RESEARCH ARTICLE

Feminist IR Theory: A Challenge or Rhetoric to International Politics?

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Abstract: The inquiry is focused on what the Feminist International Relations (IR) Theory challenge is and how the challenge is articulated? The author tried to identify the *"feminist challenge"* or the *"feminist standpoint in IR"* to gain understanding of the much touted 'feminist challenge' in IR. Qualitative literature review was adopted, and content analysis of the literature on the subject conducted. The identified papers through internet searches of various websites and content providers in the scholastic literature domain on IR, Feminism and Gender Studies, were selected for use, assessing the validity and trustworthiness of each paper. The identified papers were selected purposively, using the snowball effect by mining the reference pages of the leading papers with appreciable number of citations, until saturation was reached. The feminist standpoint appears to be all about the determination of sheer intellectual discourse or discussion and publications as legitimate feminine voices and position in IR studies by a few good researchers? In actual diplomatic practice, Feminist IR Theory is not universally adopted or applied to international politics and diplomacy. It was or is difficult to identify the results that the Feminist challenge has produced in the conduct of international relations and politics. State realism raised on male masculinity and patriarchal viewpoints and dominance in IR is still the prevailing approach to IR practice. There is a need for a better articulation of the feminist standpoint in IR since it invokes other competing standpoints such as the Masculine Standpoint, Black African Standpoint, African American Standpoint, Chinese Standpoint, etc., due to the need for objectivity, Diversity, Equality and Inclusivity on the world scale. The conclusion suggests that the Feminist Standpoint Theory in IR appears to be an invalid concept or, at best, has limited application in practice in world politics.

Keywords: feminist standpoint, international relations, African feminist standpoint

1 Introduction

1.1 Etiology of Feminist Standpoint in IR

It appears the world feminist movement or women in academia have a different viewpoint about the way things work or how relationships between the nations are supposed to be defined on the international stage (Harding, 1986; Collins, 2009). Among the leading proponents of the Feminist Standpoint Theory in IR are Collins (1990, 2009) and Harding (1997) with her suggestion of feminist need to have 'strong objectivity' in feminist epistemology, to mention but a few. The original idea behind the Feminist Standpoint Theory was the promotion of dispassionate narrative of both women and men accounts or experiences in international relations, for example, with objectivity in stating the vulnerabilities for improvement with subsequent positive effect on the general social order for all. The available literature, however, seems focus on promoting feminism and women's interests solely, and reveal a different focus as amply discussed in this paper. The moral thrust of this paper is that, since the nature of society offers multiplicities of subjective and group standpoints on just about every issue, it may be better to accept the current design of the international world order to avoid chaos. It is not only women who are entitled to sustain a different standpoint from the mainstream but other groups too have the same rights, such as Asian Standpoint on IR; African-American Standpoint on IR; African Standpoint on IR, and others of equal importance.

Content analysis of the literature suggests that the proponents of the Feminist Standpoint Theory in International Relations, (IR) object to the fact that, international diplomacy and politics are two aspects of the international governance system still situated in Hans Morgenthau's (Circa: 1904-1980) view of realism as the guiding principle. Some feminists see Hans Morgenthau's viewpoint as the epitome of hypermasculine view of the world controlled by those with average

heterosexual as well as hypernormative masculinity (Fjader, 2018; Harding, 1986; Collins, 2009). "Realism in international politics relates to the pretenses of the nation-state that, its actions are motivated by communitarian and universal concerns; rather than egoism and its national interests. That is to say, realism as a political approach is predicated on subterfuge, but which may be cloaked as either over-riding egalitarian or moral conduct on the part of the State, for the greatest number of people and for the greatest good, which actually isn't so". Governance in every nation, irrespective of the political system in operation, tends to benefit a cohort of elite politicians, elite investors, elite businesses, and elite citizens more than the average citizen. "The political concept of Statism, assumes that the political authority of a given State has legitimacy to conduct the economic, political, military, cultural and social affairs of the nation. The combination of Realism/Statism in governance provides that, the State is the main actor (Referent Object) in international politics because of the State's control over economics, military, and politics as well as society" (Norman, 2022b, p. 15-16; Snyder, 2004).

1.2 Feminist Challenge and how women have contributed to IR

The focus of this paper is to gain understanding of the much touted 'feminist challenge' in international relations as earlier announced. What really is the feminist international relations theory and what is the challenge? It has always been assumed that the meaning of the word "challenge" is as defined by Oxford English Dictionary that, "it is a call to someone to participate in a competitive situation or fight to decide who is superior in terms of ability or strength". Is this what the challenge to international relations and politics from the "feminist standpoint" all about the determination of sheer mental acuity and physical prowess or power and authority, or legitimacy and control? What result has the challenge produced in the conduct of international relations and politics so as to determine success or failure? Was the challenge still valid when, even though the international community had the duty or responsibility to protect the civilian population in Rwanda, they failed to do so but allowed genocide to happen for a considerable length of time? Incidentally, many of the victims of that genocide in Rwanda and Burundi were women and children. There appears to have been no noise or position papers in the literature on the Rwanda genocide that may have come out of the feminist challenge or feminist standpoint addressing the issues of that genocide? Hogg (2010, p. 69-102) writing in the International Review of the Red Cross on the topic, *Women's Participation in Rwanda Genocide: Mothers or Monsters?* Provides a good account of how women who had agency participated in that genocide. She added that "many ordinary women were involved in the genocide but, overall, committed significantly fewer acts of overt violence than men (ibid, p. 69). The point being made by Hogg is that, women transitioned into male chauvinistic image and displayed wicked patriarchal conduct over weaker members of the Rwandan society irrespective of being either male or female with genocidal outcomes. This view is supported by Sara E. Brown's paper, *Female Perpetrators* of the Genocide (2013, p. 448-469). Brown advised that "gender-based characterization of women as victims (of genocidal violence) is inaccurate and incomplete". That, "women with agency mobilized and prepared other women to commit genocidal crimes". If, given the right stimuli, women can be motivated to commit acts of violence against both men and women, when did genocidal tendencies become the exclusive forte of masculine proclivities? How about the recent Hamas-Israeli war from October 7th, 2024 onwards, or the Ukraine-Russian war? Are these 'just war' and part of Hugo Grotius' *Jus ad Bellum* and *Jus in Bello*, requiring conditions as having a 'just cause', with legitimate authority, the right intentions within the rules of proportionality in the use of armaments and drones, rockets but not whatever means possible to take the opponent down; as has been the case, and under the watchful eyes of the United Nations Security Council, NATO, EU and other supranational institutions? *Jus ad Bellum* relates to Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the use of force except in self-defense consistent with Article 51, or actions authorized by the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter of 1945. *Jus in Bello*, an international humanitarian law concept, regulates the conduct of warfare, protecting civilians and limiting suffering. The twin issues of 'proportionality' and 'distinction' have not been observed by either side of the conflict whether it is with respect to the Hamas/Hezbollah-Israel war; or Ukraine-Russian war. Civilians have not been distinguished from military personnel, and the use of weapons appear to have exceeded the limits that should be permissible in many war situations that lack distinction (Dinstein, 2017; Andress & Winterfeld, 2013; Diehl & Ku, 2010).

