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FEMINISM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TOWARDS A GLOBAL APPROACH

Christina Brendle

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the

Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT:

The thesis examines International Relations in connection with recent feminist trends in the discipline. C. Sylvester's 'Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era' (Cambridge University Press, 1994) and her concepts of 'homesteading' and 'empathetic cooperation' are basic to its theoretical foundations. The first half of the thesis is entirely dedicated to theory, mapping out current trends in International Relations and specifically taking a fresh look at International Relations in conjunction with Feminism. The study includes Christine Sylvester's contributions as well as other foundations to International Relations and Feminism. The second, larger part focuses on the field research done on and in China. It particularly concentrates on the international aspects of International Relations, examining the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing. Investigating not only 'women's issues' in China and the 'West' and their expression before, through and after the conference, it also enlarges the scope of this thesis. Chinese culture, philosophy, language, politics etc. are studied with regard to internationalist and gender aspects as it draws parallels as well as differences between these givens. The thesis asks how international International Relations really are and whether countries that do not figure within the US/western world do have access. The choice of women and China for this thesis was a main purpose to enable examination of this important issue of accessibility and internationality of the discipline. It shows how certain groups are marginalized, explicitly or implicitly, due to a combination of factors including culture, race and gender. The discipline is therefore widened and restrained at the same time. Widened in order to allow further

integration of the margins and bridge-building between disciplines; restrained because the specialisation and further subdivision of the discipline is at once a necessary tool to avoid distortion but also a dangerous development which tends to lose sight of the bigger picture and gives a partial, rather than holistic approach to what we define as the field of International Relations.

Index:

Introduction:

This thesis tries to answer a manifold question of International Relations (IR): How global/universal are International Relations? It does this by examining subgroups within International Relations, which try to deconstruct claims of universalism and at the same time ask for reorientation of the discipline. These terms are 'Feminisms' and 'Postmodernism'. While they can be observed separately, they also come into play in combination.

Feminism or rather Feminisms are hard to define - this is not due to a lack of clarity but much rather because of the diversities offered by a range of feminist theorising. Definitions of Feminisms all seem to point out that women compared to men are at a disadvantage in society.[1] This common ground supposes a tendency towards 'collectivism'[2] but this is true only if we treat Feminisms as theories with static frameworks, receptacles for different concerns and explanations. This is where Feminism in general differs from mainstream thought and this is where it apparently links up with Postmodernism.

The postmodern field, again, has no "unified central position".[3] With its mobile definition Postmodernism seems to reject claims of foundational truth or essence in favour of mobile meaning that is constructed and changing in time and place. The difficulty of defining Postmodernism - as well as Feminism - just lies in that mobility which allows for plurality, diversity and 'multiple determinants'.[4] What adds the 'post' to Postmodernity is the critique of modernity with its claims of truth as stemming from pure fact rather than value and therefore representing a phenomenon which is fixed in time and static.

Among the advantages of dealing with mobile, multifaceted variables are undoubtedly the closer adherence to specific situations with almost a mirroring of the

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[1] C. Beasley, What is Feminism? (St. Leonards, Australia: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 27-8.
[2] Ibid., p. 28.
[3] Ibid., pp. 84-5.
[4] Ibid., p. 85.

complexities of human nature and the social environment. On the other hand, and more particularly on a theory-basis, it seems difficult if not impossible to establish valid and valuable theory on these grounds. We therefore must ask questions on the issue of globality and/or universalism.

Theory always assumes a certain likeness among the group of people it theorises about or the events it compares. This appears necessary for it to be accepted within a greater scientific community. Such theories are used as models (smaller or larger in scale) to show how different interactions are constructed, which problems may arise and from where, and how and where to look for suitable exits or solutions. It therefore seems useful to establish such models; but how is this possible in a world of increasingly complex exchanges with indeterminate variables? - This is the main issue in the thesis, which is reflected by personal research in China, specifically on women's issues. The selection of this case study fulfils several aspects of inquiry. China is of growing importance in worldwide exchanges, but, being non-western, non-IR mainstream, how does it participate in the creation and theorisation of International Relations? Secondly, women, as a group or as subaltern term for different individuals, have increasingly entered International Relations theory and practice linking up with non-mainstream theories. But how and where do they fit in as former minority/marginal participants? The choice therefore reflects the desire to study to which degree minorities (not in absolute terms but concerning the proportion of their participation within International Relations) and/or marginalised groups can and will access international exchanges and how big and important their input and voice is. The 1995 United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) held in Beijing serves as a backdrop to the described field research.

The theory part is mainly based upon C. Sylvester's book 'Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era',[5] which is advocating new methods of analysis

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[5] C. Sylvester, Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

for Feminism and International Relations. Understanding of her texts and concepts has been improved by a personal interview conducted in July 1997.

Research in China has been completed in the following manner:

It included trips to China from August to December 1997 and in April/May 1998 in order to acquire an acceptable level in Mandarin Chinese, get acquainted with Chinese culture and everyday life in China as well as do the field research consisting of experiencing China as well as several discussions, interviews and day-to-day exchanges.

The investigation has been organised on several levels, from the more general (including the study of the language and day-to-day immersion with lifestyle and cultural aspects) as well as, more precisely, discussions with academics and non-academics, Chinese and non-Chinese on questions of political participation, women's roles and rights etc. An even narrower research has been attained by documentation and discussion on academic studies in the fields of Women's Studies and International Relations as well as through participants and organisers of programmes and conferences linked to the 1995 FWCW.

Before heading for China, the decision on what kind of methodology to apply had to be taken in order to obtain the desired information and, more specifically, what kind of information was to be collected. Quantitative studies, although undeniably appropriate for a value-denying scientific research seem unsuitable for several reasons: The first and most obvious being that this research deals with human beings, individuals and, moreover, takes a critical approach towards classical fact-only based research. It seems far more interesting to get the stories behind the publications, official documents and speeches and the official version of things. Quantitative research requires not only a significant and representative sample to be assembled, it also asks for rigid procedures of inquiry. The problem here is that by assembling a so-called representative batch automatically tends towards the above-mentioned collectivisation. Furthermore, a one-to-one inquiry on this scale requires extended

time and the consideration that uninfluenced one-to-one interviews cannot be led, since it seems difficult if not inappropriate to single out interviewees. Neglecting to do so, on the other hand, may give an entirely different picture since group-effects of influence and synergy take place.

This study has therefore opted for a qualitative approach, trying to compare official dialogue with untold stories and hidden pictures. Needless to say that this leads to a somewhat partial and author-inclusive piece, which we are aiming for. We have previously suggested that all research is value-ridden and therefore the author cannot be neutral and outside of his/her research, but always influences and is influenced by the undertaken project.

Generally there are to note the day-to-day difficulties for a 'novice' in a country such as China:

- Language barriers: based on a lack of in-country language experience.
- Cultural misunderstandings, as well as regional linguistic particularities and differences.
- Cultural barriers: including the deficit of historical experience, cultural misunderstandings which can lead to lack of trust, discrimination and therefore insufficient openness.
- Political barriers: represented by the need of mutual knowledge and acceptance of the relative political and ideological backgrounds.

It is also not always easy to find the adequate person for a discussion and to be able to get in touch. Although interest in 'westerners' is generally great, especially if (s)he is looking to learn from or about China and wanting to cooperate, many people, especially in crucial political or educational positions are not easily accessible due to an unforgiving time schedule but mostly for reasons of social pressure, prejudice and political control. Mistrust

seems to stem from these constraints as well from a fear of cultural, political or even territorial imperialism, a conscious or unconscious adherence to major political guidelines, often obsolete, and sometimes, a tendency to wilfully mislead the western researcher or to embellish the local situation.

Activities are wide-ranging: Women's Studies are a big domain already in China and, apart from studying western concepts of Women's Studies (exchange and cooperation in this field are still high in demand), there are many streams and tendencies pointing toward Chinese and/or Asian theorisations or changes. Women's Studies as a discipline are mostly linked up to the big universities (such as Beijing University, Normal- and People's Universities in Beijing) but also smaller schools and colleges (such as several law schools, management colleges etc.) within and outside of the capital, but usually in more affluent urban areas. This makes it clear that the discipline of Women's Studies (Feminism is still largely viewed in a negative way, having been decried as bourgeois) in China it is rarely isolated, but builds bridges between two or more disciplines.

This is not the case for the field of International Relations, one of the more recent acquisitions of Chinese academia. Although a plethora of texts in Chinese are at hand, the discipline reveals to be mainly western-based without major visible development of own concepts and theories more appropriate to Chinese culture and history and current events. Population is one of the important keywords when talking about China, not only in terms of numbers which ensues in growing social tensions as a new monetary elite seems to take shape; but also in terms of the different ethnicities found within the Chinese nation and the male/female split with all of its ancillaries (one-child policy, women's rights and roles etc.).

The fact that Women's Studies are so advanced in the PRC has to do with the role Chinese women took on to support and develop the Communist revolution. The government designed this role and, at least for a while, Chinese women had become the equals of their male peers, at least on a professional level. This also entailed greater self-awareness and

more rights in the private sphere. As it has been the case in the post-war west, these privileges have largely changed back once the need of continuing the revolution had come to an end. Nevertheless it is also thanks to the Communist Revolution in China that women first got access to higher education, higher professional and social positions as well as a critical awareness of their roles and potential. This shows that the role and rights of women are concepts closely linked to their existence as political beings and agents. But other factors were as much responsible for these shifts in the position of females, actually on a worldwide scale. The development of communication and media making the world's most remote parts much more accessible and channelling cultural norms all over the world is certainly not a negligible factor. Also, and this is certainly true for modern China, some women have been influential of their times such as the Dowager Empress Cixi, later Mrs. Chiang Kaishek and Mrs. Sun Yatsen, as well as Mao's wife Jiang Qing.

In the discipline of International Relations, the translation of Chinese textbooks surprisingly not only reveals western-based theories, but the names of western scholars are often phonetically translated. One becomes aware that many books are more or less adequate translations made more or less legally from English.[6] Not all of western theorising figures and not all of it is interpreted the way it is done over here. Theories of Realism, for example, are adapted to the official discourse (as it is done in the west) pointing to the importance of state-centrality, including states as central actors and the justification of different moralities for public respectively private figures.

In recent years the PRC has seen numerous new publications dealing with basic philosophical questions of International Relations following the trend of asking fundamental questions on methodology and ontology in the west. Many of these publications follow into the postmodern or critical quest and most seek new links between International Relations and other disciplines reconnecting it firmly to social sciences, as well as natural sciences and

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[6] Many thanks to my Chinese colleague and friend, former student at Beijing's Institute of International Relations at Beijing University under Prof. Ding Yuan, see Ch. 8, list Nr. 5, for this enlightening information.

humanities: an example is Wu Jie's 'Systems Dialectics',[7] which not only reconnects philosophy to International Relations and physics but is undergoing an ontological exploration of International Relations drawing on Marxist, Maoist and Deng's ideologies.

From the enquiries and studies assembled during this field trip to China, several friendships and work-related ties have ensued. Several conclusions important to the completion of this thesis can be drawn:

1) In the fields of Women's Studies and especially in International Relations there are surprising similarities between China and the west (the definition west serves to define the way studies were experienced by the author in France and the UK).

2) Although Women's Studies have developed very far and in their own terms as well as considering western theories within China, the same is not true of International Relations.

3) The discipline of International Relations is still western-dominated and does not include analytically the more recent or longer past political and/or historical happenings.

4) There are major efforts made within International Relations to change the phenomenon of geographical polarisation.

5) The concept of building bridges between the splinter groups of several 'grand disciplines' seems to lie much closer to the Chinese than to western mentality.

6) The Chinese with their cultural and philosophical background seem to be closer to Postmodernity than western scholarship.

7) On the issue of women in China we can say that their established/written rights and responsibilities rate women in the same if not higher positions in comparison to men as it is done in many western states.

8) The social and cultural pressures and habits annihilate or diminish many of these given rights in daily life in China and abroad.

9) While consciousness on the rights and roles of women may be quite developed in China's urban areas of affluence, for more rural areas point 8 is more accurate.

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[7] Wu Jie, <u>Systems Dialectics</u> (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1996).

10) Abstract concepts of 'women' and 'men' seem at first useful to avoid collectivism, but are largely deemed unnecessary and unhelpful within the concerned Chinese academic circles.

11) International Relations and Women's Studies being relatively new academic disciplines, especially in China, there is very little - if any at all - bridge-building between them.

Methodology is, similarly, approached less traditionally in China:

Due to the recent developments in International Relations and the relatively new consciousness that there is not one enlightening truth to be found, the question of methodology is difficult to be answered clearly. In fact, the search for methodology will be a constant shifting back and forth between different locations and assertions, analysing the situation from as many viewpoints as possible. For this purpose the classical researcher relied on solid theorising. Traditional theorising is found within traditional International Relations and derives from the official channels of political action. It is probably best described by Elshtain's 'narrative of closure', which she defines as:

> "(1) a search for some 'original position' from which history has proceeded, with this beginning determining its forward movement; (2) a clearly identified, universally construed object of critique (for example, patriarchal culture, capitalist society, or world communism) that gives the political agenda supported by the narrative its form and meaning; (3) an explicit or implied universal subject, one generic human type; (4) a dehistoricising sweep that deflects from cultural and political particularity in a search for the key to all ways of life, every political act, and so on; (5) a predetermined end point, whether in the creation of a benign new and better 'sex gender system' that would eliminate violence altogether, or a classless Communist utopia, or a world of freely cooperating free-market societies - ... (6) finally, an Archimedean point that offers the analyst claims of epistemological privilege".[8]

Narrative closure does not include individual stories, stories that normally remain untold. It is of utmost importance to really listen to those stories (as Sylvester would make the point in her 'Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era') and to incorporate them into the theorising as real narratives. It is there where we find the interesting and hidden locations of true stories and experiences. It is in those spaces where we can search for cooperation and empathy, for redirections of the classical theorising: "I would insist that to cease and desist from grand narratives of closure, to move instead toward perspectives and

[8] J.B. Elshtain "Act V: Bringing It All Back Home, Again" in J.N. Rosenau, Global Voices: Dialogues in International Relations (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993) p. 101.

positions that, more modestly and surefootedly, give us insight ... is far the better way to go as scholars and citizens".[9]

Sylvester certainly does not fulfil the classical 'narrative of closure' as described by Elshtain above. She opposes grand theorising, which is implicit in point 4. It therefore follows that she finds herself within a mobile theorisation taking an original stance with her process of empathetic cooperation and homesteading. Nevertheless, her 'women' respectively women categories and their mere division into these two (if not more) categories, seem to adhere to classical closure (point 3). She can also not entirely detach from point 4 since her theorising appears ahistorical (as we shall see in chapter 4 in comparison to Elshtain's work) and from point 5, since in the extreme her world is one of empathy and cooperation which allows for peace and justice, a better world based upon the utopian imagination that all exchanges can/could eventually follow this mould.

This research on and in China shall be based on official narratives, published in hundreds of texts and documents, it shall also listen to individual narratives of key participants and women on the streets; including my own narrative, since it appears impossible to abstract the colouring of one's own stories. It is important to closely look at empathetic cooperation and homesteading (two major issues in Sylvester's work and fundamental within this thesis). They shall be defined in more detail in the following chapters, for now we shall do with a brief description and describe their influences on the research and the thesis in general.

