain IR's development. Other than the theoretical standpoint, another group referred to as liberal feminists focus their arguments on creating equal rights for both men and women. Thus, they posit that women like their male colleagues must be given equal access to education and economic powers necessary to propel them to global politics and power acquisition, even though the representation of women in higher echelons of power, the state of equality has never been realized. In most cases, women have fewer slots and privileges on international discourses. Thus, the liberal feminist viewpoint is about creating one united society in which an individual is allowed to prosper regardless of gender affiliation. On the same note, these theorists consider the marginalization of feminine gender as a deliberate move to propagate the gendered lens, further sideline women. Thus, achieving a state of equality would allow women to compete in the most critical global positions.

Other than the contributions advocated by liberal feminists, Marxist feminists hold that society needs to completely change its rigid capitalist socioeconomic structures, which render women powerless and inactive on the global political front.<sup>6</sup> Despite the advocacy for liberalism, most societies are still controlled by a rigid viewpoint that only men deserve to be at the helm of social and economic decision-making. The socioeconomic structures are so

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid: Ruiz Tricia. P.5

oppressive, and only seem to favor males. This theory is well documented to promote fairness, and a revamp to the capitalist systems in place. With the current ideological view frame, women have lesser chances of thriving and taking up global positions. Just a few women would thrive in a male-dominated society. Other feminist theories give valuable contributions to the empowerment of women to international politics.

The state of women in international politics is one point of reference that feminist theorists employ to explain how the general social structures discriminate against females. The gender roles define the type of job that a woman can do and the extent that she can act independently. Indeed, global politics is believed to be delicate and requires a powerful gender to manage. Even in the preceding scenarios, gender has been a significant factor of determination in electing women to powerful global positions. Thus, feminist theorists' contributions have been so notable because they help in understanding how hegemonic masculinity has become a part of IR politics.

Moreover, feminist theories have made women visible by proactively presenting their plight globally. According to these theorists, women have been missing key decision-making organs insofar as the global political agenda is concerned. The statistics released by World Bank in 2015 revealed that women accounted for just 22% of the national parliamentary seats. Thus, feminism has taken a bold step and challenged the existence of exclusionary focus on pertinent global matters such as high politics. Therefore, women are intentionally sidelined on these issues, which impact the world, and the feminist theories always take a swipe at this biased social construction. Feminist theorists have changed their presentation styles, which deviate from the traditional view that underscored the fact that men are predominantly the head of state institutions. Women play

fundamental roles in global politics, but their inputs have been considered peripheral by society due to the predominant social construction that gives men leverage over the feminine gender.

In conclusion, feminist theories make valuable contributions to the study of global politics. Various theories such as Standpoint, Marxist, among others, hold that IR is a gender constructed field. Thus, the two essential terms that define global politics are gender and patriarchy. Through these theories, we get the knowledge behind gender construction and exclusionary practices on global politics. Despite the divergent opinion held by these theorists, one point stands out that they rebuke the social order that sideline women.

Works Cited

Lascuarin Fernandez, Mauricio and Villafuerte valdes. The international relations theory under a feminist approach. 2016, vol.11, n.1, pp.45-61. ISSN 1909-3063. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18359/ries.1366>.

Ruiz Tricia. Feminist Theory and International Relations: The Feminist Challenge to Realism and Liberalism