1.3 African Feminist Standpoint on IR?

Certainly, one would have preferred the investigation to start from African feminist standpoint, but there is paucity of publication on the issue of African feminist international viewpoint, let

alone, theory. Once again, this author was compelled to fall on Western feminist thought for specific publications on feminist standpoint on international relations and politics. The author will attempt to provide evidence or the lack of it of African feminist discourse on international relations as this work progresses. The review of the literature on feminist international theory against international conventions and human rights for all as well as the review of the literature on international relations and politics against the number of women as substantive Presidents or Prime Ministers of the various nations and those who have occupied the positions of Ministers of Defence around the world: - Vis-à-vis the contributions that the collective women in the world have made to international relations, diplomacy and politics studies, not to mention the publications by women in academia and in other fields, it is difficult to understand the allegation of feminist challenge to international relations theory; the practice and conduct of international relations. It is also difficult to appreciate the alleged inimical outcomes from international relations on the lives of women by the international systems and mechanisms modelled by the usual patriarchal, chauvinistic and heterosexual males; infused with, perhaps, high doses of hypernormativity, hate and hypocrisy; with, perhaps, Hans Joachim Morgenthau (Circa 1904 – 1980) as the ring leader of this alleged intellectual, anti-feminist, anti-gay fraternity, and anti-gender-diversity-inclusive group (Robeson, 1957; Keohane, 1989; Harding, 1986; Harel-Shalev, 2019; Ali, 2023). If Western feminist, definitely, beneficiaries of the Western world, slave master-exploiters, chauvinistic and patriarchal controls and dividends, can make such an allegation, what should African women, or African feminists say about the existing international world order controlled, manipulated, and operated by the current crop of Western powers which incidentally includes women apparatchik? Is there an African Feminist Standpoint on IR? If there is, we would find out in the results section.

There is no doubt that whether African feminist produce a pliable feminist theory for international relations or not, Western feminist epistemology has produced and added to the international relations theory, the "Feminist Standpoint" as either the point of departure from mainstream international relations theory or instead of men's experiences or view point (Harding, 1991; LeSavoy et al., 2011). The moment one views any phenomenon from one lens, such as the feminist lens, one is compelled simultaneously and as a mark of objectivity, to also view the same phenomenon from the racial standpoint; masculine standpoint; Black American standpoint; Hispanic standpoint; African standpoint; Asian standpoint, Chinese standpoint, Religious standpoint, Muslim standpoint consisting of the various sects; Christian standpoint consisting of the standpoints of the various sects and Charismatic Churches; peoples' standpoint consisting of children, adults, the aged and so on. The introduction of "standpoint" into any discourse, though a show of inclusivity and discursive democracy, has the potential to lead to chaotic expression of subjectivity, on the bandwagon of intersectionality of sex, race, religion and others and, ultimately, lead to unresolved tensions and, perhaps, poor decision-making, in the absence of deliberative critical decision-makers by representatives of the collective but stratified standpoints (Lukacs, 1990; Collins, 2009; Harel-Shalev, 2019; Ali, 2023).

Researchers like Patricia Hill Collins, (Black), Dorothy Smith, (Caucasian), and others promote the feminist standpoint theory that feminist epistemology should be viewed, practiced and studied from the viewpoint of women. It appears, when Harding (1986) proposed the Feminist Standpoint theory, it was not for international relations and politics per se. From the standpoint of other feminists, it had a unique standpoint of black women specific to Black American women in the United States (Collings, 2009). The position of the feminist standpoint is that, different people in society have different experiences to the same phenomenon and for this reason, it is important to take women's unique standpoint in operationalizing any public domestic and international public actions into consideration (Longino, 1993; Heckman, 1997; Harding, 1986; Collins, 2009).

The labelling of the Feminist International Theory: the feminist standpoint appears not to be inclusive theory as might have been expected. It is a theory or a viewpoint exclusively for those women who have had lived experiences as feminists, or who self-describe as feminists. It does not necessarily include women who are conservative, traditionalist, and may subscribe to values consistent with the international system. Such group of women may feel their needs are not being addressed under the feminist international theory and may want to combine their numbers with those of the modern and post-modern and conventional articulation of international law and politics (Hartsock, 1997, 2003). Although it is too early to theorize about the two-time victory of Donald Trump, a man who is generally accused as being a racist, misogynist, anti-abortionist, anti-women's privacy concerns, a man who is reported to have said, it is okay to grab a woman by the crotch and kiss her without consent: - first victory over Hillary Clinton, and now on the 5th of November 2024, second victory over another woman, Kamala Harris, is, perhaps,

the summary of the voices of opposition to the entire concept of feminist standpoint theory, the proliferation of the demand for sexual rights, the growing feeling among young men in the Western world of becoming the new minority, and the affirmation of the statement that, "White Men's Lives Also matter". Perhaps, too much of anything is bad for consumption. Finding the right voice, the right tone and timing to espouse seemingly innocuous idea, which in actuality is as penetrative and powerful as a high velocity bullet discharged from a raffle, is actually the challenge for the promoters of the feminist standpoint theory, if the expected gains are to be realized from leasing the theory to other regions of the world?

The feminist standpoint theory appears to be excessive because it makes no room for the right of nations to engage in war under the 'just cause' theory articulated by Hugo Grotius and other philosophers. It also questions the basis of power and social controls in Western societies against the overarching view of self-determination, non-interference in domestic affairs of a State, autonomy, choice, and the freedom to be a sovereign state with its defined population irrespective of gender. Hugo Grotius' concept of *Just Cause* with respect to the rights of States to self-defense, an inherent right to not only States but to every person on earth, in the face of warfare or threat, and that, before engaging in war to defend sovereignty, the doctrine requires that there ought to be 'just cause'; 'necessity' and the response must be 'proportionate' to the threat, in addition to the ultimate 'responsibility' for the damages done to third parties under the 'duty of care' obligation to all (Grotius, 1625; Crawford, 2013; Shaw, 2017).