Empathetic cooperation is explained as "a process of positional slippage that occurs when one listens seriously to the concerns, fears and agendas of those one is unaccustomed to heeding when building social theory, taking on board rather than dismissing, finding in the concerns of others borderlands of one's own concerns and fears".[10] This results in homesteading, becoming unsure, mobile and aware in a sense of partially changed and influenced of 'another' view. Naturally, one would assume, this was an everyday challenge

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[9] Ibid., pp. 101-2.
[10] C. Sylvester, "Empathetic Cooperation: A Feminist Method for IR" in Millennium (Vol. 23, Nr. 2, 1994) p. 317.

posed during research in China. Not all viewpoints are completely different and opposed, this would result in 'otherising' Orientalism, but some of them are different and must/can be taken on board. The problematique comes with awareness. How aware does the researcher become that certain things are perceived differently: this is especially true with China where many things are left unsaid either for socio-political reasons or because they are culturally implicit. Moreover, Sylvester's empathetic cooperation works both ways: the question here is how much is the other side willing and able to 'homestead'. As mentioned before, differences in culture and language are basic problems for the process of empathetic cooperation. In concrete experiences the author often felt a barrage against her research, due to above mentioned social and political pressures as well as cultural dissimilarities, but also due to mistrust and wilful misleading. It became clear that a heavy portion of willingness is fundamental to the working of empathetic cooperation.

The thesis is divided into 2 main parts - a first, mainly theoretical treatment of the topic, which gives definitions and sets out the framework and scope of this study (chapters 1-4). Part II illustrates the theoretical claims and issues on the practical research example. Chapter 1 examines western Feminisms and the global conditions of women. It gives a brief, selective history of women's organising in the west (institutionalised and grass-roots) against the historical backdrop of the 20th century. It sets out definitions and the bases for the forthcoming analyses. The feminist International Relations literature (chapter 2) analyses the issues considered within feminist discourses and their encounter with International Relations theories and debates, outlining different orientations and views. Chapter 3 concentrates on Sylvester's contribution to Feminism and International Relations - it re-examines her book 'Feminism and International Relations in a Postmodern Era' in detail, while also discussing her other work. Other philosophical foundations to Feminism and International Relations are being discussed in the last chapter of part I mainly comparing Sylvester's claims to those of J.B. Elshtain and other authors such as E. Croll or D. Davin.

Chapter 5 prepares the outline for the case study and does this by asking what the requirements of third world women really are. This is followed by a chapter on the political difficulties of Beijing as perceived by different actors: the UN, NGOs, individual participants, the Chinese government, non-participants and the media. Chapter 7 expands on the Chinese view by giving insights into political and philosophical foundations that are explanatory for the choices and positions taken by the government as well as individuals or collectives in China. The final chapter details interviews and meetings that have been led all along in London and in China and that have been crucial for the understanding of China's positioning. It is supposed to give a glimpse into personal stories, the frequently untold.

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Chinese colleague and friend, former student at Beijing's Institute of International Relations at Beijing University under Prof. Ding Yuan, see chapter 8, List Nr. 5

Interview with Dr. Christine Sylvester, London, Heathrow Airport, July 17th 1997

1. Western Feminisms and the Global Conditions of Women:

Western political theory has, it is claimed - for most of its history - disregarded women. This has not been done with an open exclusion of women but much rather through the assumption of gender-neutrality while taking 'man' as the typical example in these exchanges. Through this, women felt disqualified from most aspects of public life and confined to the limits of their homes and families. "Politics is still a male preserve: only a handful of elected officials are women even where women voters are in the majority. Women tend to be relegated to certain areas of government, preserving the age-old division between the male world of politics and the female world of social concerns".[11] Feminist theorising therefore asks for the reasons and background of the establishment and perpetuation of these relations of domination which gave and still give the impression that the division of the world into 'men' and 'women' is a natural one; and most importantly, point the way towards how women can turn around to change this situation.

This chapter will present the history of women's international struggles trying to defeat the existing system of relegation to the private. It will constantly emphasise and examine the conditions of women. The focus is on western Feminisms because the author's own experience lies within these boundaries and also because western theories form one core element of this thesis. It is disputed within the thesis that only women should be enabled to talk about women's issues, or, similarly, only Chinese people should talk about issues concerning China. Whatever our background and situation, any discourse is biased through personal experience, upbringing, education etc. "The author's sex, however, is not enough to effect a change in intellectual outlook".[12] This procedure permits to compare and test western Feminisms with regard to achievements in non-western cultures (more specifically in China). In addition to this, it is an indicator of the unequal amount of material available by western/non-western authors and academics due to the lack of interest and the assumedly

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[11] F. Thébaud (ed.), "Introduction" to <u>A History of Women in the West - Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century</u> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994) p. 5.
[12] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 13.

imperialistic behaviour of the west over the developing world, as well as the uneven nature of international studies.

As we have mentioned in the introduction, the common feature of the very diverse forms of Feminism seems to be their perception that women are disadvantaged in comparison of men in several if not all aspects of life, that is that "women have had and continue to have a rough deal because of their sex".[13] The oppression of women and the advantages enjoyed by men are put down to an institutionalised system that favours males. Even though this is not an accurate definition of 'patriarchy', which in itself is a problematic term both in its historical inception as well in the fixed definition of its meaning, we shall stick to this rather open description. "Patriarchy [has] developed in distinctive communities including the Jews, the Aryans (Indians and Europeans), the Arabs, the Chinese and their respective great religions. The rise and the universalisation of all these civilisations are based on conquest and war".[14] With this patriarchal dominance, two unequal categories of people co-exist on this planet: 'men' and 'women', each with its own specific set of characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, each with its attributed roles. This division has persisted for such a long time that symbols of what is 'male' and 'female', images about this seemingly natural division, are inscribed into our minds. Images of the 'strong man', the leader, warrior and breadwinner protecting the 'weak female', sensitive, mothering, and submissive have lasted into our generation, still claiming their validity.

> "But to study women in isolation from men, as if in a vacuum, is a theoretical dead-end and a possible source of historical misunderstandings. What we propose, rather, is a gendered approach. Relations between men and women are an important dimension of history. These relations are not a natural fact but a social construct, and they are constantly being redefined".[15]

This implies that men, as much as women, are gendered subjects too. And it is not only men trying to hold up a system which puts them in charge, it is women as well who cannot imagine a different world. Once established, a working system is not easy to be overcome, for change means leaving the comfortable environment we know to head for the unknown: here Sylvester's 'homesteading' comes in. This "'homesteading' refers to the processes that

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[13] C. Beasley, <u>What is Feminism?</u> (St. Leonards, Aus.: Sage Publications, 1999) p. 28.

[14] <u>Ibid.</u>

[15] F. Thébaud (ed.), <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 4.

reconfigure 'known' subject statuses"[16] ... it "is always a politics of disturbance that unsettles and ploughs up inherited turfs without planting the same old seed into the field".[17] The theme of homesteading will run like a guiding thread through this thesis. It means inclusion, but not of things 'other' but inclusion in a sense of acceptance and appropriation. This supposes continuous dialogue and a willingness to cooperate and throw prejudice and previously acquired 'knowledge' over board in order to open the road for expanding knowledge. It means leaving behind fixed, acquired 'homeplaces' and to accept mobile subjectivities. The necessary cooperation and ensuing discourse have to be 'empathetic'. Through empathy we try to put ourselves into someone else's position, we stop 'otherising' that person in favour of trying to acquire their state of mind. What happens is that we are more open to diversity, ready to accept variables. On the other hand the entire construct becomes extremely complex, since we are not only dealing with ever-changing variables, but also an infinite number of them. Subjectivities are complex constructs of identities and social exchanges - when the entire construct becomes variable it appears difficult to theorise, let alone to establish any model of analysis, but we shall discuss this problematique later

Although Feminisms account for some aspects of women's world-wide subordination, these theories generally fail to explain how women can break the circle to exert power and act legitimately and with recognition in the public sphere - in general they make the state women are in appear as unchangeable. Sylvester seems to offer a solution by constant shifts that she compares to Kuhnian shifts in the scientific community (scientific revolutions) when anomalies seem to displace and eventually render obsolete current theorisation. The clear difference with Sylvester is that her way of homesteading cannot render positions obsolete; it seems a constant expansion of variables, which appears difficult to put back into theory.

Undoubtedly theory must be normative and therefore not only assumes a certain likeness and collectiveness among the individual members of the included group (it is however doubtful that the individual human being must be the smallest denominator, since we know of the complexity of his/her identity). We can certainly argue in favour of a further fragmentation of theory, but in the end, in order to have a voice at local, regional, national or

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[16] C. Sylvester, Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p. 2.

[17] Ibid., p. 216.

even international level, group support and group action is needed. In comparison one could argue that in democratic systems, one is left with the choice for either one or another or a third etc. party each of which adheres to some common, general principles. One may not agree with all of them, but when it comes to decision-making one has to either adhere to one of them in order to place ones voice or one is simply left without a voice.

In this sense we shall examine, on the following pages, women's activities during the 20th century. Although singular women have been pointing at the oppression of the female for a very long time, the history of their international association is relatively brief and - for reasons of space as well as understanding it seems useful to take a closer look at their activities during this century.

Deborah Stienstra usefully divides modern international feminist activities into four periods:[18] pre-war, inter-war, post-war and current. International action on women's questions did not occur simultaneously and everywhere. Many parts of the world have - at some time - experienced a wave of women's movements, but it is only fairly recently that Feminisms have been concerned with attempting to enable third world women to participate. The pre-war period characterised by a belief in the moral superiority of women is said to span from about 1840 to 1920. Through lobbying and staging alternative gatherings women tried to include their voices into the process of decision-making. The second period (ca. 1920-48), inter-war, was marked by an effort to institutionalise equal rights and secure women's participation in important international decisions. Period three or post-war (ca. 1948-70) saw a split of opinions about the role of women and their position in the international sphere. During the last period of 1970-now increasing international organising of women led to the increasing acknowledgment that many women had been excluded in the past (mainly women from non-western, often developing countries), working towards a more inclusive women's movement.

At the 1915 International Congress of Women, which met in The Hague, women claimed the right to assert their perception of and interest in the international situation, although most participants did not yet have the basic citizen's right to vote granted by their national government. The difficulty of The Hague was not only to permit women from

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[18] D. Stienstra, Women's Movements and International Organisations (London: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

belligerent and neutral countries to get together during the ongoing war, but also to get together in useful debates. The final platform suggested that women's suffrage and peace were closely tied together; grounded in the assumption that women were/are more peaceful than men. As a consequence from The Hague Conference several delegates called on the leaders of fourteen countries to call for peace and mediation.[19] But women were still not invited to international negotiations; in fact they had to ask to be let in as outsiders, not being given information about the ongoing debates. But even their admittance means - in retrospective - a big change in the discourse of gender relations, because the pre-war discourse assumed that men were the leaders of international activity while women had only a secondary role to play, as wives and mothers supporting men in their primary task.[20] But the women delegates from The Hague not only gave proof that women could lead international activity, but also that women's roles were by no means naturally restricted to the private sphere of family, mothering and home. In the media however, women's empowerment and efforts were minimised, underlining the dominant discourse of women as wives and mothers over and over.

In January 1919 the Paris Peace Conference met in order to put together a peace settlement and to construct the League of Nations. While the leaders of Britain, France, Italy and the USA came together women needed to be represented at the conference too. The French 'Union pour le Suffrage des Femmes' invited delegates from IWSA to Paris for this purpose, to discuss the position of women in the world and to make their concerns known.[21] But the women's delegations were allowed to make presentations only to the commissions that were dealing with issues concerning women (International Labour Legislation Commission, Commission on the League of Nations). The Finance Commission and the Reparations Commission did not seem to be of women's concern. Women did achieve their right of eligibility to the League of Nations through their presentations and perhaps also in recognition of their work during the war. Clearly the notions about women's roles was changing.

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[19] J. Addams, E. Balch, A. Hamilton, Women at The Hague (New York: Macmillan, 1915) p. 43.
[20] D. Stienstra, op.cit., p. 53.
[21] A. Whittick, Woman into Citizen (London: Athenaeum/Frederick Muller, 1979) p. 70.

But some women were unable to attend the Paris Peace Conference; German women were refused entry into France at that time. At the verge of the publication of the peace settlement, 150 women, mostly from Europe and North America, met in Zurich condemning the terms of peace and the reparations. In a final document they asked the national governments to follow the League in the recognition of women's suffrage and to treat women wage earners as well as women homemakers as fundamental in building world peace.[22] The lasting result of Zurich was certainly the creation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), still active today.

The first half of the 20th century saw great social changes resulting from the two world wars, providing a temporary shift in women's positions in the economy without significantly changing the underlying gender relations. During the war women were drawn into non-traditional occupations by appealing to their sense of mothering and caring (thoroughly traditional images). In addition to working for the benefit of the Fatherland they were also expected to fulfil their traditional roles as mothers and bear children for their country.[23] After the war, women in North America and Europe were called back to home and family and replaced in economic production. Those who remained were used as cheap labourers, often in the new assembly-line productions.[24] Similar arguments were used in the 60s and 70s to outline the suitability of many third world women as cheap and convenient labourers. The 20s and then especially the 50s saw the glorification of the housewife and mother. Not only did this facilitate their economic exclusion or exploitation, but also to make this image more attractive, new household appliances became the symbols of the professionalisation of household management. However, women's work, maternity and health were increasingly protected through national and international legislation (maternity benefits, prohibition of night work etc.).

In the inter-war years the chief focus of new women's groups were linked to peace issues by equal-rights feminists. Among them were the Co-operative Women's Guild, the World Women's Party (WWP), the Open Door International (ODI), and the Equal Rights

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[22] A. Wiltsher, Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War (London: Pandora, 1985) p. 202.

[23] M. Huss, "Pronatalism and the Popular Ideology of the Child in Wartime France" in R. Wall, J. Winter, The Upheaval of War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) p. 346.

[24] R. Bridenthal, "Something Old, Something New: Women Between the Two World Wars" in R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz (eds.), Becoming Visible: Women in European History (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1977) p. 430.

International (ERI). The ODI attacked the League of Nations' anti-feminist nature to work towards equal economic freedom, opportunity and status for women-workers.[25] The ERI wanted to ensure that an equal rights treaty would be internationally ratified.

In 1920, after many states had recognised women's right to vote, the International Alliance of Women (IAW) adopted a new 'Charter of Women's Rights' calling for equality of the sexes in all spheres: political, economic and social. It also stated that "married women should have the same right to retain their nationality as a man",[26] this being the beginning of raising the nationality issue that would continue to concern women's groups for the next four decades. The 'Convention on Nationality' of 1930 under the League of Nations in The Hague was grounded in several gender hypotheses: (1) women have special needs in marriage, men do not; (2) law dictates the woman's choice of nationality, because women do not have the need for choice, but family unity stands in the foreground of this decision. These laws were not gender neutral, but fit into the existing system built upon women as subordinate partners.[27] But one year later a big opposition (ICW, IAW, ERI, WILPF etc.) manifested to The Hague Nationality Convention because it differentiated between women and men on the basis of their sex. A new agreement embodying equality between men and women in nationality should be found.[28]

Women's groups also faced inner differences. A core disagreement concerned the equality issue: some feared that the call for equality would jeopardise the protective legislation that had been achieved for women. The social-feminists argued that men and women were biologically different, especially in the area of reproduction and protective legislation would enable women to continue their roles as mothers and wives.[29] This assumption did not challenge the existing relations of dominance, still defining women as prime child bearers. Given the infinite variety of women's experiences this is a dubious statement. On the other hand, the equal-rights feminists challenged the traditional separation of private and public life accepted and maintained by many. The problem with this

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[25] S. Becker, The Origins of the Equal Rights Amendment (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1981) p. 171.
[26] A. Whittick, op.cit., p. 75.
[27] D. Stienstra, op.cit., pp. 68-9.
[28] League of Nations, Report of the Secretary-General (Geneva: A.19.1931.V, 1931) pp. 7-14.
[29] League of Nations, Statements Presented by International Women's Organisations (Geneva: A.19.1935.V, 1935) p. 13.

assumption was that there seemed to be a universal image of 'man' and 'woman' that could be applied readily across the world.