Although the standpoint theory accuses patriarchal males for opting for war, rather than considering the feminist standpoint, conflict is not the exclusive purview of men (Ali, 2023; Havel-Shalev, 2019). For example, Margaret Thatcher, was an able conservative Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, who though a woman, took Britain to "war" in the Falklands against Argentina in 1982 to defend the integrity and sovereignty of Britain. Not only did Thatcher defeat Argentina in that war, but she also declared a war zone within the internationally accepted Exclusive Economic Zone of nations of 200 (320km) nautical miles, extended it to pass 8,000 miles (13,000 km) to the war zone, gained the support of the United States and NATO, making this war one of the most important wars since the Second World War. The control of the area extending beyond the EEZ, into international waters of as wide as 8,000 miles with war ships and overhead aircrafts, made it impossible for ships of Argentina and other nations to sail out of port. This action probably posed a threat to the International Law of the Sea and regional peace with respect to the EEZ limitations. Where were the proponents of the feminist standpoint when Thatcher was acting out her powers, responsibilities and duty as a Prime Minister of Great Britain over the Falklands with the support of NATO and others? Viewed from the Argentine Standpoint, that war was unjust, perhaps, but from the Standpoint of Great Britain, it was a just war that met the rules of the art of war in international politics, although there have been studies pointing out the fact that Thatcher used the war to salvage her sinking image and control as prime minister of Great Britain (Waldman, 2015; Parr, 2022, p. 266-270).

Returning to the discussion, Sandra Harding added a third dimension to the feminist standpoint theory with the phrase 'strong objectivity' to the articulation of the views of feminists who may have or have been left out of expressing their views in presenting the feminist standpoint in all spheres of life and in academia. The 'strong objectivity' element is not easily noticed about African feminism. What is easily noticed about African feminism, with or without any specific indigenous theoretical basis, is 'polite demurring', or 'measured protest' when the African woman seeks to project a viewpoint, but not necessarily, feminist standpoint. The feminist standpoint, it seems, conveniently get evaporated from the discussions when important events erupt in the world's public space, because, for example, there does not seem to have been sustained viewpoint expressed against Margaret Thatcher's Falklands War escapade, with a few exceptions (Waldman, 2015; Parr, 2022).

Recently, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic led to the publication of a few papers that were produced during covid-19 outbreak applying the feminist standpoint in their discussions (Viswanath & Mullins, 2020)? Even so, the articulation of the differential needs of women with children, equals, perhaps, the same human rights imperative as the case of poor men with chronic disease, or young people with no reliable incomes. That is to say, the standpoint expressed in the Viswanath & Mullins' paper would remain the same if the word woman or women is removed and substituted with poor man with chronic diseases or unemployed youth, making the so-called standpoint more a generic human rights appeal than a unique standpoint expressed only by women. Perhaps, Harding meant to establish a definitive feminist standpoint that, the presenter ought to be aggressive, use strong language and, perhaps, adversarial or alienating verbal combative expression to show to 'the others' the essence or message of the feminist standpoint presenter (Harding, 1991, 2003; Naples, 2007). Such communication gimmicks

would not make the message either unique or the need it expresses, exceptional.

2   Procedure

Qualitative literature review was adopted, and content analysis of the literature on the subject conducted. Search strategy included phrases and combinations such as "define the feminist standpoint in IR"; "women-centric theories in IR"; "is there an African women theory in IR?" Others were "leading authors in international politics and diplomacy", "what is the position of women on the framing of IR issues?" "Key theories in IR and how they are applied in practice: - realism, liberalism, Constructivism, Marxism, Feminism"; and "Key thinkers in IR". The identified papers through internet searches of various websites and content providers in the scholastic literature domain on IR, Feminism and Gender Studies, were selected purposively, using the snowball effect by mining the reference pages of the leading papers with appreciable number of citations, until saturation was reached. The trustworthiness of the selected papers was tested by evaluating how data for each paper was collected, sampling strategy, organizational approach involving categorization, interpretation and representation, how outcomes were reported and analysis conducted, whether the paper was quantitative, qualitative, analytical piece, or systematic review. This outcome reported here arose from content analysis of over 75 papers with high citation rates. The author relied on his knowledge, skills and abilities in law, international relations and diplomacy, security studies, gender studies and public health experiences and professional studies.

3   Result and Outcome of Content Analysis

3.1   Realism, Persistent rationale for International Diplomacy and Politics

Realism appears to be the persistent and predominant approach to world politics by just about every nation on earth. The recent tariffs war initiated by the U.S. President Donald Trump has highlighted the enduring influence of Morgenthau's articulation of nations being motivated by national interests more than any other consideration in international politics very vividly. Despite the occasional forages by the world community into human flourishing, human security and society as the referent object, no matter how democratic a nation is, the State is the apex agent overseeing, moderating, and managing opportunities, rights and obligations of the populations so as to ensure peace and order in society (Norman, 2022a, 2022b). Due to the dynamic setting within which the geopolitical play takes place, each social group has its own unique standpoint on both domestic and international issues, which, if all the competing standpoints were to be taken into consideration, the field of international diplomacy and politics would have been more chaotic than it currently is. Human societies may have to contend with either traveling backwards in civilization to the Hobbesian world of survival for the fittest, or accept, perhaps, the current design of the world order as probably the best that might be, without pushing the comity of nations into precipice of another world war, through unnecessary academic obsession with theories. The recurring question is what does Africa say to; or about IR; in the way IR affects their lives?

3.2   African Feminist Ambivalent International Relations Theory

Although some of the literature appears to claim that issues such as decolonization, intersectionality, feminism, economic empowerment are some of the key issues addressed by African women, this claim is false. Women's empowerment has been promoted by central government programs for equity, diversity and equality, and has not been engineered, inspired, instigated or aroused by African feminists, literature, or demonstrations (Norman & Norman, 2024; Norman & Kpeglo, 2023). Women's groups may have adopted Decolonization as one of their issues, but there is hardly a leading woman scholar or writer or researcher who has focused, promoted and worked towards decolonization as a general conceptual impediment to the flourishing of women. Decolonization has been a general issue of concern of all Africans, often led by patriarchal males for the benefit of all sexes. These issues are not theories but concepts waiting to be theorized by African women. The position of Western women when it comes to conceptualization and theorizing for issues in Feminism, is clear and independently verifiable, including the Feminist Standpoint. Such positions in the Western literature tend to make African feminist more and more ambivalent about demonstrating a strong point on feminism. In my desire to fill in the gap in the literature or add on to the literature if African Feminist International Relations

theory already existed, I discovered that no such theory is available. In the absence of such a theory, I have articulated the *"African Feminist Ambivalent International Relations Theory"* for the purposes of discussion and also as an ethnographical exercise. The African Feminist Ambivalent International Relations Theory, (AFAIR) and politics posits that, the international system was composed, by and large, without African men and women until much later in the 20th Century. African Feminists can only watch developments in the international space from the fringes of international hegemonic white power, whether it is expressed by foreign men or women, with occasional incursions into the arena of international politics, when the phenomenon of interest concerns and addresses the rights, duties and obligations of African women. Only a handful of African women get to serve as Foreign Ministers in their respective nations and therefore could directly be engaged in evolving international relations and politics. The African Feminist Ambivalent International Relations Theory is raised on hedonism: - pleasure or pain, normative values and meta-ethics. There is obvious mixed feelings or thoughts about international relations among African Feminists particularly because of the negative effect of coloniality and neocolonialism, patriarchal power and Western hegemonic influences on the African continent, which intensifies domestic patriarchal controls and traditions. Added to this is the treatment meted out to African women seeking to obtain foreign visas for international travel, entering Western hospitality establishments in their traditional African ware and headgear, and the cultural distancing they experience when studying or living in foreign nations from their female Caucasian, Hispanic, Arab or Asian counterparts. From the African Feminist viewpoint, feminist international relations and politics means absolutely nothing, unless it is linked to the subjective experiences of African women within the international arena without discrimination, racism, and xenophobic tendencies (Norman, 2024, 2016, 2015). At the national and community levels, the ambivalence theory of African feminism can be used to assess the degree of ambivalence of a person to feminism, and relies on attitude, subjective norm and perceived moral and ethical controls against trade-offs and choices of the person. This tension in such competing situation can lead to conflicting emotions and attitudes. When people have lower ambivalence, they tend to be more proactive about feminist studies and issues. When they have higher ambivalence, they are also less interested in feminist studies in international relations. Historical racism, sexism from both black and white men towards African women have rendered African women less dedicated to feminist international theory prevailing in other climes, due to low expected gains they are likely to harvest from collaborating with other feminists in a patriarchal society, where those found to be sympathetic towards feminism, face potential ostracism and discrimination. Feminism in its real sense also has the tendency to isolate the practitioner and reduce the expected happiness the person was hoping to receive, because it does not create the inclusive social settings that the African woman is used to, and accepts as part of her heritage due to the general rejection of feminism, lesbianism and homosexuality by both African women and men (Norman & Norman, 2024).

3.3   What are the Contributions made by Women in Power, generally speaking?

A review of the literature and history of women in powerful positions of leadership, such as Prime Ministers, Presidents, Ministers of Defence and such like power status, one is tempted to caution against the wholesale application or pursuit of such scientific inquiry. Men have not been the only actors in the international political scene (Norman & Kpeglo, 2023). For example, since 1960 when Sri Lanka named a woman, Sirimavo Bandaranaike as Defence Minister, followed by India's Indira Gandhi in 1975, there have been over one hundred female defence ministers across the world from high to low income nations, which includes: Costa Rica, (1996); Hong Kong, (1998); Norway, (1999, 2001, 2005, 2013); France, (2002, 2017); Sweden, (2002); Japan, (2007); Spain, (2008); Nigeria, (2012); Thailand, (2013); Germany, (2013, 2019, 2021); Italy, (2014, 2018); Australia, (2015, 2019); United Kingdom, (2019); Austria, (2015, 2019); Kenya, (2020); Togo, (2020); Belgium, (2020); South Africa, (2021, 2024); Canada, (2021); and New Zealand, (2023) to mention but a few.

Have these women defence ministers articulated a new paradigm in fighting the war on drugs, terrorism or even human trafficking, illegal migration and smuggling across borders? The reason being that, there has not been documented cases of different approaches to international relations by women in international politics and diplomacy, even when a significant number of women are actually involved in the day-to-day makings of the international system. Perhaps, one could argue that the Ministers of Defence only mandate was or is about national security or the defence of the nation, yet if one looks into these nations' recruitment and promotion practices and the entire architecture outlining their Civil-Military Relations, one would notice that the women in

the military, were not relegated to support services and were even involved in combat services, even volunteered for it because they wanted to serve their nations. Many of these nations would also have a handful of women at the rank of Major-General and Brigadier-Generals. Despite the presence of these women on top of the hierarchical totem poles in their respective nations, gender, diversity and inclusion would be lacking in the developing and the middle-income nations' military, because these powerful women Ministers of Defence of the various Military organizations do not think of other women's wellbeing and progress any more. They have become like men? From the point of view of policy about gender issues, women heads of states or Presidents that are women would be expected to be more sensitive to the feminist standpoint, but it appears, those nations run by female heads of states, prime ministers or president are no better off than those nations run by the usual power hungry, patriarchal and domineering males, in terms of gender balances in all walks of life (Norman, 2024).

Examples of nations where females were either the Presidents or Prime Ministers are the following: - Khertek Anchimaa-Toka, Tanu Tuva, (1940-1944); Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Sir Lanka, (1970-1977); Indira Gandhi, India, (1980 – 1988); Golda Meir, Israel, (1969-1974); Isabel Peron, Argentina, (1974-1976); Elisabeth Domitien, Central Africa Republic, (1975-1976); Margaret Thatcher, Great Britain, (1979-1990); Vigdis Finnbogadottir, Iceland, (1980-1996); Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norway, (1986-1988); Angela Merkel, Germany, (2005-2021); Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia, (2006-2018); Kim Campbell, Canada, (1993-1993); Hellen Clark, New Zealand, (1999-2008); Julia Gillard, Australia, (2010-2013); Theresa May, Great Britain, (2016-2019); Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania, (2021-incumbent).

These women and many more have been part of the International Community for a long time, since 1940 even before the League of Nations, and later, the United Nations was formed. One would have expected by now that feminist and others with partisan motivations would look for the evidence and stop blaming men for everything that is wrong with our societies or women causes.

3.4   The Apology for late admission into Consular Duties, and Demand for "gemutlich" or cushy posting in Diplomatic missions by women

Notice that "historically, women were not admitted into diplomatic or consular duty stations in appreciable numbers, until 1933, when at least 13 countries had women diplomats". [. . .] However, "in 2019, 50 out of 193 Permanent Representatives to the UN (PRUNs) were women, compared with about 15 to 20 in the 1980s and 1990s, respectively (Bimha, 2021, p. 1-2).

Bimha also reported that,

> "*Though there are more female diplomatic representatives today, women are generally posted to less significant posts, and contextual constraints linked to unequal access to opportunities and discriminatory norms and attitudes continue to undermine prospects for gender parity in the foreign policy realm. One female ambassador I spoke to indicated that she and other female colleagues from their country's ministry of foreign affairs had been posted to economically insignificant duty stations in south east Asia and parts of Africa. On the other hand, deployments to key capitals in the global political economy such as Beijing, New York, Addis Ababa, France, London, Brussels and Vienna, just to name a few, were reserved for male diplomats*", (ibid, p. 2).