With the Second World War ended, many international women's groups tried to re-establish their international networks.[30] Some groups had vanished (e.g. ERI). Groups with Eastern European membership faced the changed relations due to the Cold War (WILPF, IAW). Others pursued developing and intensifying their connections with the United Nations and worked towards the creation of stronger links with women in third world countries.

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-86) was one of the few audible feminist voices in the 50s. In her book 'The Second Sex' (1949) she stated that:

> "Men have created an image of us as 'the other' different from them, and to be kept inferior. When are women going to fight back with our own images and experience, to establish our equality with men?"[31]

For the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organisation (UNCIO)[32] in San Francisco representatives of 45 countries came together. No representatives of international women's groups were given official or consultative credit, but some delegations included women. This clearly showed that certain assumptions about the role of women in international affairs were changing, but many other assumptions remained: with one exception women were for example excluded from military issues.

Issues related to gender entered the UNCIO agenda in four areas: (1) the preambular paragraph reaffirming the equal rights of women and men; (2) several clauses calling for the application of rights and freedoms without distinctions on the basis of sex; (3) article 8 affirming the equal eligibility of women and men for position in the UN; (4) discussions on the establishment of a Commission on the Status of Women. Those in favour of equal eligibility of women and men stressed women's exemplary contributions to peace, which were not expected given their roles in society (a remark thoroughly in-line with patriarchal tradition), the opposition outlined a gender-neutral point of view stating that the

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[30] International Council of Women, Women in a Changing World: The Dynamic Story of the International Council of Women Since 1888 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966) pp. 75-8.

[31] S. de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).

[32] All data on the UN and women from The UN and the Advancement of Women 1945-1995 (New York: United Nations Publications, UN Blue Book Series, Vol. VI, 1995).

Charter already included non-discrimination and any additional statement was therefore futile. Although the article is standing and the UN has agreed to implement it, the real situation remains unequal. In the intense discussion around the establishment of a Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) some argued that the Commission on Human Rights should encompass any discussion on the status of women (this was strongly upheld by ECOSOC), but those commendatory of the establishment of a separate commission wanted to reward women for their service during the Second World War, and held that time had come to put into effect the principles outlined in the preamble to the Charter.[33]

CSW with representatives of 15 countries met the first time in February 1947. The Commission also listened to presentations of several international women's groups. The defined scope of work was broader than any activity on women done throughout the era of the League of Nations and was an attempt by women representatives and the women's groups to expand the understanding of gender relations in the United Nations. But what the League of Nations did in 1935, ECOSOC representatives undertook in 1947 trying to narrow down the broad scope of gender relations to a very confined set of activities around women's concerns:

> "... many of the responsibilities which the Commission proposed to assume have already been rightly assigned to other Commission of the Council ... there was a danger of duplication of effort with other Commissions and with the specialised agencies, because the activities of all the organs of the United Nations and of all the specialised agencies affect in greater or less degree the condition of women, inasmuch as they are members of the human society".[34]

According to some ECOSOC representatives women's inequality came from traditional customs and practices that were to be removed through education. Thus they recommended that the CSW should only assume those projects that would guarantee that women are not being deprived of the rights and benefits enjoyed in their countries by men because of their sex alone. The limitation to the mere examination of existing legal and customary disadvantages of women as regards political and social rights, economic rights (after consultation with the ILO) and educational opportunities prevailed.[35]

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[33] ECOSOC, Official Records. Economic and Social Council. Second Session (1946) pp. 30-1.
[34] United Nations Weekly Bulletin (Vols. 2-3, 1947) p. 316.
[35] D. Stienstra, op.cit., p. 86.

After the institution of the United Nations, very few new international women's organisations appeared; the existing ones mainly followed the narrow scope of the CSW. A new problem arose for international women's groups, because of the building of two opposing blocks on the onset of the Cold War, which created tensions (e.g. between the newly created WIDF - Women's International Democratic Federation (*1945) - as the primary international voice for Eastern European women, and WILPF). There was still little effort towards including women from third world countries in international women's organising. The IAW developed the most extensive network in newly emerging countries adding new affiliates in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, but these new additions did not change the predominantly western emphasis of the IAW. In one of its seminars African women were said to be individualists who needed to form co-operatives to reinforce their role in the unfolding economy when African women had been working co-operatively for centuries.[36]

The International Council of Social Democratic Women (ICSDW) was a revitalised variant of the earlier Socialist Women's International. It displayed the earliest and most active response to decolonisation by establishing scholarships for third world women to study abroad and then provide technical assistance to women in their home countries.[37] But the ICSDW failed to bring these issues to the attention of the CSW or other UN bodies. Only in 1960 did an Afghan representative raise the issue of women in development in the UN. But not only did greater attention to the incorporation of third world women lack, but also respect for difference and tensions due to class was missing. Women implicated in international movements, as well as in governmental delegations, were in general members of the middle- or upper classes. They were therefore less able to advance questions that may have been important to working and peasant women. These tensions between class and gender accentuate the need to recognise both sets of power relations when we reflect on the lives of women and the necessity to understand the mutable interdependencies between them. A similar question can be raised about the ability of first world women to address or even understand the concerns brought forward by women of the third world.

So what was/is the problem with the incorporation of third world women? Clearly early 20th century Feminism was a privilege of the educated and well-off western elite of

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[36] Ibid., p. 88.
[37] SIW (Socialist International Women) Bulletin (Nos. 4-5, 1982) p. 19.

women; those who had no concerns regarding daily survival, were not involved in national liberation struggles and had plenty of material as well as time resources to organise. It is also clear that with this background there was no need and no aptitude to include women from the third world. Such international exchanges came up by the middle of the century, but as always established ways are difficult to change (see Sylvester's 'homesteading'). At issue was that the needs and issues for women of the third world were sensitively different from many of those of women in the first world. Women of the third world felt doubly oppressed, not only by the often imperialistic west which left many peoples to struggle for their national liberation and the re-invention of their cultures, but also because Feminism and women's movements so far had done little and were unwilling to change for the sake of third world women. In fact western Feminism had moved along as a distinct, separate discipline. But power relations not only consisted of gender inequalities, but economic, racial, class, etc. inequities were all linked up together. Accordingly first world women who generally lead international women's groups were unable to even grasp, much less address the concerns brought forward by third world women. They primarily acted in terms of assistance rather than empowerment and the initiative for discussion of third world women's concerns came from within their own ranks.

With the vast and varied range of women's international organising manifested in the latter part of the 20th century, one would anticipate a matching augmentation in attention on women's concerns within the United Nations structures. This was not the case. Important shifts in language have occurred and the UN has given more attention to women's affairs including them systematically into the UN framework following 1985. Nevertheless, the shifts within the UN have not brought about great change to the lives of many women. In some parts of the world women's situations have even worsened.

The 1968 Conference on Human Rights in Teheran marked a transformation in the focus of the CSW's orientation, being diverted from equal rights to the integration of women in development. But this change was undertaken with much reluctance at the beginning. The CSW resisted drawing connections between women's concerns and economic development, fearing that this would distract the Commission from its primary objective of women's equal

rights.[38] Only in 1974 the CSW finally completed the transfer to an equity-based approach, adopting recommendations insisting on women's full integration into all aspects of the development process of their country.[39] The underlying assumptions of this transformation were: (1) women were not part of the existing development efforts; (2) existing approaches saw women only as mothers and wives and only as such able to make a contribution in society. But already by the 1980s, third world women questioned the integration-of-women approach. The 1980 Copenhagen Conference re-endorsed the United Nations approach to women and development via the integration of women into the present systems. The Forward Looking Strategies (FLS) adopted in Nairobi in 1985 mirrored the limits of this approach. The outlined problems were: (1) the lack of attention given to the links between women's household and reproductive responsibilities and their role in development. Many of women's productive operations remain unaccounted for; their reproductive activities on the other hand can restrict their productive activities. This contradiction led to the separate investigation of women's productivity and women's reproductive activities. (2) The shift in the United Nation's approach has transformed women's concerns from the realm of social development to the area of economic development. Another separation took place disengaging the social from the economic. It therefore failed to see the interrelationships existing between them, limiting the notice of women's concerns in a unified approach. (3) The women-in-development approach cannot overturn the hierarchical structure that controls development. Development should seek to empower poor women first of all.

The IWY meeting held 1975 in Mexico City dealt with three main themes: equality, development, and peace. The documents from this conference contained the first comprehensive international analysis of women's inequality; but it also revealed some of the underlying tensions between women from the north and the south:

> "Under the leadership of Betty Friedan, the women had enthusiastically passed amendments to the UN plan and marched them to the conference site in the Mexican Foreign Ministry. Therefore their shock was considerable when shortly thereafter groups of Latin American women seized the platform to protest against 'US imperialism' - and implicitly against North American domination of the proceedings".[40]

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[38] I. Tinker, "The Making of A Field: Advocates, Practitioners, and Scholars" in I. Tinker (ed.), Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) p. 29.

[39] D. Stienstra, op.cit., p. 119.

[40] J. Whitaker, "Women of the World: Report from Mexico City" in Foreign Affairs Vol. 54, No. 1 (October 1975) p.175.

These events foreshadowed the confrontations at the 1980 Copenhagen World Conference on Women.

2000 women from 46 countries attended the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Brussels 1976, testifying about all forms of women's oppression by men. This tribunal and the meetings of the previous year in Mexico City stimulated the international community to consider the status of women in connection with a variety of issues.

Delegates from 145 countries come together in July 1980 in Copenhagen to assess the work of the 'Decade for Women' (1975-85). The women were faced with obstacles because women's concerns were minimised by national governments and the United Nations. Tinker reports "holding women's conferences by men's rules on men's issues is a no-win situation".[41] But more importantly the north-south tensions of different understandings of Feminism or women's equality burst out:

> "Some third world feminists ... felt that the crusading zeal with which Western women had seized on the issues was a mute but nevertheless blatant declaration that as usual it was up to the good old paternalistic west to come and save the third world, even or perhaps particularly when it was a matter of saving it from its own nasty, backward habits. The very fuss over the issue seemed to contain an insidious implication that only in the third world there were truly misogynistic things done to women. Therefore western women's involvement with this issue was seen as an attempt to assert - and reassure themselves of - their own superiority".[42]

When western feminists called for international Feminism, third world women accused them of assuming more commonalities than there really exist between women of the world. Women from the south also condemned the insufficient participation from third world women. Copenhagen taught a useful lesson on the understanding and practices of gender relations at the international level; the most important being that there is no uniform women's situation or perspective, but also that women's issues are not a luxury to be dealt with and therefore of at least equal importance as economic or diplomatic-political issues.

The Nairobi Conference held 15-25 July 1985 published the FLS that contained significant differences to earlier documents thereby providing not only an analytical approach,

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[41] I. Tinker, op.cit., pp. 33-4.

[42] M. Mc Intosh et al., "Comments on Tinker's "A Feminist View of Copenhagen", Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society (Vol. 6, No. 4, Summer 1981) p. 780.

but also prescriptive measures to address the obstacles to the advancement of women. The FLS provides a different understanding of the role of women in their own advancement: no longer is it only equitable representation (as in the Mexico City and Copenhagen documents); the role for women in society is not just based on their status as objects, but as subjects of their own future.[43] The FLS called on governments to encourage the participation of men and women in the raising of families and the maintenance of the home by sharing domestic responsibilities and recognising women's informal and invisible economic contributions.[44] For the first time the private sphere had been publicly addressed and therefore become a civic issue. The FLS also focused on violence against women. A most unusual proposal links violence against women with the achievement of peace, consequently providing an analysis that does no longer separate private violence from the public violence of war. Unfortunately this proposal only achieved recognition in the women's meetings, the United Nation's political and security offices failed to deal with these issues.

The indirect influence of international women's groups is evident in three ways: (1) they provide research and analyses for the documentation of the UN's Division of the Advancement of Women; (2) they indirectly link to the UN through their relations with national governments; (3) by the overwhelming presence of the international non-governmental women's community before and during the Nairobi Conference.

The Cold War had become a background issue during the protest years of the Vietnam War. With the defused opposition, the Pentagon went on the offensive again in the Reagan era. In Britain, feminists grabbed the leadership of the peace campaign against the new cruise missiles and set up a Women's Peace Camp outside the US Air Force base at Greenham Common. The symbolism of male vs. female at Greenham could not be missed. The Greenham Common Peace Camp gave new impetus to semi-mystical ideas of the 'essential' difference between women and men. This grew into a reversed 'essentialism' that

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[43] H. Pietilä, I. Eide, United Nations and the Advancement of Women: The Role of the Nordic Countries to Promote Efforts by the UN System for the Advancement of Women (Stockholm: Nordic UN Project, Report No. 16, 1990) p. 17.
[44] United Nations, The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women - As Adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade of Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, Kenya, 15-26 July 1985 (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, DPI/926-4176, Sept. 1993) §59.

emphasised women as nurturers, life-givers, the force for peace and love; men as aggressors, killers, rapists of women and nature.

The conservative backlash against Feminism in Britain ironically began with the election of the first British woman Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher (1979-90). In the US, Ronald Reagan posed as an 'economic libertarian', joining with Thatcher in a salvationist double-act. The idea of community was trashed. The mindless easy fix of monetarism in Britain and Reaganomics in the US were a social disaster. All the public services that women depended upon were cut or savagely downgraded. Their limited gains in the trade union movement were wiped out.

As an effect of the Thatcher-Reagan duet a new 'under class' of the desperately poor and unemployed was created. [In Britain alone 65% of the 'officially' poor are women, many of them single mothers. Women are the fastest growing category of homeless, nearly half of them fleeing domestic violence. Those in work have never been so stressed. In the 1970s trade unionists campaigned in favour of the 35-hour week. In 1991, the Conservatives still refused to sign the European Social Charter calling for a maximum 48-hour week and a minimum wage. And they still did in 1996].

The 'American way of life' revived under the Reagan leadership and was increasingly imported into cities all over the world. But hope gave away to racial hatred and religious fundamentalism. The climate of fear created by Christian fundamentalists against abortions and fertility treatments seriously undermined the Roe vs. Wade US Supreme Court decision that gave women the right to choose an abortion in 1973. The new fundamentalists were notably young white males from lower income brackets, condemned to 'downward mobility' in the Reagan decade. Maddened by their lack of economic prospect, they took their resentments once again out on women and ethnic minorities.

Although there have been serious attempts to integrate women's concerns into all UN work since Nairobi, this goal has not yet been achieved. The CSW continues to be identified as the primary body on women's concerns. A number of important organisations like the IMF, GATT, UNCTAD (until the early 1980s) still do not include devices related to the status of

women. The system-wide-medium-term plan on women and development (SWMTP-WD) between 1990 and 1995 set and strengthened the UN agencies' co-ordination of essential units on the status of women. However it completely ignored the issue of violence against women. If any document could encompass the definitions of gender relations of the United Nations system, the SWMPT-WD is it because the plan receives high-level participation from the UN organisation; the plan's scope is extremely broad. The allocation of financial resources is a big problem in the United Nation's work on women's concerns. They are either insufficient or allocated according to traditional conceptions of development. Consequently national governments' interest and attention to the implementation of FLS has considerably reduced.[45]

Neither women's movements nor international organisations have - over this period of time - been able to come to terms with the differences and hierarchies of class, race and dependency in their work on women's concerns. Commitments were made on paper but minimised through inadequate allocation of resources.