The complaints can be a bit too much, but it is the way it is. It, however, does not make much administrative sense to complain when all some women want is to be served with influential appointments irrespective of their merit. If one is inexperienced in diplomacy, why should the appointing and posting authority in one's nation send such a person to an important diplomatic mission where, perhaps, a significant part of that nation's international trade and other goodies come out of? Which soccer coach would put an inexperienced footballer as the main goal scorer in an important soccer match? This kind of complaint is quite often heard from women novices in industry and in academia as well as in government jobs and roles, especially those with overblown egos of their skills and abilities. In a study on presidential appointments under which diplomatic appointments fall, *"The President's Prerogative"? The Cabinet Appointment Process in Ghana and the Implications for Gender Parity"*, the authors found that "Who is Eligible and Qualified to be a Minister in Ghana?" was influenced by "affiliational, representational and experiential criteria" as well as 'reward for prior commitment and contributions to the party' (Bauer & Darkwah, 2021, p. 14-15). This situation applies to both men and women and is dictated by one's prior commitment to the political party in government, but in the same paper,

the authors reported that, women in some Eastern European nations complained that ministerial appointments to, for example, the health or education ministry was somehow beneath them, and that they should have been appointed to ministries of defence, national security or foreign affairs, whether or not they had the experience; just as Bimha mentioned in her paper of 2021.

Women, whether they are feminist or co-opted into feminism, who have served as military Defense Ministers, Heads of State, Presidents (whether executive or ceremonial), Prime Ministers, or members of various Councils of State, should henceforth be considered part of the cadre of actors responsible for addressing gender inequities and inequalities, for the sake of objectivity and accuracy. The counter to this position is found in the works of Keohane (1989), Harding (1986) and Gilligan (1982). Obviously, these research papers are historically old, and calls for a more modern update of similar researchers on the same themes to bring out new developments in the field of international relations and the role of women. However, it appears even the new and evolving research publications often claw back into the past and thus often distort the message they wanted or desired to communicate, due to the limitation on the application of new knowledge and analytical approach to the apparent dogmatic nature of Standpoint Theory. How does one measure 'strong objectivity'; 'situated knowledge'; 'epistemic advantage'; and 'power relations' of only men, or women in positions of power are also included in the power relations, particularly when one is dealing with subjective experiences? In the 2024 US general elections, those who were for Donald Trump whether men or women, had their own unique standpoints, the same as those who were for Kamala Harris. Therefore, whose standpoint is superior to the other and why should it matter when dealing with subjectivity of choice, autonomy and privacy in selecting a candidate of your choice (Gurung, 2021, p. 106-115)? Does it matter whether some of the voters who voted for Trump felt that they have been marginalized and ignored by the Biden-Harris government? Even to some voters who normally voted for the Democrats did not see the utility of remaining dedicated to the democrats when they asked the questions, "What has Biden or Kamala done for me lately? Where is the beef in all those promises?" Individual preferences do quickly evaporate the utility of things familiar, and tend to move towards newer objectives that may promise better outcomes than what the individual may be used to. Another variable in the bouquet of Standpoint Theory is: Situated Knowledge. Those supporters of Donald Trump have situated knowledge outside the duality of objective-relativism that the 2020 US election was a stolen victory. No matter what evidence election officials produced, it did not matter, because when those supporters thought outside the box of objective, evidence-based data or information about the election outcome, they arrived at one conclusion: the 2020 election outcome was stolen by Biden because there are elements in America, the democrats, who could not accept and respect the choice of the Republican voters. In 2024, these same Trump voters did all they could to give a decisive, and trashing victory to Trump, a man alleged to be hypernormative, hyperheterosexual, misogynistic, chauvinistic, racist, serial wife cheater, tax-dodger, serial and congenital liar and so on, despite his antecedents and previous harm to feminist courses or the way some Americans perceive him to be.

3.5   Role of Women in Asymmetrical and Symmetrical Warfare

We already know from Brown (2013) and Hogg (2010) that women in Rwanda participated in that genocide. We also know from the same researcher, Hogg, that society likes to differentiate between ordinary women and women of war or men of war. 'We cannot insist on the strength and competence of women in all the traditional masculine arenas yet continue to exonerate ourselves from the consequences of power by arguing that, where the course of it runs more darkly, we are actually powerless. This has become an awkward paradox in feminist argument' (ibid, p. 100-101).

It is interesting to review aspects of international relations and diplomacy in a nation or region that is oftentimes exposed to asymmetrical and symmetrical warfare and, where its women form about 200,000 strong members of their defence force: - Israel. Havel-Shalev (2019) saw feminist international relations much in the same way other nations' scholars see it, but her emphasis was more on the "concept of power, sovereignty, hegemony and security" (ibid, p.1). She also stated on the same page that, "feminist international relations also help unravel the means by which hegemonic masculinity has become embedded in international relations and politics". In a nation like Israel, what did Havel Shalev want the nation to do if it is being attacked as it happened on October 7th, 2024, with rockets from Hezbollah and Hamas staging camps? Should Israel call in the female brigade of peace (if there was any group like that on a Jewish religious holiday of Simchat Torah) for them to pray, perhaps, at the Wailing Wall with the expectation and belief that Yahweh would hear them and stop the rockets or destroy them midway as the Iron Dome was meant to do? If one claws back into these pages of the

number of women defence ministers and heads of state, won't these caches of data defeat the call for gender inclusivity when the women at the helm of government business do not seem to see that there is the need for government intervention in society to protect women from male patriarchy and controls? Perhaps, these claims are more realistic in the Western hemisphere and in nations like Israel than they are in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a pragmatic matter, within the affairs of the respective nations engaged in international relations, such claims are difficult to verify despite the involvement of women in power and government structures around the world as well as quite a number of women, who are actually Presidents and Prime Ministers of various nations. In Harel-Shalev's paper, *Feminist International Relations (IR) Theory, (2019)* she claimed that this theory "allows us to view international relations not only from an abstract philosophical and historical point of view, but also from the viewpoint of those who experience international relations and politics but who are usually missing from the mainstream body of knowledge" (ibid, p. 1). If the feminist standpoint was not a mere abstraction, then why hasn't the research caught up with the reality that it is not only men who manage systems, communities and the people, but at every step of the way, women are keenly involved in framing gendered issues, policies, social etiquette and conduct. Therefore, in the work of Harel-Shalev and in the literature, we could tease out these elements or variables below:

(1) Realistic outcomes of changes in the conduct, philosophy and practice of IR from feminist standpoint are needed?

(2) IR and security studies should also reflect and refract in the conduct of IR and politics from feminist standpoint in the use of not only structural systems in IR but in the procedural approaches to IR as well as in the language of IR and practice?

(3) Those with lived experiences in IR and politics should provide their narratives to be systematized for the purposes of deepening IR studies and feminist epistemology.

(4) There ought to be the featurization of security studies with new securitization framework from the feminist standpoint?

(5) Nonetheless, the paradox in feminist epistemology is that, women in powerful positions do not actually have power due to the limitations placed on them by the traditional masculine, patriarchal controls?