Certainly many IR theories have proved unable to account for the activities of women, in the case of Realism, which excludes non-state actors from its analyses, or again liberal pluralism that confines its examination to formal international NGOs. But the international organising of women has all along been deeper and wider than within the boundaries of such organisations.[46]

Considering the level of commitment of women's international organising in regard to Feminism there are differences all along: pre-WW II some groups had pursued the goal of equal rights for women and men. After 1970 however, many strands of Feminisms came into international women's organising, especially with the increased action and interaction with women from developing countries.

Stienstra argues that international women's groups and movements pursued one of two different political strategies: mainstreaming, which works to directly include women within the institutional decision-making process at its most successful when there is cooperation

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[45] D. Stienstra, op.cit., p. 140.
[46] Ibid., p. 146.

with the formal institutions and sufficient material resources; and disengagement, which consists in the organisation of alternative meetings. The policy of disengagement, however, requires a strong voice at the international level and therefore strong alliances among groups in order to avoid marginalisation.[47]

As we have seen above several shifts took place in the assumptions, discourse as well as the situation of women. In a first period women went from total exclusion to limited inclusion in international affairs. Gender blindness in discourse gave way to limited acceptance of women's capabilities. This resulted in the very limited access of women to public life, emphasising however the differences between women and men. Secondly, the assumptions shifted increasingly towards equality between women and men. It gave women a place within the international arena based on equal rights. A third transformation was a change in focus that was based on the integration of women in development. This shift returned, in discourse, towards differentiation. Within international organisations such as the UN this meant that the former equity-based approach was given up for an efficiency-based proposal: using each to their greatest capacity within their existing roles in society. Although this shift appears more expedient to international institutions and probably more practical to those finding themselves included, it nevertheless gives up difference and individuality for a greater voice.

Undoubtedly women's situations and roles have changed over time this century with greater access to education, health and economic production, but the basic elements of their lives have barely changed leaving women mainly responsible of child-care and domestic work. "In all cases women's programmes and policies remain marginal in the system and rarely have the resources or authority to match the mandates given".[48] So the question remains whether the changes that have taken place over this century in women's lives are really 'achievements'. Additionally we must be clear that no 'achievements' are ever permanent of which AIDS or the present-day anti-abortion movement should be enough proof. "Women's history grew out of the women's movement, but those militant beginnings

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[47] Ibid., pp. 147-8.
[48] Ibid., p. 152.

must not mislead us into thinking that the story we have to tell is essentially one of progress".[49]

At the global level feminists had to deal increasingly with the diversity among women, the different Feminisms and manifold understandings of it across the world. Space had to be made for these different schools to contend and to discuss. This coexistence and exchange between different Feminisms has not been unproblematic.

> "Feminism discovered the multiplicity of individual female subjects as a result of different conflicts between different groups of women: disagreements between black and white women activists in the United States, for example, or, even more dramatically, accusations of imperialism levelled at Europeans and Americans by third world women at international conferences".[50]

This tendency toward individualisation not only made theorisation and the voicing of group concerns more and more complex and difficult, it also let to a basic theoretical re-questioning on the issue whether the category of 'women' exists and is useful and at the same time "the need to construct a feminine identity".[51] Recently many international feminist movements have started cooperating with other social movements such as environmental movements. This not only increases their voice within the global community and gives them a larger backing within the population it also allows definition of and work towards common or complimentary projects. This shows the increasing need for bridge building between interests, or, within academia, between disciplines.

Why has so little been accomplished for women at the international level in spite of extensive international women's activities? Did important changes in economy, ecology, the colonising experiences and the states' responses to these changes affect women in a way to making their situation worse through adjustment policies? Did liberation struggles and wars have positive or negative effects on women's roles and lives? Or could it be the inherent conservatism in international organisations that reflects power relations and resists changes in those power relations? We mentioned at the beginning the unwillingness of organisations and groups of people to comply with changes. If this is so, did states and international

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[49] F. Thébaud (ed.), op.cit., p. 2.
[50] Ibid., p. 11.
[51] Ibid., p. 1.

organisations give in to some demands from women's movements to accommodate them, without needing to radically restructure their economies or societies? Proof for this may be that the mandates related to women that were adopted by the UN grew considerably at the same time as women were organising more successfully globally. A combination of mainstreaming by sceptically analysing ensuing government actions, and disengagement with an attempt to develop alternatives within the existing social structure, may prove most useful for global women's movements according to Stienstra. So far, none of the international women's movements have been able to establish themselves as a balanced counter-power. Feminists working at the global level also have had internal difficulties to discover, accept and trying to understand the different comprehensions of Feminism around the world. But the advancement of women's concerns needs them to cooperate among themselves and in alliance with other projects around very diverse issues such as peace, ecology, race, economy etc. [52]

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[52] D. Stienstra, op.cit., p. 158.

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2. The Feminist International Relations Literature:

The study and analysis of the feminist International Relations literature set out in this chapter questions the reasons for International Relations' reluctance to integrate Feminism and gender issues. The questions will be asked both, from within the discipline of International Relations itself, as well as from the point of view of women's studies: examining the internal complications of gender issues. The various challenges Feminism poses to International Relations will be outlined, determining Feminisms' main approaches of and their implications for the discipline of International Relations and unveiling the contemporary situation of Feminism in International Relations.

The importance of questions of gender within social sciences has been neglected for a long time. This has been particularly true for the discipline of International Relations. The last few years have seen a abundant output of feminist works within the International Relations discipline with the publication of a special 'Millennium' issue in 1988 and books and articles by Tickner (1991), Enloe (1993), Sylvester (1994), Whitworth (1994), more recently Pettmann (1996), and many others. The question though remains how far these works could penetrate the resistant walls of 'traditional' International Relations as "the study and teaching of International Relations seems to continue much as before, largely unmoved by feminist analyses".[53] Some basic theoretical works like Groom & Light's 'Guide to Theory'[54] as well as Halliday's 'Rethinking International Relations'[55] admit the lack of prominence accorded to gender issues within social sciences, particularly in International Relations. But which exactly were the obstacles in the way of feminist penetration of the discipline, and what were the reasons for this unwillingness to accept gender as an important factor within International Relations?

Many Feminisms: "There are by now many Feminisms ... Alongside and often overlapping with older-identified distinctions between liberal, socialist, radical and cultural

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[53] S. Whitworth, Feminism and International Relations (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1994) p. x.
[54] M. Light, F. Halliday "Gender and International Relations" in A.J.R. Groom, M. Light (eds.), Contemporary International Relations: A Guide to Theory (London: Pinter Publishers Ltd., 1994) p. 45.
[55] F. Halliday, Rethinking International Relations (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994).

Feminisms, for example (as important as they are in their different accounts of sexual difference and gender power), are variously named black, third world and ethnic minority Feminisms themselves far from homogenous".[56] The many Feminisms are proof for the dynamic character of research into women questions, but have as negative effect the dispersion of 'power' in a traditional sense because constant in-fighting makes it unworkable for Feminism to emerge and successfully challenge traditional and established International Relations.

Are all relations power-relations? Power theories of politics (that describe and explain those things in terms of the existence, transfer, development and division of power, e.g. Machiavelli, Marx, Hobbes etc.) meet rights theories of power.[57] Once again it would be categorical and hasty to maintain that all relations are power relations. It seems far more essential to look at different definitions of power: "The ability to achieve whatever effect is desired, whether or not in the face of opposition. Power is a matter of degree; it can be conferred, delegated, shared and limited. It may be based on consent or coercion. ... Power may be exercised through influence, or through control".[58]

In its classical definition power is said to be "man's control over the minds and actions of other men".[59] Power is not a relationship but the "old and simple notion that an agent is powerful to the extent that he affects others more than they affect him".[60] Power is the characteristic of a relationship between A and B in which A has the ability "to get B to do what he would otherwise not do".[61]

Some feminists present a contrasting definition of power when they say that it is "the human ability not just to act, but to act in concert".[62] Arendt, not really a feminist as such, is largely concerned with political thought and the issue of Jewish difference. Nevertheless her

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[56] J.J. Pettman, Worlding Women: A Feminist International Politics (London: Routledge, 1996) pp. ix-x.

[57] R. Scruton, "Power Theories of Politics", Dictionary of Political Thought, (London: Pan Books, Macmillan Press, 1983 ed.) p. 367.

[58] Ibid., p. 366.

[59] H. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York: Knopf, 1967) p. 26.

[60] K.N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979) p. 192.

[61] D.A. Baldwin, "Power Analysis and World Politics", World Politics (Vol. 31, Nr. 2, January 1979) p. 179.

[62] H. Arendt, On Violence (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969) p. 44.

thoughts are illuminating, specifically when she asserts the necessity to recognise difference without falling into the trap of fixed subjectivities: "this revelation of the who as opposed to the what ... is implicit in everything one does and everything one says".[63]

Power-as-domination has always been associated with masculinity, since the exercise of power has generally been a masculine activity: rarely have women exercised legitimised power in the public domain.[64] On the other hand "female power has usually existed only within a framework of male authority. ... Elshtain talks of 'unintentional' power, which is how a group possesses power because of its position in society. She argues that the benefits of privilege will belong to such social groups even though the possession of power may be personally unintentional to any one of them. Elshtain claims that males are the sole possessor of unintentional power which has any public consequences".[65]

Is power rather expressed in relations of domination or of cooperation? How can we determine which is the more basic form of power? Once again we find ourselves entrapped inside an antagonistic dichotomy. Accepting power as domination as it has been done in mainstream International Relations leaves us with the question about the use of cooperation and how to avoid established situations of violence? Accepting its apparent counterpoint, power as a cooperative relation, the question is when this cooperation needs coercive rules to remain productive or, to put it otherwise, if we can cooperate in harmony to achieve our goals the anarchical society seems its ideal social form.

Harding defines Feminism as "a political movement for social change".[66] Conscious of the western science's positivist heritage she asks how feminist research can be justified within the social sciences. This kind of justification seems all the more difficult as feminist epistemologies not only conflict directly with traditional ones, but they also differ among

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[63] F. Thébaud (ed.), A History of Women in the West - Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994) p. 289.

[64] N. Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1983) p. 210.

[65] M. Humm, "Feminism", The Dictionary of Feminist Theory (London: Prentice Hall, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Second Edition 1995) pp. 94-5.

[66] S. Harding, op.cit., p. 182.

themselves. There are many different classifications of the different feminist schools, some based upon methodological or epistemic distinctions (S. Harding), some more historically orientated (L. Nicholson), others more detailed outlining different schools of thought (S. Whitworth). Harding's classification of Feminism into three main epistemologies (feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint and feminist postmodernists) seems to coincide in its main claims with Whitworth's and Sylvester's more particularised deliveries:

Feminist empiricism: (Whitworth's liberal Feminism I) - Feminist empiricists argue in favour of a "stricter adherence to the existing methodological norms of scientific inquiry".[67] It therefore seems to be the least threatening of the feminist epistemologies leaving intact much of the established theorising in International Relations. It challenges "the incomplete way empiricism has been practiced, not the norms of empiricism themselves ... from these historical perspectives, the contemporary women's revolution is just the most recent of these revolutions, each of which moves us yet closer to the goals of the creators of modern science".[68]

Nevertheless feminist empiricism's "feminist component deeply undercuts the assumptions of traditional empiricism in 3 ways": (1) it has a 'radical future' arguing that the "context of discovery is just as important as the context of justification for eliminating social biases" (e.g. the social identity of the researcher which is denied importance by traditional empiricists) - (2) it claims "that scientific method is not effective at eliminating social biases that are as wide-spread as androcentrism" (they state that "an androcentric picture of nature and social life emerges from the testing by men only of hypotheses generated by what men find problematic in the world around them") - (3) although they "exhort social scientists to follow the existing research norms more rigorously" they can be understood to argue also "that it is precisely following these norms that contributes to androcentric research results" (Whitworth's liberal Feminism II).[69]

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[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., p. 183.
[69] Ibid., pp. 183-4.

In more practical terms it sees the position of women in society as caused by unequal rights. Its main focus is therefore devoted to the public sphere. "Public citizenship and the attainment of equality with men in the public arena are central to liberal Feminism. There is a presumption of sameness between men and women in liberal feminist thought. Liberal feminist political strategies reflect a conception of a fundamentally sexually undifferentiated human nature...".[70]

Feminist Standpoint: (Whitworth's liberal Feminism II and radical Feminism). Women's experiences, informed by feminist theory, provide a potential grounding for more complete and less distorted knowledge claims than do men's because "knowledge emerges for the oppressed only through the struggles they wage against their oppressors. It is through feminist struggles against male domination that women's experience can be made to yield up a truer (or less false) image of social reality than that available from the perspective of the social experience of men of the ruling classes and races".[71] Unlike feminist empiricism, a feminist standpoint is an achievement that one has to work toward.

The two epistemologies (feminist empiricism and standpoint) seem to be "locked into dialogue with each other. The relationship they have to each other reflects the struggles in mainstream discourses between liberal and Marxist theories of human nature and politics"[72] the tensions between and within them suggest their transitional natures. Transitional epistemologies suit transitional cultures or indeed modern culture. In these transitional cultures, epistemologies and sciences are frequently in tension and dialogue with each other; this should probably always be the case to avoid a hegemonic science/epistemology.[73] [This point will be argued in detail in a latter chapter of the thesis. Its implication is nevertheless clear at this moment: it is contended that different frameworks (may we call them paradigms or not) can and should exist simultaneously.]

> "It suggests that one can maintain those particularistic experiences and
> subjectivities while conversing together to find some new, tangential points of

[70] C. Beasley, What is Feminism? (St. Leonards, Aus.: Sage Publications, 1999) p. 52.
[71] Ibid., p. 185.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., pp. 186-7.

identity hyphenation that become, to use the idiom that I prefer, powerful tools to homestead the stories told about and for people like us. This is different than theorising sympathetically with the other. In an environment of what I call empathetic cooperation, it makes all of us "other" to the places we are assigned by social theory, so that we can recognise and work through the distortions and partialities that mark those theories".[74]

Or as Ferguson points out, feminist standpoint is inclined to make us see that "expressions of women's voices usually call for respect for differences among women (and sometimes among men as well)".[75]

Feminist empiricists and standpoint theorists both want to produce a feminist science, one that reflects the world around us better than the incomplete and distorting accounts provided by traditional social science. "This science would not substitute one gender-loyalty for the other, but, instead, advance the objectivity of science".[76] They are therefore both still very close to the traditional definitions of science, categorisation and the classical paradigms.

This standpoint or radical Feminism therefore is based upon the assumption that "women's oppression is seen as lying in their sexual oppression".[77] In sharp contrast to liberal Feminism a difference between men and women is seen as given by nature or deeply grounded in history and therefore merely inevitable. Moreover their focus rather centres on the private sphere, since there is an examination of the distinction and interconnectedness made "between the 'self' (who might take control) and the 'body' (the object of that control)".[78]

Not so postmodern Feminism (Whitworth's and Sylvester's postmodern Feminism, feminist Postmodernism, poststructuralism and critical feminist theory). Feminist postmodernists question the epistemological project by asking whether there can ever be a feminist science, or whether any science is doomed to replicate the androcentric ways of being in the world? This leads to scepticism about universal claims for reason, science, and the subject/self because many stories can be told. Moreover it expresses that Feminism is

[74] C. Sylvester, op.cit., p. 47.
[75] K. Ferguson, "Interpretation and Genealogy in Feminism" in Signs (Vol. 16, Nr. 2, 1991) p. 323.
[76] Ibid.
[77] C. Beasley, op.cit., p. 54.
[78] Ibid., p. 58.

not possible because women share some experiences, but because they can federate around a common resistance.[79]

In her introductory chapter Harding asks whether there is a distinctive feminist method of inquiry? She argues against this idea putting the main focus of her analysis rather on why feminist-inspired biological and social science research has come to power in the last few years and whether it is possible to simply 'add women' to existing social science analyses in response to feminist criticisms. This appears to be one of the central questions debated within and outside of the feminist International Relations community. Women and men are not general categories but contained within gender, race and class claims, as much as these claims are contained within gender. "Not only do our gender experiences vary across the cultural categories; they also are often in conflict in any one individual's experience".[80] "Traditional research has been for men, feminist research is for women";[81] if this is so, is Feminism not relativist in using women's experiences rather than men's? Some researchers argue that 'women's and men's characteristic social experiences provide different but not equal grounds for reliable knowledge claims',[82] others claim that 'this will only lead to a reversal of protagonists without challenging the established structures of power and domination'.[83] Can men make important contributions to Feminism? There are important contributions to the history of feminist thought made by men (J.S. Mill, K. Marx, F. Engels). But, argues Harding, women are wise to look especially critically at analyses produced by members of the oppressor group.[84] On the other hand Carver holds that men should be more central to feminist inquiry, not men as a category, as the 'other', but men as oppressors and oppressed, with all their different identities, roles and functions.

Postmodernism is, as its name says, the line of thought that follows and replaces modernity. It therefore is critical of the achievements of modernity, namely enlightenment and "there is not a unified central position (essential meaning) that can be straightforwardly

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[79] For example b. hooks, Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983).
[80] S. Harding, op.cit., p. 8.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., p. 10.
[83] T. Carver, op.cit., p.15.
[84] S. Harding, op.cit., p. 11.

designated as postmodern".[85] By rejecting enlightenment it refuses the assumption of foundational truth, recognising that it is neither fixed in time nor value-neutral, but a constructed notion.

Similarly, and within the same epistemological group, poststructuralists (who examine philosophic-linguistic implications) "stress the shifting, fragmented complexity of meaning (and relatedly of power), rather than a notion of its centralised order".[86]

Critical theory focuses on exclusions and represents an "open dialogue about the configuration of politics and society".[87] Committed to human equality and recognising cultural as well as natural difference it views the position of excluded groups, but, as Sylvester criticises, is still unable to offer an exit to the current exclusions.

Another aspect of International Relations' hostility to marry with gender issues was or is International Relations' difficulty to define its own limits and parameters. This problematique is made clear when we study basic International Relations texts such as Banks' Inter-Paradigm Debate.[88] The different definitions and limits with the three leading paradigms in International Relations (1. realist-idealist debate, 2. a critique of scientism with the emergence of Neorealism or behaviouralists versus traditionalists, and 3. International Relations' crisis: fact versus value, or progress versus multi-layered complexities) have set to give evidence of the above-mentioned shortcomings.

1. International Relations' dominant paradigm up to the present day, namely Realism, only recognises states as actors, not individuals. This being the prevailing thought, International Relations is said to affect women no more than men, in brief: to be gender neutral.[89] Both Realism and idealism do not specifically consider women or even point out

[85] C. Beasley, op.cit., pp. 84-5.
[86] Ibid., p. 91.
[87] A. Linklater, "The Question of the Next Stage in International Relations Theory: A Critical-Theoretical Point of View" in Millennium (Vol. 21, 1992) p. 92.
[88] M. Banks "The Inter-Paradigm Debate" in M. Light & A.J.R. Groom (eds.) International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory (London: Frances Pinter, 1985) pp. 7-26.
[89] S. Whitworth, op.cit., p. ix.

their inherent public-private split. The human being portrayed within these schools of thought is merely a representation of men who have access to the public sphere. While Realism excluded individuals by defining states as sole agents of International Relations and therefore leaving women where they were, in the background, in the private zone but rarely participating in public, in political life, not representing the state and therefore not acting as agents, i.e. 'states-persons', idealism referred to women inherently as peaceful, but without explicitly mentioning them. These people called women remained in the private sphere as background, as wives and as mothers.

> "In the first debate of International Relations, therefore, it is not surprising that we find International Relations constructed as a zone of domestic gender politics. Realism offered anarchy as a controlled community of national statesmen, among who any serious talk of or admission of not-women was out of place. Idealism told us that these realist statesmen could do the bidding of peace-loving publics because, in effect, none of us had really succeeded in eradicating our memory of early connected relationships with 'women' (although not speak it) in idealist political practices".[90]

2. In the second debate H. Bull criticised International Relations' new scientism. Being purely quantitative "practitioners of the scientific approach, by cutting themselves off from history and philosophy, have deprived themselves of the means of self-criticism, and in consequence have a view of their subject and of its possibilities that is callow and brash".[91] Waltz and his scientific Neorealism tried to locate systems dynamics beyond statesmen by moving the level of analysis to system dynamics, but reductionism of gender remained as in previous theories. Women still seemed relegated to the private sphere, while analysis focused on public, political life. Although at large women were still equalised with gender within this theoretical framework, they found a few places which offered possible locations for women, for example in the anarchic system between key actors or the levels of analysis which seemingly admitted that at the basic level of analysis could be placed the individual.

3. The third debate mirrored a crisis within International Relations, which roughly coincided with the break-up of the bipolar system created through and all along the Cold War.

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[90] C. Sylvester, op.cit. p. 92.
[91] H. Bull, "International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach" in K. Knorr, J.N. Rosenau (eds.), Contending Approaches to International Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969) pp. 20-38.

While scientism continued dominating the discipline, some people criticised that International Relations had been most effective at supporting a particular ideology rather than at inspiring science.[92] This crisis of explaining the perseverance and repetition over and over again of certain phenomena such as war or patriarchy led to the disillusion with modernity and the enlightenment's prominent achievement of defining science by the separate study and analysis of fact rather than value. Uncertain on whether social sciences such as International Relations had made progress, postmodern and poststructuralist theories broadened - for the first time - the theoretical bases of International Relations. What ensued was a breakdown of theory as it had been known, allowing for a number of methodologies and epistemologies. It opened the way for individuals to count within International Relations. This 'displacement' or in Sylvester's terms 'homelessness' therefore allowed women into the discipline, what was lacking, however, was theorisation, since any assumptions had become variable in time, space and focus. R. Ashley warns to beware of the battles fought to define International Relations' basic concepts as "for each creation myth that has come into the mainstream, others have been rejected",[93] meaning that while we make certain assumptions they appear to automatically exclude others.

There is also a political contradiction in International Relations concerned with order, because Feminism is concerned with disrupting this order;[94] or as Pettman puts it "Feminism disrupts International Relations by telling other stories".[95] Although the location of anarchy (of more than just between states) and later of postmodernity (defined as "unsystematic, heterological, decentred, ever-changing, and local)"[96] gave women specific niches, it made solution-finding and analysis difficult if not impossible, since studies based upon these premises become extremely fragmented.

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[92] Y. Ferguson, R. Mansbach, The Elusive Quest: Theory and International Politics (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), p. 216.

[93] R. Ashley, "The Poverty of Neorealism" in International Organisation (Vol. 38, Nr. 2, Spring 1984)

[94] S. Whitworth, op.cit., p. 11.

[95] J.J. Pettman, op.cit., p. 214.

[96] P. Rosenau, Postmodernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads and Intrusions (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992) p. 7.

We must therefore ask what is new in feminist analyses? The new resources come from the focus on women's experiences: "there is no such thing as a [social] problem without a person (or groups of them) who have this problem: a problem is always a problem for someone or other".[97] Apart from the obvious inclusion of women that made an individual approach a necessity, Feminism claims to be an inclusive theory, which accepts and contains a multitude of diverse ideas and differences. This fragmentation undoubtedly can give more precise insights in localised, precise situations. Nevertheless the content of Feminism is changing and short-term in orientation. It appears more like a form of critical endeavour, rather than a fully-fledged model of analysis offering exits and /or solutions.

Confusion of gender and women: Gender bias in western political and philosophical tradition is unquestionable, although gender appears irrelevant in theorising. Positivist philosophy and political theory have employed abstract images to teach us more about the world in general. The designation women in itself is an impediment; since it is really about gender: "the first obstacle is the term women. The real target is gender: not the anatomical difference between the female and the male sex but the complicated aspect of social being known as gender".[98]

In feminist readings man is variously defined as "patriarchalist, misogynistic, dominatory, materialistic, competitive, and violent".[99] Yet the human being in the political discourse seems to be neither masculine nor feminine. Grant & Newland define "a feminist study is a study whose objective is to explain the situation of women".[100] But according to Carver "it may be that theorisations of men should play a greater role in feminist theory to counter the argument that Feminism - and the concept of 'woman' - are both constructed against an undertheorised and apparently monolithic concept of 'man'".[101] He contends that an anti-essentialist and antireductionist methodology, such as some feminists apply to

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[97] S. Harding (ed.), Feminism & Methodology (Bloomington, Indiana and Milton Keynes: Indiana University Press, Open University Press, 1987) p. 6.

[98] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 8.

[99] T. Carver, "'Public Man' and the Critique of Masculinities," Political Theory (Vol. 24, Nr. 4, November 1996) p. 676.

[100] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 21.

[101] T. Carver, op.cit., p. 680.

women when they are attentive to 'differences' within the category 'woman', could just as well

apply to men. Carver regrets and criticises that 'public man' ...

> "... is both male and degendered. 'He' has a 'masculine body' and 'is inherently male'. Maleness here is theorised negatively as unable to be pregnant and to give birth, and as not displaying other female bodily characteristics. Moreover, masculinity is said more positively to encompass a psychology of competitive self-interest in material things, rather than a focus on nurturing and emotion. But this 'subject' is also correctly, but paradoxically, identified as degendered and neutered. In political theory the subject is presented as unsexed as sex is generally backgrounded as irrelevant, or when it is made relevant, it is clearly a subordinated element in the conception of human identity informing the 'human subject'. The 'abstract individual' appears degendered because it is in the 'public' realm. This realm is defined in opposition to the 'private' precisely through a particular kind of abstraction, an abstraction away from sexual activity and reproductive attributes altogether".[102]

This also indicates the lack of feminist literatures in International Relations. Besides the

consignment of sexuality, reproduction, childcare, and domestic labour into the sphere of

'private woman' there is another result: male sexualities and reproductive capacities are

minimised, the male role in childcare and domestic labour is neglected. Moreover, some men

are also subjugated, e.g. gay men are oppressed by the dominant heterosexist masculinities.

"Theorisations of gay sexualities are beginning to trace the political subordination that gay

men experience in relation to dominant heterosexist masculinities".[103]

"Politics is still a male preserve":[104] not only is most of the world's and specifically the

western political leadership male, but women seem historically absent from International

Relations.[105] Light & Halliday underline that specifically "the institutions of high politics -

ministries of defence and foreign affairs are male-dominated preserves".[106] Created in the

aftermath of WW I with the objective to analyse war and its reasons and to seek ways to

avoid war and maintain peace, security issues have always been at the very centre of

International Relations. But international security policy is frequently described as "a man's

world, a world of power and conflict in which warfare is a privileged activity, and from which

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[102] Ibid., p. 678.
[103] Ibid., p. 680.
[104] F. Thébaud, op.cit., p. 5.
[105] S. Brown, "Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality" in Millennium (Vol. 17, Nr. 3, 1988) p. 462.
[106] Ibid.

women traditionally have been excluded".[107]   Therefore the definition of what constitutes

security for a state does not necessarily reflect the concerns of all the state's population.[108]

Feminism then tries to ask what would or could be if women were the 'leaders'? And whether

the concept of the female gender role does offer insight into ways to reduce the tensions of

the security dilemma?[109]

But not only is this absence of women found in the world of policy-making, the same

problem seems to have arisen within academia. International Relations is a recent discipline

and in many places like the UK and the USA women have had the vote long before most

universities have introduced faculties teaching International Relations. It appears therefore

quite inexplicable how women's issues and questions about gender have been so steadily

omitted. Now, more women research and publish within International Relations, thus gender-

awareness has increased. Pettman puts it this way: "we cannot make sense of the world

without gendering the account, without taking women's views and experiences of the world

seriously and applying a feminist lens to International Relations and the world".[110] One of the

reasons for this omission may be that most of the prevalent paradigms in International

Relations theory were drawn from earlier works but constructed during this century.[111] This

return to the past, to history, not only gave International Relations its social scientific stance

of truth, but at the same time shows the fear of its theorists to explore new, untouched

territory (the present and future) and the apprehension of the scientific community to

implement new methods. According to Grant & Newland one of the major sources of gender

bias in International Relations theory is the emphasis on males as citizens and political

actors. Relying on this being so and exclusively so, International Relations theory has

developed with practically no means to review gender as a political force.[112] These "gender

biases not only demonstrate a weakness in current theory but an opportunity for new

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[107] J. A. Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation", Millennium (Vol. 17, Nr. 3, 1988) p. 429.

[108] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit. p. 16.

[109] C. Gilligan, In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982) - Gilligan's Playground Activity Study: while boys tend to continue competitive games to the point of conflict, girls often choose games that do not depend on another player's loss.

[110] J.J. Pettman, op.cit., p. 213.

[111] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 23.

[112] Ibid., p. 9.

theoretical work".[113] International Relations theory with Realism as its main paradigm has also not been able to make progress in gender issues because it has not been too concerned with the individual in society, preferring to define states and/or organisations as political players and higher moral entities. Pettman holds that "feminists attempt to expose the certainties and absences of International Relations' masculinist discourse, and of a dangerously masculinist world".[114] This quote can be interpreted in a twofold way: the pro-feminist interpretation welcomes the event that within the International Relations community consciousness has finally been raised towards the issues of women and gender; the anti-feminist version maintains that International Relations does represent the real, masculinist world and is therefore not entirely dismissible. This argument of women's practical absence from the political arena links with a more philosophical problem:

The separation and isolation of private and public domains. As we have discussed in the first chapter some feminist theorists see this as the primary issue leading to and permanently reinforcing patriarchy.[115] This contention however, goes much further than the equation male:female = public:private = culture:nature. The dichotomy goes back to the very roots of western philosophy and indicates the dualistic nature of western political thought. "We in the West are the heirs of a tradition that assumes an affinity between women and peace, between men and war...".[116] In this line of thought Elshtain examines the traditional dichotomy whereby women are seen as the life givers, men as the life takers. She detects similarities in the structure of male war experience and female maternal experience and underlines the importance to go beyond the discourse of war and peace and challenge the 'Just Warrior/Beautiful Soul' formulation.