Assuming these issues are addressed, would that change the balance of power in the world, or improve the economic disparities between the periphery nations and the core industrialized nations and between men and women at the domestic level, as per World Systems Theory of Wallerstein (1974, 1992, 1995, 2004)? Would that remove violence against men by women and vice versa or eliminate inter-personal and spousal violence not only in the emerging economies but in the Western nations, where each of their citizens knows or should know that the justice system does not take kindly to inter-personal, and spousal violence. A number of researchers have raised uncomfortable issues of sexism and chauvinism against traditional IR Theory that have allegedly not redressed gender disparities and inequalities in IR Studies (Harel-Shalev, 2019; Tickner, 1988, 1992). If it is believed that "war, security, and conflicts cannot be fully comprehended unless they are studied through the prism of how people have experienced them in a myriad of ways, not solely by what are considered to be mainstream IR theories and methods", then why the justification on subjectivity, and the call for a general new approach to IR studies from feminist standpoint?

3.6 Would Feminist Standpoint Theory replace Realism in IR in the Future?

Granted, no objective researcher or student of international relations studies can ignore the predominant male-centered, philosophical, sociological and psychological nature of the literature in IR. It is also a fact of IR Studies that "after the end of the Second World War, the theory of realism dominated the analysis of IR and politics, and its laws and mechanisms" (Ali, 2023, p. 1-3; Norman, Kpeglo & Agalga, 2020). As reported by Inass Abdulsada Ali in the paper *Feminist Theorizing in the IR Discipline* (2023), the field of International Relations has been shaped by numerous debates aimed at establishing lasting peace and preventing the recurrence of events that led to World War II.. A number of new developments occurred during this period, including the setting up of the Woodrow Wilson Chair in International Policy at the University of Wales at Aberystwyth (Ali, 2023). Additional developments were the seminal publications of Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, (1948)*, E. H. Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations, (1939)*, and even prior to those were Raymond Leslie Buell's *International Relations, (1925)*. Much later in the course of world events, in 2007 came Jay Winik's *1944 (2015)* and *The Great Upheaval: America and the Birth of the Modern World, 1788-1800, (2007)*. During this moment,

some women also contributed their share to the literature including Eslanda Robeson's 1957 interview for Women's International Democratic Federation magazine. She said, "International affairs are merely an extension of domestic affairs, which in turn are merely an extension of community affairs, family affairs and relations with the neighbors". This to Robeson, was the link between race relations, human rights and international relations (Information, Women's International Thought, 2021, pp. 93-112). The evolution of International Relations epistemology was itself a desperate attempt of a few able and capable men in Western society to analyze the challenges and events leading to the two world wars for the benefit of humanity not because these authors wanted to preserve masculinity or male hegemonic controls over world affairs. Women during this time also had the burden of explaining and analyzing the events leading up to the Second World War. If women did not choose to play active role in developing the essential material for International Relations Studies, Securitization Studies, this cannot be attributable to masculine proclivities and idiosyncrasies, but to the inertia on the part of women generally, perhaps with the usual excuses of being a homemaker, mother and wife. It has increasingly become part of standard operating procedure that gender debate by hook or crook, has to be situated on the premises of masculinity and chauvinism exclusionary tactics with intentionality, without ascribing equal responsibility to women for not being active enough, aggressive theoretically enough and scholastic enough to promote women or feminism among the competing philosophical frameworks of realism, pluralism, Marxism and racism? Whitworth (1997) stated that the current progression in International Relations Studies as well as Security Studies emancipated international relations studies from the "intellectual cage in which it was imprisoned by traditional post war realism" (In Ali, 2023, p. 2). The evolution of the issues in IR, naturally had involve gender, race and minority issues. Since our focus now is on Feminist IR, it behooves this study's author to handle the various issues as embedded in it and interrogate it much in the same way researchers like Ayelet Harel-Shalev's 2019 work did looking at the theoretical construction of feminism and through case studies or published works.

In 2018, Sarah Smith reported that, "feminist theory has challenged women near complete absence from traditional IR theory and practice" (ibid, p. 1). In her work: *Introducing Feminism in IR Theory* (2018) Smith commenced her paper by looking at gender violence at the domestic level, citing True (2012) for support with the statement that "links violence against women in private sphere [. . .] and the kinds of violence women experience in public" (ibid, p. 1). This was a bit of a stretch particularly as a case study or analogous comparison to violence in war, which does not only target women, whether they are combatants or non-combatants, particularly in asymmetrical warfare, but also targets men and children as well as natural and economic assets. Perhaps, it would be interestingly informative to calculate the cost of war on the environment in terms of destruction, the pollution and displacement to the fauna and flora through the use of rockets, bombs and other explosives, fire and chemical weapons. At any rate, Smith continued that, due to the violence against women in the globalized workplace and in times of war, there is a violence continuum against women from domestic space into the international arena, forgetting perhaps, that in that international arena are many influential women who are heads of states, presidents and prime minister who acquiesce to such positions? Obviously, this statement or linkage, invokes Robeson's interview in 1957 for the Women's International Democratic Federation magazine in which she is reported to have said, "International affairs are merely an extension of domestic affairs, which in turn are merely an extension of community affairs, family affairs and relations with the neighbors". Be as it may, there is an obvious bias against men in that assertion not from the submission of Robeson, but from Sarah Smith's invocation of that earlier statement which was more generic while Smith's application of it was more specific casting blame on men as, probably, the main or only perpetrators of domestic violence. Smith affirmed her belief that, such domestic violence is found to be "characteristic of traditional international relations viewpoints" (Smith, 2018, p. 1). Feminists' empiricism has raised issue with the framing of the literature in international relations.

3.7   Distortion of international Conventions to promote Feminist Theories

Whereas realism, statism and issues of nationalism may have favored males over females, the absence of women in traditional and even post-modern international relations is particularly due to the general absence of women from violent confrontation of wars and hostilities throughout history (Keohane, 1989, p. 245-246). Post war intellectual investigations into the factors leading to the First and Second World Wars considered the policies, the causes, the actors, the politics and the relative international cultural practices of leadership, nationhood, racism and hegemonic power over society as the primary focus of the investigation. In effect, the writings