In fact Elshtain takes on a very different stance from Sylvester. Although firmly within the postmodern line of thought she deplores the current tendency that "high academic International Relations is hooked into the interstate system".[117] She also stresses the

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[113] Ibid., p. 25.
[114] J.J. Pettman, op.cit., p. 214.
[115] S. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in M. Rosaldo, L. Lamphere (eds.) Women, Culture and Society (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974) p. 72.
[116] J.B. Elshtain, Women and War with a new Epilogue (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995) p. xiv.
[117] J.B. Elshtain, "Act V: Brining It All Back Home Again" in J.N. Rosenau (ed.), Global Voices: Dialogues in

importance of the individual: "Surprisingly many social scientists seem to forget that their subjects are neither automata, nor particles of matter, nor faceless collections of medians and averages labelled 'voters', 'non-voters', 'apathetic masses', or 'working class authoritarians'".[118] But her thought is more complex. She denies the capacity of social sciences to act as anything more than analyses of situations, therefore lagging behind events, rather than predicting them. "... not being able to presume continuity in the affairs of men and women, aware of the fragility of human events and our shared vulnerability in light of current arsenals of potential force, we cannot predict. For prediction presumes regularity and requires presumptions along the lines, 'if x, then y'".[119] After systematisation, she claims, empathy does not naturally ensue: "even if over-ambitious systematisation were out, the alternative would not be a collapse into empathy - you know, some thoroughgoing identification with 'oppressed people everywhere', not only or simply because this attitude easily becomes rather patronising but because it does not permit the necessary critical distance and analytic acuity".[120]

In her writing Elshtain reworks major discourses of International Relations: war and peace, nationalism and patriotism as well as power. Within these she seeks to place women, Feminisms and their claims. In her analyses of war and peace she re-states the western tradition to naturally associate women more with peace and men more with war: "We in the west are the heirs of a tradition that assumes an affinity between women and peace, between men and war ...",[121] stating that women in western culture served as "beautiful souls".[122] But she goes on to prove that peace is ontologically suspect since its mere existence depends on war. It is, as she puts it, a constructed discourse:

> "Peace is an ontologically suspicious concept, as troubling in its own way as war. War's historic opponents - those who want peace - are inside a frame with war. These two, peace and war, help structure western civil society's view of itself, with protests against war couched in terms that mirror that which they oppose: peace to war; anti-bellicist femininity to bellicose masculinity; harmony to disorder; homogeneity to heteronymy; and so on. Peace cannot exist without

[118] International Relations (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993) p. 99.
[119] J.B. Elshtain, The Family in Political Thought (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980) p. 288.
[120] J.B. Elshtain, Meditations on Modern Political Thought (London: Praeger Publishers, 1986) p. 115.
[121] J.B. Elshtain in J.N. Rosenau, op.cit., (1993) p. 106.
[122] J.B. Elshtain, op.cit. (1995) p. 4.
[122] Ibid.

war, and both are problematic notions, obsolete in an era of nuclear weaponry ... War as it has been historically constituted is an artefact of the grand narrative ... just as peace, emerging as the antinomy of war, got similarly constructed".[123]

But the end of war does not necessarily lead to the state of bliss and utter harmony of peace, which often promises to be more than it can deliver.[124]

Elshtain's examination of war leads into the examination of nationalism, citizenship and patriotism. In her eyes there is a patriotism, expressed through the figure of the 'chastened patriot' which is positive since it accepts plural approaches. "The idea of the nation can be, I think, deeply 'non-aggressive'; a plea for 'cultural self-determination' can not only be comfortable with the possibility of coexistence, but even insistent upon it. The 'plurality of cultures is irreducible', and that plurality is best recognised in and through institutions that create and protect independence".[125]

In the same spirit she condemns the tendency of many postmodernists, -structuralists to criticise universalism at the same time as institutions of power for the protection of the individual: "... you can't have it both ways. You can't condemn universal categories, concepts, and views on human beings and the like and then go on to trash the concepts and institutional arrangements necessary to protect particular identities".[126] For Elshtain power is not a great, unmovable, and basic concept of International Relations, much rather she asks what if power limits itself through institutions which try to curb its excesses and becomes more and more powerless ending to be a compulsion to react rather than an expression of domination.[127] Elshtain is unsure whether women are to be seen as powerful or powerless and whether feminists have decided on whether to fight or to join men. She sees the process of devirilising discourse not in favour of feminisation but of politicisation:

"Open to foreignness and differences from a mood that embraces less purity, hence sees less danger in others; that can practice 'live and let live' - that is the intimation to which these reflections on women and war lead. Is it possible for human beings to accept life as a risk-taking adventure filled with uncertainty? Certitudes invite the arrogance of nationalistic excess and structure solemn,

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[123] Ibid., p. 253.
[124] Ibid., p. 254.
[125] J.B. Elshtain in J.N. Rosenau, op.cit., (1993) p. 114.
[126] Ibid., p. 113.
[127] J.B. Elshtain, Power Trips and Other Journeys: Essays in Feminism as Civic Discourse, (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990) p. 143.

brittle identities - the tough male warrior; the pure, pacific woman - that not only keep others out, and construe them as enemies, but that preclude any inner dialogue with one's own others".[128]

As we shall discuss more in detail in chapter 3 this is very different from Sylvester, since Elshtain does not only criticise the impossibility to theorise within a maximally fragmented discipline of International Relations, she also argues in favour of embracing one's homeplace, since this forms identity while opening up to plurality through her discourse of citizenship and the 'chastened patriot'.

Pettman argues that gender relations are constructed as power relations through dichotomies within which women and the feminine are inferiorised, and that women are relegated away from state and political power in ways that mark them as transgressing public/male space, therefore women's bodies are used to mark the boundaries of belonging.[129] In the west conceptual dichotomies such as public/private, have been used to describe male/female differences by both feminists and non-feminists alike. These characteristics are stereotypical and fixed and consequently cannot represent real people in real situations: "masculinity and femininity are socially constructed categories that vary in time and place, rather than biological determinants".[130] Among feminists there is no agreement whether the male/female divide is down to biological or social causes, but there is no question about their agreement on the question about the very existence of this divide. Grant & Newland see both (social and biological reasons) at the root of the problem:

> "... from the theoretical perspective two sets of social relations were established, with gender as their most important divider: female private roles and male public relations. The process of distinction began at family level between the two sexes, but at the political level the distinction was one of gender, as the gendered role of the female in the private sphere is a social construction, not a natural one".[131]

P. Windsor points out that the domestic/public distinction dangerously implies "that private and domestic morality is different in kind from, and works at a level inferior to, that of

[128] J.B. Elshtain, op.cit., (1995) pp. 257-8.
[129] J.J. Pettman, op.cit., p. 213.
[130] J.A. Tickner, op.cit., p. 431.
[131] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 12.

public choice".[132] In other words the public/private split made it possible for the state to adopt a kind of morality that is different from the moral requirements of relations among individuals; this being one of Realism's most fundamental assumptions. Tickner distrusts this assumption by questioning the legitimacy of resistance. "Public resistance is often seen as legal, as the state has to fight for his (indirectly for its citizens') rights in an immoral anarchic world to keep its/their interests; as the state is acting in a sphere of higher morality, while private resistance may and will be punished if opposing the internal and moral laws of the nation-state".[133]

The separation of women from public reality has led to suspicion about the very understanding of history and philosophy used in International Relations theory with two consequences: (1) criticism of the concept of state, (2) question of the ability of western tradition to give an accurate picture of human relations.[134] The latter point has been made clear by Elshtain, criticising that western culture has separated humankind into two separate groups, nurturing, private women; and bellicose, public men. The concept of state being the basis for International Relations analysis denies women access to the public sphere since its apparent gender neutrality keeps the status-quo and therefore by exclusion of the individual, women in particular are excluded.

Not only International Relations' classical paradigms such as Realism or Pluralism are challenged by feminist scholars, even the postmodern and critical theories are being accused to omit women and gender questions widely: "Perhaps the problem that now plagues critical theory began with Marx's view of gender. He saw reproduction as a natural and ahistorical phenomenon. ... reproduction as carried out by women had little to do with the things that most concerned Marx - the evolution of consciousness in human societies and, ultimately, the impending triumph of class consciousness in resistance to capitalism".[135] The central issue is that class is economically categorised and hence completely detached from gender questions. Indeed it seems difficult to bring up gender issues in International

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[132] P. Windsor, "Women and International Relations: What's the Problem" in Millennium (Vol. 17, Nr. 3, 1988).
[133] J.A. Tickner, op.cit., p. 430.
[134] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 14.
[135] Ibid., p. 19.

Relations as long as the discipline is caught in the categorical division of the domestic and the international.

On the other hand Engels' view was more positive. He traced the enforced subordination of women back to the origins of private property in ancient times. From about 5000 BC humankind began to produce more than the tribe needed for survival and reproduction and this surplus food could now support a minority-class of non-working rulers - who conquered more slaves to produce more wealth. Women were exchanged for precious goods, treaties and land transactions. A ruling class husband owned his wife - as he owned his female slaves - not only by his power of life and death over her, but through his exclusive control over her fertility. The veiling and seclusion of women, the cult of virginity and the death penalty for women's adultery (not for men's) are all evidence of men's control over women's life, freedom of movement, sexuality and death. Some of the anthropological data Engels used has been disproved now, but his insights into the links of the economic structure of a society and the family forms it adopts are still fascinating.

> "In the old, communistic household, which embraced numerous couples and their children, the administration of the household was just as much a public, socially necessary industry as the procurement of food. With the development of the modern individual family, the administration of the household lost its public character. It became a private service and the wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production".[136]

Women's inactivity and feminist theory failed to theorise about International Relations. "It must also be said that feminists were slow to engage within International Relations. Primarily concerned with women's oppression, they tended to seek the cause and the remedies in inter-personal relations and in domestic society and they paid little attention to the international system". Feminist analysis "tended to focus on the internal sphere".[137] Even some feminists admit that to date only a minor share of feminist writings have focused on the international contex.[138] But some, such as Brown, contest that feminist scholarship accepts the assertion of women's inactivity indicating "the involvement of women in activity

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[136] F. Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1978) p. 78.
[137] M. Light, F. Halliday, op.cit., pp. 45-6.
[138] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 24.

relevant to International Relations is not a new phenomenon".[139] This hints that the identification of the limits of International Relations' capacity to theorise about the International Relations of gender inequality has become the central locus of attention.[140]

Exclusion of Critical Theory. Critical theorists have abandoned reason as a tool man cannot use effectively.[141] "Although reason originated in the struggle to come to terms with nature, it turned against 'the thinking subject'. The extension of enlightenment in practice led to the decline of critical thought".[142] Marcuse argues that Comte's philosophy implies "educating men to take a positive attitude towards the prevailing state of affairs. Positive philosophy was going to affirm the existing order against those who asserted the need negating it".[143] Postmodern feminists argue that reason and the scientific model of reason being based upon pure facts is a masculine concept. Critical Theory especially criticised the concept of state, but gender issues have not been widely considered.[144] But Feminism is not an easy ally to critical theory since critical international theory (R. Cox, A. Linklater) seeks to marginalise practice while it is central within Feminism.[145]

Enlightenment (objectivity, science, empiricist epistemology) seems to stand in stark opposition to the new claims of critical theory that all facts are value-ridden and scientism as well as empirical epistemology are unable to propose concept of any truth-value. It is to the Athenian state that the first victory of rationality and social organisation can be traced back. The Greek state is said to stand as a theoretical model for western states, however, the rise of the 'polis' also promoted a concept of citizenship that has consigned women to the private sphere of domestic existence. This creation of the state depicts the shift from societies based on kinship to patriarchal dominance. Defining women's labour as inferior, the state was able to concentrate its means and could thereby consolidate its economic power. As V. Spike

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[139] S. Brown, op.cit., p. 464.
[140] Ibid., pp. 464-5.
[141] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 24.
[142] M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York, Herder & Herder, 1972, transl. by J. Cummings) p. 12.
[143] H. Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941) p. 327.
[144] R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 17.
[145] B. Maiguashca, M. Johnson, "Theory and Practice: Critical Theory, Feminism and International Relations", Millennium Conference, LSE, 18.10.1996.

Peterson argues: "The formation of the state depended on a sexual division of labour to establish and reinforce economic and political structures".[146] The state then symbolised an entity, subject to no higher authority, and could only be subjugated by another state. Consequently there were no prescribed constraints between states, only anarchy. This is still true for most theories of mainstream International Relations.

"The Enlightenment's fundamental character is contained in the concept of nature to which most of the enlightenment thinkers adhered. The concept suggests a 'radical disjuncture between subjectivity and nature' ... Nature is the 'sphere of pure objects'. Since consciousness and purposeful activity are attributes of humans and/or God, the use to which nature will be put depends upon human decision and/or divine bequest".[147] Positivism can be seen as a "resignation to the pregiven".[148] The goal of Positivism is to construct an objective, empirical and systematic foundation for knowledge, which is science. But according to Husserl science is not neutral as it "embodies the particular ends and values which aid the enhancement of practical interests".[149] A positivist approach cannot come to terms with competing frames of meaning as it relies on dichotomies or antagonisms to build scientific theory in order to represent the real situation or truth.

"There is no ultimate criterion of truth. Truth is whatever is imposed as 'truth': it expresses 'will to power'...".[150] According to Habermas both, mythology and enlightenment, find their roots in the same basic needs: survival, self-preservation and fear (Angst), both therefore contain value-judgements said non-scientific by positivist enlightenment rules. Criticising Foucault, Habermas states that:

> "The historical analysis of this rancorous will to knowledge [intervening in the constitution of scientific discourse and explaining why scientifically prepared knowledge of man can directly congeal into disciplinary violence in the form of therapies, expert opinions, social technologies, curricula, tests, research reports, data banks, proposals for reform, etc.] reveals that all knowledge rests upon

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[146] V. Spike Peterson, "Sex and the Sovereign State: What's at Stake in Taking Feminism Seriously?" unpublished manuscript quoted in R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.), op.cit., p. 12.

[147] D. Held, Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), p. 152.

[148] Ibid., p. 162.

[149] Ibid., p. 166.

[150] Ibid., p. 156.

injustice (that there is no right, even in the act of knowing, to truth or foundation to truth. Thus, the attempt - under the uncompromising, objectifying gaze of an analyst who comes from afar and confronts his object without any native understanding whatsoever - to explain discourse and power formations only on their own terms, turns into its opposite".[151]

Enlightenment seems to be Janus-faced containing at once: "the universal movement of sovereign spirit ... and a 'nihilistic' anti-life force".[152]

Necessity for generalisations. "Universalisations are invariably supported with apposite illustration, it follows that they do not, as they sometimes pretend, actually aim to cover all times and circumstances anyway".[153] We cannot imagine scientific theorising that does not, at some point and in some respect generalise to build a model that is valid for more than an individual, partial situation. Maclean sees it as

"the reduction of the complex whole of International Relations to one abstracted activity, ... politics, and consequently to an almost complete dependence upon the concepts of that area of study ... [This] of course may be evaluated as perfectly 'natural', in that International Relations developed out of politics and political theory, but this would be to miss the point. Such an evaluation is really a way of giving reasons for the dominant conception of a discipline - reasons which are widely accepted".[154]

The question hence is whether categorisation and engendering are essentialist. Pettman advances that "gender relations are constructed as power relations through dichotomies within which women and the feminine are inferiorised. (Elite) men are associated with mind and reason; women are associated with body and emotion".[155] In brief, engendering means categorising and therefore comparing. The result from all of the above-mentioned issues is a differentiation that separates men and women into two basic, antagonistic categories and consequently takes on the essentialist stance that men and women are fundamentally different, not only in their sex and physical appearance but, and as a logical consequence, also in their behaviour and socialisation. Here, gender and sex are mixed and melted together. Sylvester and many of the current feminists try to separate constructed identity and

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[151] J. Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (London: Polity Press, 1987) p. 278.
[152] Ibid., p. 156.
[153] T. Carver, op.cit., p. 676.
[154] J.S. Maclean, "Political Theory, International Theory and Problems of Ideology" in Millennium (Vol. 6, Nr. 2, 1981) pp. 109-110.
[155] J.J. Pettman, op.cit., p. 213.

physical appearance and therefore deny the consequential logic of different sex equalling different identities, rights and roles.

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3. Christine Sylvester's Contributions to Feminism and International Relations:

a) Sylvester's Intellectual History

Looking at her major publications until 1996 there are two main areas Sylvester is concerned with: Zimbabwe and Feminism. However, these two themes are never entirely separated; knowing Sylvester's aspiration for an inclusive International Relations that does not marginalize individuals from its theorising. This becomes clear when in her article on the 1990 election in Zimbabwe she specifically points out the direct and indirect consequences of the election on women: [156]

> "To summarise the manifesting parties, Z.A.N.U. P.F. alternates a virulent commitment to destroy masculine social enemies 'outside' the noble party project with images of calm mother-loved 'inside' families enjoying a wealth of state-provided services". [157]

The same inclusion goes for her book on Zimbabwe where apart from constant reminders on women/gender issues she devotes a sub-chapter on gender questions (pages 143 - 152). [158] Therein she defines gender to include not only the 'men-women' differentiation but also race, culture, environment (rural or urban) analysing western as well as local theorising.

> "The overall picture is of a state willing to make fundamental legal commitments to women's advancement in public and private spheres on an incremental basis. What westerners understand as sexism, however, is rampant in the country, in part because social attitudes lag behind changes in the law and because the law itself addresses only the most flagrant and visible discriminations. Even the law's efficacy is hindered by its perceived insensitivity to traditional beliefs. As a result, the identities of many women hyphenate traditional and modern liberal dictates about women's 'proper' roles in society. This means that women feel alternately empowered by the attention called to their needs and reticent about embracing new opportunities for fear that the 'privileges' will bear only a heavy cost in male disapproval". [159]

Sylvester's work on Feminism, on the other hand, includes many references back to Zimbabwe, obviously because her fieldwork in Zimbabwe and her intensive study of that area have given her expertise. In the book she edited together with Dennis C. Pirages [160] she

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[156] C. Sylvester, "Unities and Disunities in Zimbabwe's 1990 Election", Journal of Modern African Studies (Vol. 28, Nr. 3, September 1990) pp. 375-400.
[157] Ibid., p. 394.
[158] C. Sylvester, Zimbabwe: The Terrain of Contradictory Development (London: Dartmouth Publishers, 1991).
[159] Ibid., p. 153.
[160] C. Sylvester, "The Emperor's Theories and Transformations: Looking at the Field Through Feminist Lenses" in

investigates a theoretical discourse on the discipline of International Relations seen through 'feminist lenses'. Deploring the restricted 'conventional wisdom' that forms the basis of International Relations she goes on to formulate a thesis that there are gender tensions in the fields of International Relations, political economy and the larger international system. Her method is one of "juxtaposition of mainstream theories of International Relations and political economy ... with feminist critiques of scientific research, social structure and theory itself".[161] She notes that gender issues are invisible in mainstream International Relations theories and that it is the goal of Feminism to analyse the reasons for this invisibility.

Like in most of her later publications she discusses different Feminisms (which shall be discussed in the second part of this chapter). Based on S. Harding's discussion of three 'feminist schools'[162] she analyses feminist empiricism (where 'good science' which is no longer gender biased provides a valuable way of knowing), standpoint (opposing scientific culture as denigrating women's specific activities and therefore acquired standpoints can script women's lives in International Relations) and postmodernism (which questions fixed concepts of women and science), underlining that none of them pose a direct and complete challenge to reigning understandings of International Relations and political economy but that they identify the "deceptions, distortions and systematic denials in theories which implicitly or explicitly assume that women and their activities are either beside the point or are subsumed under men's activities".[163] She points at the differences between the feminist schools and mainstream theories within the discipline of International Relations outlining their different foci, frameworks, and levels of analysis. At the same time she denies that they have talked past one another.

> "Although feminist theorists will disagree on the questions we should introduce to the study of International Relations and political economy and methods to improve the field, few will disagree with the proposition that there are many relations masked within official International Relations. This is a clue to the transformation puzzle that no other tradition of analysis offers. How a gender dethroning can occur, how it would interact with other changes, are issues mainstream theorists might explore in dawning recognition that their theories are more similar than different in the issues they evade"[164].

D.C. Pirages, C. Sylvester (eds.), <u>Transformations in the Global Political Economy</u>, (London: Macmillan, 1990) pp. 230-253.
[161] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 231.
[162] S. Harding (ed.), <u>Feminism & Methodology</u> (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987).
[163] D.C. Pirages, C. Sylvester (eds.), <u>op.cit.</u>, pp. 235-6.
[164] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 249.

Sylvester therefore underlines that "there are points of nexus which could bring accuracy through inclusiveness to theories of International Relations and political economy".[165]

Her article in 'Gendered States'[166] again gives an overview over different Feminisms, but this time from the perspective of analysing the grounds for the invisibility of women, where and how the notions of obligation and autonomy have originated and developed from. She studies how to reveal women's concrete struggles, revealing sites of women in International Relations such as the wives of diplomats, clerical personnel in international organisations or women soldiers. This, she argues, demands a re-definition of the purpose and scope of International Relations in the first place, and states: "the proper object and purpose of the study of International Relations is the identification and explanation of social stratification and of inequality as structured at the level of global relations".[167] There Sylvester makes reference to what she later presents as the method of empathetic cooperation, where people can meet in "conversation that starts from the assumption that 'people will really listen to what others say, will attempt to incorporate those views into themselves, and indeed become somewhat transformed by that incorporation'".[168] This emphasis of structures fits in with the surreal 'women', the non-category. She nevertheless cannot avoid falling back onto real women from time to time, since she simultaneously takes on an individualistic stance. She warns of falling into the trap of thinking in terms of absolute success or failure, advancing the mobile concept 'women' that gives 'women's' views of the picture without shattering the realist window, for it gives a partial view as Feminisms do, and, put together, they may stand for a more open International Relations.[169]

In an article in 'Alternatives'[170] Sylvester discusses the pros and cons of three feminist schools (empiricist, standpoint and postmodern) staging a brief imaginary feminist

[165] Ibid., p. 248.

[166] C. Sylvester, "Feminists and Realists View Autonomy and Obligation in International Relations" in V. Spike Peterson (ed.), Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992).

[167] S. Brown, "Feminisms, International Theory, and International Relations of Inequality" Millennium (Vol. 17, Nr. 3, 1988) p. 461.

[168] N. Hirschmann, "Rethinking Obligation", in V. Spike Peterson, op.cit. p. 168.

[169] V. Spike Peterson, op.cit. p. 172.

[170] C. Sylvester, "Riding the Hyphens of Feminism, Peace, and Place in Four- (or more) Part Cacophony"

discussion around the concepts of women/'women'.[171] The argument is whether women can exist as analytical basis for theorisation or whether this leads to distortions found in current theorising. She opts for an imaginary notion of 'women' with multiple, mobile identities. The notion of imaginary is not easily theorised and Sylvester only seems to offer negative theorisation. She establishes that "'men' and 'women' usually stay in their designated places and engage in behaviours presumed by the theories",[172] in fact they tend to stay in their traditionally assigned homeplaces and therefore become real men and women. Her imaginary notion of 'women' appears socialised and de-sexed at the same time: it represents the stories about women. "I am concerned with the theoretical moves that have evacuated the people and traits of 'women' from IR theory, and seek to offer a feminist method that can disturb the train of gender stories that touts a certain homesteading experience at the expense of others. I argue that the early debates in the field, and the pre-theoretical discussions about International Relations that preceded them, helped to establish IR as a 'man's' realm of politics".[173]

'Global Voices'[174] stages a piece in 5 acts on dialogues in International Relations. Sylvester's contribution discusses the advantages and disadvantages of several feminist and traditional theories and methods ending once again in the proposal of 'women' as mobile identities and empathetic cooperation as a method of negotiation to make incommensurables commensurable.[175]

Empathetic cooperation is the main theme in her article in 'Millennium'[176] and she defines it as

> " ... a process of positional slippage that occurs when one listens seriously to the concerns, fears, and agendas of those one is unaccustomed to heeding when building social theory, taking on board, rather than dismissing, finding in the concerns of others borderlands of one's own concerns and fears".[177]

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[171] Alternatives (Vol. 18, Nr 1, Special Issue: Feminists Write International Relations, Winter 1993).
Ibid., p. 115.
[172] C. Sylvester, Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p. 4.
[173] Ibid., p. 5.
[174] J.N. Rosenau (ed.), Global Voices: Dialogues in International Relations (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993).
[175] C. Sylvester, "Reconstituting a Gender Eclipsed Dialogue", in J.N. Rosenau (ed.), op.cit., pp. 27-53.
[176] C. Sylvester, "Empathetic Cooperation: A Feminist Method for IR" Millennium (Vol. 23, Nr. 2, 1994).
[177] Ibid., p. 317.

Giving three examples of empathetic cooperation, she pursues to discuss feminist standpoint and feminist postmodernism as she takes elements from both: standpoint because of the empirical focus on women (despite her introduction of 'women') and the emphasis on empathy and cooperation traditionally associated with women; postmodernism because of the mobile identities of 'women'. She ends pointing out "the goal is not to persuade one side to embrace the other, but to facilitate a process that has each side appreciating that the claims and accounts others present are important to a field of social knowledge".[178] This may sound convincing it nevertheless seems to borrow elements from almost all feminist schools and the end-product becomes a complex mix which offers no holistic alternative or exits but is afloat with the mobility and variability of everything in time and space.

In 'Simultaneous Revolutions and Exits'[179] she factors in gender relations into the notions of revolutionary change using Zimbabwe as case study. Sylvester concludes "states tend to be intrusively gendered actors. That is, their intrusions, like those of revolutionary centres of force, have dissimilar consequences for men and women".[180] For example, Zimbabwe supported women's rights as long they supported the state, but as soon as this support was no longer needed, a backlash occurred and the state was no longer willing to stick its neck out too far for women.

In summary, Sylvester's key feminist analyses and arguments turn around an in-depth study of mainstream theorising in International Relations as well as in gender studies in order to link the two together. She does this by creating the imaginary notion of 'women' to start out on her epistemological project and proposes empathetic cooperation as a method to work through the problems of current theorising to get a fuller, more inclusive picture. Empathetic cooperation means "recognising that certain spaces have been marked out as homes for certain bodies, activities and talents and not for others, and it entails taking seriously the possibilities to homestead those turf-bound homes with the knowledges gleaned from infidels at the fences".[181] In other words, one's known homeplaces become uncertain, but not obsolete.

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[178] Ibid., p. 334.
[179] C. Sylvester, "Simultaneous Revolutions and Exits" in M.A. Tétreault, Women and Revolution in Africa, Asia, and the New World, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994) pp. 415-425.
[180] Ibid., p. 422.
[181] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 2.

b) Reasons for the Choice of Sylvester's Book, Analysis of Content and Methodology

Sylvester's 'Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era'[182] is the core theoretical text for this thesis. The choice is due to theoretical as well as analytical reasons. In its content the book looks to build a bridge between two seemingly incommensurable fields: Gender Studies and International Relations. As much as International Relations has resisted to integrate gender issues into its mainstream theorising (see chapter 2), as much have Gender Studies neglected to examine the international aspects of women's agency too; both rendering women invisible within the international sphere. To link the two together, therefore making them commensurable, is not only new, but as the content shows, important for the advancement and increased accuracy of both fields. In this spirit the book also represents one of the main targets of this thesis, namely enlarging the scope of study, getting a more accurate, and also less restricted view. Her book is a theoretical discussion written for International Relations theorists in the first place, but not easily accessible for non-academics and 'outsiders' to the field of International Relations: Sylvester "is very concerned to reach the International Relations academic community, especially the theorists".[183] The book represents not a cure, but a therapy, a trigger to re-consider the fixed identities and limitations of mainstream International Relations; pointing out that having many coexisting theories that have (re-)emerged with the third debate in International Relations is a sign of intellectual activity and the strive for more accuracy and openness within the discipline: "we must become comfortable with the idea that 'there is no 'sovereign' player' but only various contests among authority patterns".[184] This may not offer, as we have stated before, a full and inclusive new range of theorisation which over-simplifies the scope and intent of International Relations as a global analytical tool; it nevertheless offers a novel point of view, mainly tending towards the praxological, that seems to give justified criticism of mainstream theorising. The text does not offer yet another grand theory and solution, much rather it deconstructs and fragments elements of theory to perhaps give a new starting point.

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[182] Ibid.
[183] M. Zalewski, "The Women/'Women' Question in International Relations" Millennium (Vol. 23, Nr. 2, 1994) p. 419.
[184] Y. Ferguson, R. Mansbach, "Between Celebration and Despair: Constructive Suggestions for Future International Theory," International Studies Quarterly (Vol. 35, Nr. 4, 1991) p. 382 quoted in C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 159.

Setting out the premises Sylvester uses a metaphor to describe how International Relations and Feminism are still said to be incommensurable. The metaphor is that of a painting elephant-cow in a zoo. The elephant displays a strange behaviour for her kind by painting and suddenly her identity as 'elephant' hyphenates into those of 'aesthete' and 'artist', while the identities of her 'keepers' hyphenate into 'art-philosophers'. What Sylvester wants to express is that no identity can ever be static, fixed, and single-layered. Identities are multi-layered and in constant move, change and adapt to new situations and environments. These processes of hyphenation that "reconfigure 'known' subject statuses ... in ways that rather open up than fence in terrains of meaning, identity and place"[185] she calls homesteading. The method of these processes of homesteading is 'empathetic cooperation' as defined previously to define particular spaces that are 'homes' to some people or characteristics but not to others and therefore lead to a potential to homestead with new knowledge from those outside of these homes.[186]

Sylvester criticises mainstream International Relations as "the proper homestead or place for people called men".[187] She introduces the notions of 'men' and 'women' because she thinks of them being socially constructed subject statuses rather than natural categories of people. For Sylvester the early stages of pre-disciplinary International Relations and the early debates helped establish International Relations as a 'man's' domain, and even after 30 years of feminist theorising she accuses the third debate of being still silent about 'women' and gender. Different Feminisms are introduced and Sylvester gives a brief autobiographical note, providing background for the book, the knower including her/himself, therefore aware of the bias emerging from her own experiences and setting.