of Morgenthau and his compatriots, paved the portraiture of both domestic and international power structures to vividly show the absence of women, their role, contributions either direct, indirect, supportive and conspiratorial, and responsibilities in the events leading to the two wars. It certainly would have been an act of intellectual dishonesty if writers like Morgenthau had concocted a narrative that depicted women's role leading up to the catastrophe, which may not have raised the curiosity that might have given birth to, perhaps, social movement of feminism and the subsequent development of feminist international theory. Therefore, blaming the absence of feminine actors in international relations was an honest, unapologetic statement of history of international relations and politics studies. It is, perhaps, very easy for some researchers today to forget about the history of the world as it then was, and replant current developments into the historical past and then demand for positive evaluation of their present positions; without considering the historical etiology of the phenomenon under investigation. It appears when it comes to absence of feminist thought in international relations and politics, society is being pushed literally under the intellectual duress that feminism as a concept, a philosophy, a way of life, has been an active and purposeful part of humanity from the beginning of creation or evolution depending upon individual preference. For this reason, international relations and politics studies should have captured feminist contributions right from the inception of the discipline. It is morally unacceptable for feminism to universalize perspective in international relations studies, because this could arouse tensions between "masculinism standpoint" on one side and "feminist standpoint" on the other side (Harding, 1986). Notice that until the promulgation of the various international human rights-based conventions and treaties of the United Nations, there were large areas of human rights law and humanitarian law which were left untouched by both domestic or international law whether considering the legal framework of monist or dualist nations and jurisdictions. Therefore, to attack the international community for the late development of human rights protocols is to expect too much out of human institutions with traditions so steeped in self-interest, national interests and sovereign controls. It is actually quite surprising to read contributory literature like Tricia Ruiz's (2005) paper: *Feminist Theory and IR: The Feminist challenge to realism and liberalism*, as if the challenge was a formal contest between the proponents of the international system's actors and those from the feminist front. Despite the alleged claim of feminist challenge, it is hard to find the feminist doctrine for this challenge. What is the feminist doctrine in the war against masculinity in international relations studies? There are scores of researchers, who have assumed that the contributions from feminists in academia towards the broadening and improving international relations studies; is rather an adversarial contest. This seems to suggest that there ought to be a winner and a loser at the end of this challenge? Ruiz wrote that "since the end of the cold war (1989-1991) and the increased interdependence resulting from globalization process, the field of international relations has faced major challenge to its core theoretical structure" (p. 1). What then is the challenge? What is the core theoretical structure of international relations and politics? Ruiz did not address these two important questions with the assumption that the world knew what she was discussing. Despite the jump from not discussing the nature of the challenge or the attributes of the international system, she provided a sort of apology when none had been asked for, that, international relations "[. . .] no longer revolves solely around the realist issues of war and security, but rather, international relations (studies) has broadened to include traditionally liberal concerns, such as the international political economy, socioeconomic development, human rights, non-state actors, and civil society". Such a submission muddies the discussion, particularly when one views the gradual enlargement of international treaties and protocols granting or inuring human beings in formal ways, their pre-existing bouquet of rights as humans. Perhaps this is the right time to pull out some of the earlier developments in the formal enlargement of human rights on the international scale. For example, in 1965, the UN offered to the world, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) soon after the United States under Lyndon Johnson as President passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, amended and enlarged in 1968, a legislation that was started under J. F. Kennedy before his unfortunate assassination. This effort had nothing to do with feminist international theory but the natural development of the rights-based development of domestic and international law. Soon after that, the following international treaties were also entered into, again, not inspired by feminist theory or feminist standpoint:

(1) International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, (ICCPR), 1966;

(2) International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (ICESCR), 1966;

(3) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW), 1979;

(4) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, (CAT), 1984;

(5) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989;

(6) International Convention on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, (ICMRW), 1990.

In 1979, Karel Vasak, a Czech jurist, introduced three different categories of human rights, inspired by the three basic tenets of the French Revolution, namely liberty, equality and fraternity and further developed human rights into: *First Generation of Rights* - civil-political rights, *Second Generation of Rights* - socio-economic rights and finally, *Third Generation of Rights* - collective developmental rights (Weston, 2024, p. 1-3). In addition, the Welsh School of security studies, also known as the Emancipatory Realism has articulated human centric approach to human development, a drive which started in the 1940s. In many ways, the Welsh School of Security Studies is very different from the Copenhagen School due to the emphasis on human beings, which goes in line with the United Nations perception and articulation of human security, which includes both men and women, which also announced the various dimensions of freedoms such as economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political security to the human experience in the Human Development Index of 1994 (Rolf, 2023, p. 554-556). Though the Copenhagen School of Security Studies views four dimensions as crucial to national security, namely: economic, military, political and the environment, it seems these do not go far enough. I had previously argued that,

> *The CoS approach to securitization studies emerged as an alternative analytical thought in the Western military Industrial complex and, contextually, attempted to label the securitization processes in those nations from first, the military standpoint and second, lassie faire. [...] In all fairness, the Copenhagen School assumes a duality of security purposes, which are mainly State Security on one hand and Societal Security on the other hand (Buzan, 1991, p. 19). There seems to be unavoidable internal inconsistency with the Copenhagen School when Buzan (1991, p. 19) segmented security into five dimensions including military, economic, political, environmental and societal security as part of the 'de-securitization' process. This appears to have been a belated addendum attempt to either expand or inure the initial analysis with broad based, human-centric dimensions about which national security ought to be concerned. In Ghana and in most nations, control over the military, economic and political affairs as well as the environment and the generalities of societal security, by and large, are in the exclusive domain of the State (Aradau, 2004; Vileikeine & Janusauskiene, 2016; Eroukhamanoff, 2018). These dimensions per Buzan's enlargement of State security under CoS, appears to have transported the Copenhagen School unto the philosophical parity with the Welsh School and the Human Development Report of 1994 (Huysmanns, 2008, 2004b). It is also fair from analysis of the literature on securitization and de-securitization hypothesis to assume that, the power over these five dimensions appears to have influenced the thinking that the State is the only entity capable of managing the divergent interests impinging on those dimensions, and, therefore, making the State the Referent Object as a practical matter (Hama, 2017, p. 4). Again, as a practical matter, in mature and industrialized economies, the control over the general stream of business, the economy, political affairs and societal concerns are not solely in the hands of government but dispersed in the hands of government, investors, industrialists, the middle class and the working classes (Williams, 2003) (In Norman, 2022, p. 17).*

After much discursive discourse, Ruiz agreed that because feminist theory reflects a wide range of perspectives generating internal debates concerning how it should be represented, "[...] there can never be a truly singular voice of feminist foreign policy simply because of the diversity of views within feminism itself".

If this is an admission of 'defeat' of the allegation of the neglect of feminist standpoint in international relations and politics, then the entire feminist theory in international relations is, perhaps, a monumental waste of energy and time? If there can never be a coherent feminist foreign policy, then what is the utility of feminist theory or even feminist standpoint? In this author's estimation, the issue is more complex than a mere admission of defeat. Feminism never developed a coherent and galvanizing basis or meeting point for sympathizers and interested parties to meet. It was conveniently assumed, rather erroneously that, if one was a woman, if one cared for the status of women and wanted to see improvement in such status, then one would, by compulsion, gravitate towards feminist causes (Giardina, 2010; Shulamith, 1970). Why? Because according to Shulamith Firestone, "sexual class system predates and runs deeper than any other form of oppression, and that the eradication of sexism will require a radical reordering of society [...] feminists have to question, not just all of Western culture, but the

organization of culture itself, and further, even the very organization of nature" (ibid, p. 11-29). This call was too radical to make masculine men stand up to defend their grounds, hegemonic controls and power.

Feminists like Shulamith did not, perhaps, appear to understand social marketing and were more interested in shocking, alienating and packing the presentation with intellectual oddities that certainly made men cringe and develop quiet but resolved internal resistance to reason, the moment feminist as a word is mentioned, and lesbianism as a way of life is noticed about a person. Feminist have often accused the rest of society as being 'evil' because they are neither sympathetic or nonchalance about feminism, which deepens the cleavage between the heterosexuals and everyone else. Shulamith's radical feminist theory, which posits that society is controlled by patriarchal males that needs to be re-ordered to eliminate male supremacy, although the experiences of women are fraught with divisive issues of racism, agism, class and sexual orientation, has persisted throughout American social and political history and life, culminating in the second coming of President Donald Trump in the defeat for the second time, a supporter of feminism, Vice President Kamala Harris in the 2024 general and presidential elections in the United States. Other allegations against men include the issue of sexual objectification of women, since, of course, women neither objectify men, nor even engage in sex and advance their need for heterosexual options towards men. What some these feminists tend to forget is that patriarchy built the capitalist system in which they live and immensely profit from in the Western economies. To advocate for the end of patriarchy and the dismantling of masculinity is another way of saying the entire Western template for national development is fraught with inequities for that matter, should be abolished. Who should do the abolishment? Who in his or her right mind, would advocate for the replacement of the capitalist system in place of a yet to be developed politico-economic paradigm? Interestingly, Griffiths (1999) opined that women are not made invisible in the international scene. Women have never really been excluded from the core of international relations. They have rather not been acknowledged for their past and present contributions to the central issues in international relations. Perhaps, feminist researchers and writers should leave men alone. Men are not fungible. There is nothing called "caring masculinity", or "inclusive masculinity", "female masculinity", "plastic masculinity", or "toxic masculinity" but one type of masculinity infused with human qualities of empathy, sympathy, communication, responsibility, virtue, morality and reason (Mellstrom, 2022, p. 156). Women are not more pacific than men in their attitudes towards international conflict, regardless of sex (Tessler & Warriner, 2011). Mark Tessler and Ina Warriner conducted their study in Israel, Egypt, Palestine and Kuwait, and found that those who "expressed greater concern for the status of women and men, are more likely to believe that international dispute [. . .] should be resolved through diplomacy and compromise (ibid, p. 250-257).

4 Discussion

The common issue with feminist international relations theory is that, it does not matter which paper or book one reviews and conduct content analysis on the subject, one cannot escape their authors' use and reliance on conventional lexicon, language, terminologies of securitization and human development theories; probably developed by the alleged sexist, chauvinistic and masculine and testosterone driven males on issues of nationalism; realism; statism; liberalism; radicalism; conservatism; neo-Marxism; Marxism; post-modernism; masculinism; patrimonialism; patrilinealism; hypermasculinity' heteroradicalisms, and so many of the old theories for evaluating State and individual responsibility, sovereignty and autonomy from the point of view of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, the Welsh School of Human Security Studies and the United Nations Human Security and Development Index of 1994 (Kumar, 2023; Saidi, 2020). One would have expected to see a more gendered use of language that sought to change the traditional way that constructivists theories and philosophical justifications of the conduct of society to create the disparities between men and women through the use of language, words, and phrases or expressions, so as to radically change male dominance in all these areas? Perhaps, that era has probably not yet arrived. Hopefully, soon. With no desire to disparage or ridicule any scholastic work, it appears that feminist international relations theory has neither expanded nor shrunk international relations and politics studies and practice. It appears some of these authors have rather jumped on the existing band wagon of the international relations literature to ride along as a significant number of researchers do, but with the occasional flurries of intellectual breakthroughs such as the "feminist standpoint" of Keohane (1989), and for want of innovative additions, "radical feminist theory", a concept that has been around since the Second Wave of feminism until this day. The big faux pas in the literature is that, feminists see war as an extension of hypermasculine activity, as if men are basically suicidal, irresponsible

and nation wreckers. This is a fact of history deliberately concocted for its propaganda value in expressing Hobbesian idea of power in the wild, wide natural order of things, and as a tool of intimidation by European hegemony but also as expression of realism and territorial control, and which women and other racial minorities and previous colonial subjects have accepted without serious interrogation.

> "*Thus, according to Nancy Hartsock, war gives meaning to life and provides men an opportunity through heroism [. . .] opportunities that women potentially get through childbirth. In contrast, women are portrayed as more peaceful than men – whether due to biology, culture, or both. [. . .] Because of such caring roles, it is believed that women are more likely than men to oppose war and more likely to seek alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts*" (Hartsock, 2013; In Kumar, 2023, p. 247).

To agree with this assertion, perhaps, one has to examine the relative peace dividend in the nations where women are either the Presidents or Heads of States; Chief of Defence Staff or Defence Ministers, and compared those nations' peace, stability and the rate of development, using the traditional economic metrics of gross domestic product and per capita incomes, or the more inclusive gross national happiness index and subjective experiences of happiness, with those under male controls with similar titles: - to assess the most peaceful nations, the most progressive and economically successful, out of the lot to guide future research on the determination of which gender is best suited for peace, national development and for the leaderships of nations.

5   Conclusion

The struggle to articulate a different pathway for evaluating, assessing, and analyzing issues in international relations from the perspective of women is a valid focus, considering that women constitute the majority of the world's population but occupy less than acceptable positions or bear less than an acceptable share of responsibility in international public relations and diplomacy. Perhaps, women would be better off expressing "soft power" in international relations than investing in feminist standpoint idea (Nye, 1990, p. 9). Joseph Nye argued that it is probably better for nations to display 'soft power', that is, power derived from economic and cultural influences rather than military or aggressive, war machinery, to establish national interests in the absence of coercive 'threats', 'payments', or 'co-optive' (Nye, 2004, p. 9). This is a deviation from 'hard power' which is focused on kinetic and non-kinetic military engagement, intimidation, propaganda and conduct detrimental to international peace and mutual trust. The application of soft power is more lasting, more attractive and volitional for those who choose to be associated with that 'soft power' nation's cultural and social outlook and conduct in international diplomacy. Diplomacy is the main vehicle through which small states ensure that their goals and interests are addressed in the global arena peacefully (Morgenthau, 1954, p. 25). The Feminist Standpoint Theory in its basic application, tends to produce cleavages between gender on the thinking of we against them which does not auger well with national building, patriotism and nationalism. During the cold war, nations like the U.S., Germany and France deployed some of their best cultural icons to various countries to sing, put up concerts and other public social events in order to sway the public to the course of these nations. Joseph Nye in the 1980's articulated that, a country's ability to influence others is through soft power without resulting to the use of arms. It entails, cultural exchanges, student scholarships to graduate schools in the desiring nation, sports, and even religious exchanges as well as the Peace Corps. Nye's take on IR regarding the application of soft power is no enabling, it is interesting why any one would articulate a feminist standpoint as an alternative doctrine in IR, when the soft power approach is all inclusive, conscious of diversity and equality.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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