Starting from an epistemological concern "to consider what knowledge is, what makes it possible and how to get it"[188] she is sceptical about using the ontological category of women as the basis of analysis. She prefers to speak of 'women', a constantly changing category, a 'mobile subjectivity'.[189] But in fact epistemologically, basing herself on notions of

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[185] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 2.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid., p. 4.
[188] S. Harding, Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking From Women's Lives (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) p. 308.
[189] M. Zalewski, op.cit., p. 421.

postmodernism as well as, what we have seen before, on empiricism she cannot detach her main focus from women. Her ways of knowing therefore become somewhat blurred by the double standard in the 'women'-women concept. The epistemology is therefore based upon her own method of empathetic cooperation, which admits all past elements (empiricism, standpoint and postmodernism) to mix in, add up and converse. Unfortunately she leaves us in a state of insecurity and does not propose how to acquire even partial security. Without this it becomes impossible to theorise - we are left at best at the level of discussion, at worst with traditional oppression of one group by another, one complex of subjectivities by another, due to misunderstanding or an unwillingness or inability to cooperate. Where will this leave us in an increasingly global and interdependent world? In a brief chapter she sketches first wave Feminism and then goes on to outline "the palette of feminist epistemologies and practices".[190]

Empiricism and Liberalism - the Assimilationist Feminisms:

As we have previously discussed, feminist empiricist epistemology does not challenge the foundations of modern science, but rather claims that by strict adherence to 'good science' gender blindness is not an issue: "Feminist empiricists argue that sexist and androcentric biases are eliminable by stricter adherence to the existing methodological norms of scientific inquiry".[191] According to Flax in many "cultures and discourses, men tend to be seen as free from or as not determined by gender relations",[192] therefore being able to give an objective, scientific discourse. On the other hand the old image of women as less rational beings often persists and as a consequence the conviction arises that academic texts by women are less objective, due to the sole fact that a woman wrote it. This means a take-over of control in modern science by men. Feminist empiricists argue that including women is not only more just, but also "that research incorporating feminist awareness is more reliable and supportable than research based on the experiences of one group of isolated people".[193] There is discussion around this issue of including the knower into the research said to be a stricter adherence to scientific method and leading to a more objective result by feminist empiricists, conventional scientists "counter that feminists merely introduce bias into their

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[190] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 30.
[191] S. Harding, "Conclusion: Epistemological Questions" in S. Harding (ed.), Feminism & Methodology, p. 182.
[192] J. Flax, "Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory" Signs (Vol. 12, Nr. 4, 1987) p. 629.
[193] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 32.

studies by politicising the identity of the investigator".[194] The problem with International Relations as a science is its striving for value-neutrality (the separation of fact and value being the very foundation of modern science where only pure facts are taken into consideration to achieve an objective analysis of the situation). Value-neutrality enabled International Relations to issue universal grand theories about the behaviour of its abstract agents: states, organisations and corporations. The microcosm of individual levels has not been included in the scope of International Relations at all or simply assumed "that 'micro-level' has to do with the political activities of people ... called the public"[195] equated with people called men. Sylvester argues that feminist empiricism has an ambiguous relation to science, on the one hand strengthening it "by reinforcing modern claims that science is the route to knowledge", on the other hand weakening it by introducing social practices and accusing scientific norms to be constructed to answer questions asked by men.[196] Feminist empiricism does not ask for complete transformation, but rather to compensate for the current shortcomings in the discipline, and, according to Sylvester, so does liberal feminist politics associated with empiricist epistemology.[197] "The desideratum of liberal feminists is to bring (real) women into sociality as individual agents with rights equal to those that individual white and privileged adult men enjoy on principle in liberal societies, and the method relies heavily on the type of rationality that fuels the politics of science".[198] Liberal feminists seek to rationally reveal inequalities due to race, class, and sex. Nevertheless there are, as Sylvester points out, problems with liberal feminist politics. One of its central features, the individual rights orientation, does not accommodate the liberal view of the liberal individual as "disembodied, egoistic, and isolated chooser who has few public interdependencies, outside of those voluntarily assumed, and few structural constraints inherited from past contracts".[199] It can overlook social changes (collapsing the rights of women into privilege for the few and exploitation of the many) - and differences among individuals, conflating class, race, cultures and gender all over again. "In short, just as feminist empiricists accept certain premises of science, even as they criticise other premises, liberal Feminism basically accepts liberalism in a state activist form and criticises its applications to women".[200] Therefore both, feminist

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[194] Ibid., p. 33.
[195] Ibid., p. 35.
[196] Ibid., p. 36.
[197] Ibid., p. 37.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid., p. 39.
[200] Ibid.

empiricism and liberal Feminism see the transformation through inclusiveness, disabling the old enterprise without radically changing its premises.

In summary Sylvester describes feminist empiricism: (1) to see rationality as a bias founded in the assumption that men are rational and women are not; (2) to argue that there is no such thing as a gender unitary society to be found in 'the' state system, 'the' world system, or 'the' interdependent system suspecting "that it is more common for women and men to occupy quite separate societies"[201] that only appear gender unitary. This underlines her choice of the notion of 'women' rather than a distinct category of women, separate and homogenous - (3) to reveal a functional bias in mainstream theorising asking whether relationships functional for men's societies are also functional for women's societies; (4) to be aware of impersonal actors that replace and institutionalise the individual. To her the feminist empiricist contribution is "to show that historical trends in the emerging international system were very likely misogynist as well as racist and classist".[202]

Standpoint(s) and Radical-Cultural Politics - Difference-Between-Women-and-Men Feminisms:

"Feminist standpoint is an epistemological achievement that entails working through the thorny issue of women having assigned ways of knowing that may be distorted by patriarchy".[203] Using the Hegelian 'master-slave' relationship as a metaphor.[204] Sylvester not only hints an opening up of the discipline and a move away from binary thinking and dichotomies, she also justifies the standpointers' claim that a women's approach is more sustainable. Feminist standpoint, Sylvester notes, reveals "the overarching analogy men-women with master-slave where the slave is a structural extension of the master's will, yet the master thinks the relationship is really co-determining, with slaves creating masters and masters simultaneously creating slaves. ... one must look from the perspective of the subordinate, not the master" to discover these dyads.[205] But even among feminist standpointers (who have an informed standpoint acquired through feminist struggles for

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[201] D.C. Pirages, C. Sylvester (eds.), op.cit., pp. 237-8.

[202] Ibid., p. 240.

[203] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 43 .

[204] Ibid., p. 46.

[205] D.C. Pirages, C. Sylvester (eds.), op.cit., p. 241.

respect that admit their special knowledges into the pool of epistemological bases) there is no absolute unity, differences focusing particularly around the issue of whether "standpoint epistemology can homogenise the diversity of women's experiences in the world and thereby corral differences into one proclaimed truth"[206] or whether "people who are not usually called women, and 'women' who reside far from our circle of knowledge and meaning must be considered along with people who are not initially sympathetic to Feminism or to the notion of socially located knowledge".[207] But in an environment of 'empathetic cooperation', Sylvester claims, these are not opposed positions as "one can maintain particularistic experiences and subjectivities while conversing together to find some new, tangential points of identity hyphenation that become ... powerful tools to homestead the stories told about and for people like us".[208] The contradiction arises here that on the one hand standpoint wants to preserve particularities calling to respect differences among women, while, on the other hand, looking for an original experience inclined to overlooking difference.[209] Standpoint "draws attention to the incompleteness and failure of objectivity in any project that purports to be generalisable while giving voice and agency only to a privileged few".[210] Sylvester later uses parts of feminist standpoint theorisation to establish her theories of homesteading using the method of empathetic cooperation.

In radical and cultural Feminism women explore their oppression and seek alliance with other oppressed groups (women, class, ethnicities etc.). In the 1970s it took a biologically essentialist turn by insisting on the difference between men and women and exploring what made women special. Mothering which translated into caring and peace loving was often at the centre of debate.[211] As a consequence the women's movement split up into several groups, many advancing that the standard of womanhood elevated in all the essentialist texts was white, heterosexual, and middle class. In the 1980s feminist standpoint took a less biologically determined direction, focusing more on cultural aspects, but reconceiving the old values of mothering and high morality.[212]

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[206] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 47.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] K.Ferguson, "Interpretation and Genealogy in Feminism" in Signs (Vol. 16, Nr. 2, 1991) p. 323.
[210] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 48.
[211] See S. Ruddick, "Pacifying the Forces: Drafting Women in the Interests of Peace" in Signs (Vol. 8, Nr. 3, 1983) and B. Brock-Utne, Educating for Peace: A Feminist Perspective (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985) quoted in C. Sylvester, Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era. op.cit.. p. 50.
[212] C. Sylvester, op.cit.. (1994) p. 51.

Liberal and radical standpoint Feminisms, even though based on the diverse premises of essentialism versus difference share more than meets the eye at first: they can both homogenise an abundance of different identities into one; they both assume that women's and men's identities exist preceding politics and environmental influences and therefore are ontologically prior; they both presuppose the category of women as real; and both provide the opportunity to project the view of the marginalized onto the world of dominant and oppressive standpoints.[213]

In the standpoint case, however, it is less a simple exercise of adding on women to International Relations, but rather a rewriting of International Relations' basic parameters to make 'ourstory' the starting point of research.

Postmodern Scepticism and Socialist Feminist Practice - The Difference Among 'Women' Feminisms:

Sylvester distinguishes between feminist postmodernism and postmodern Feminism, the latter being her epistemological approach. Both deconstruct gender, the first having a "posture of radical scepticism about 'the self, gender, knowledge, social relations, and culture understood by linear, teleological, hierarchical, holistic or binary ways of thinking and being'".[214] The second, postmodern Feminism, is an association of these sceptical components with principles of standpoint Feminism. The specific doubt about the existence of a category of woman, is the postmodern side to it. Yet the order of social dominance is not simply to be reversed (this would be an extreme standpoint application), because this would not break the pattern of dominance and subjugation. The standpoint trait of postmodern Feminism is its temporary acceptance of ontologically categorised identities on the way to their relaxation into hyphenated identities in a politics of empathetic cooperation.

Both Feminisms of the postmodern do not want to write yet another story of International Relations, but rather deconstruct existing modern theorising: "both Feminisms of the postmodern turn usefully question the tendency of modern social theory to paint over the

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[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid., p. 52.

diversity of lived experiences in the world with broad universalising brush strokes, thereby creating coherent and totalising images (supposedly) identifiable to anyone living anywhere".[215]

Using Elshtain's 'Women and War'[216] Sylvester shows the alliance of postmodernist (concerned with textual deconstruction) and standpoint (concerned with the public enhancement of women's experiences) approaches. When Elshtain equates the 'good soldier to the good mother'[217] and talks about exclusions "women are excluded from war talk; men from baby talk"[218] Sylvester takes up the arguments to argue that "there are shadowy places at the borderlands of seemingly incommensurable narrated stories that supposedly specify who we definitively are and what we must definitively do".[219] Evacuating these secure 'homesteads' of fixed identity unhinges the public/private divide and leads to the process of self-hyphenation or 'mobile subjectivities' that render possible empathetic cooperation. The question that arises here is how each of us defines her/himself. Isn't it just by mirroring, by comparison to a supposed other? This assumes at least some fixed layers of identity. This is not a direct contradiction to Sylvester's notions not only permitting women as analytical category (in addition to 'women'), but also, moreover, refusing the absolute take-over of empathetic cooperation as a new and better way for International Relations. It is the co-existence of different approaches that stands in the foreground in her approach.

Riley criticises multiple standpoints, being more than one thing at once, as something that "shreds women to bits"[220] yet it also allows the uncovering of the tangential points, the shadowlands or borders of different experiences. Splitting into categories is the privileged image of modern scientism. Harvey criticises Postmodernism's focus on deconstruction while underemphasizing conceptualising methods and people feel rather alienated,[221] unable to appreciate their supposed epistemic advantage (an example for this is found in Sylvester's

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[215] Ibid., p. 54.

[216] J.B. Elshtain, Women and War with a New Epilogue (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2nd edition, 1993).

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid. p. 221.

[219] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 56.

[220] D. Riley, Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1988) p. 114.

[221] D. Harvey The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change quoted in C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 60.

piece in Rosenau's 'Global Voices' when the Third World woman Tsitsi is not sure about the notion of 'women', rather identifying with women.)

Sylvester argues in favour of postmodern Feminism as it fulfils her purpose of multiple stories: "postmodern Feminism amalgamates ontology and epistemology in the face of long-standing rationalist and empiricist philosophical moves to keep being and knowing separate. The knower and known join and objective knowledge and identity, thereby, become disabled".[222] She goes on recognising that postmodernity has nihilistic tendencies that via the creation of the notion of 'women' women may be further annihilated. But she counters that the nihilistic dangers of postmodernism are not entirely applicable to postmodern Feminism as it "assumes a (probably ongoing) process of identity slippage that leads to simultaneous and changing homesteading strategies".[223]

Socialist Feminism seeks to find an answer to the oppression of real women at the fulcrum of capitalism and patriarchy. Patriarchy which indicates the alienation of men from the processes of foetal growth and childbirth and capitalism, lodged in the economy of most modern societies.[224] The two power systems institutionalised a multi-layered division of labour with 3 concurring points:[225] (1)childbirth (men controlling women's reproductive choices); (2) production of commodities for market exchange (higher valued than reproduction); (3) commodity production women and men performing different jobs and being remunerated differently.

Socialist Feminism takes a standpoint approach when it wants to establish guidelines for social action; at the same time it takes a postmodern turn arguing that men and women are socially constructed and is therefore leaving room for change.

Sylvester revisits International Relations' three debates with feminist arguments.

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[222] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 61.
[223] Ibid., p. 62.
[224] Ibid., pp. 63-4.
[225] Ibid., p. 64.

First Debate Revisited:

Born out of the First World War 1914-18, the first debate in International Relations was about the scope of the field with the underlying "fundamental disagreements about human nature, about the nature of good government, and about what we now think of as issues of agency versus structure".[226] It opposed realists (supposing that 'man' is fundamentally bad) and idealists ('man' supposed to be fundamentally good). "But in neither tradition was there a discussion of gender and human agency or of 'women'".[227] In this context Sylvester discusses the pros and cons of modernity showing the shift from an idealist tradition post WW I (supposing the benevolence of people and organisations) to a realist approach (based on national interest) as a consequence of WW II. Further on, Sylvester points to the gender absences in the first debate, noting that history is in effect his-story: "women lose out in historical recountings of foundational deeds in International Relations because their bodies do not fit the mould of realist statesmen or soldiers; nor, of course, do they carry rights of citizenship that would later give public authorial signatures as idealists. 'Women' have a problem that has only recently been named: heroics configure the state and such actions have been associated with 'men'".[228] In International Relations' pre-theoretical texts women have either not played an accountable role at all or they have been relegated to the private sphere outlining the dangers of women entering the political domain (see Machiavelli's chapter in the 'Discourses' on 'How States are Ruined on Account of Women'). This public/private divide was reborn into the International Relations discipline of the first debate. Enloe though pointed out that International Relations rests upon "certain kinds of allegedly private relationships - governments need more than secrecy and intelligence agencies; they need wives who are willing to provide their diplomatic husbands [statesmen] with unpaid services so those men can develop trusting relationships with other diplomatic husbands".[229] She criticises the caricatured women within first debate International Relations where "'men' are the voice of the species and 'women' have exaggerated private traits that are either grotesque versions of masculine virtue [e.g. the Amazons, realist men in drag] or are different and valued versions of humanity only if they are represented by 'men' as human

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[226] Ibid., p. 70.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid., p. 80.
[229] C. Enloe, Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Relations (London: Pandora, 1989) p. 196.

traits"[230] (e.g. the housewife and mother, relegated entirely to the private sphere, peaceful, without warring against men).

The 'assimilationist Feminisms' (as Sylvester calls liberal Feminism and feminist empiricism) "reveal the absence of women from texts of idealism and Realism".[231] Women should be integrated into the very processes that seem inequitable.[232] This relegation of women to the private realm can be viewed from a biological perspective distinguishing mothering, peacefulness and political struggle; but also from a psychoanalytical understanding of social contract liberalism agreeing there is an entirely detached site 'out there' for the power play between statesmen, completely separate from the private sphere. The problem women now face in International Relations is not only one of breaking down the walls of tradition and finding their places in the public arena, but also of defining what 'women' are, how and whether this 'we' can be clearly defined. Sylvester proposes empathetic cooperation to mark the tangential points of the various experiences of different women, to then hyphenate the identities to be able to be on both shores at the same time in order to cooperate. Feminism, in this view, is not a new universal theory, replacing and ameliorating former traditions, but a continual process of respectful negotiations in an environment of shifting identities that transcend fixed positions and give authority to all, while nobody can claim to have the ultimate truth.

Second Debate Revisited:

In International Relations' second debate traditionalists face scientists rehearsing the question whether there is more to International Relations than a purely scientific approach of International Relations, based upon quantitative measuring of structures that existed prior to human beings. Within this debate came the rise of Waltzian scientific Neorealism, a further step towards a scientism that excludes women from the public sphere: "his work [...] proffers a litany of 'men's' efforts".[233] Even though some neorealists acknowledge that states actually cooperate returning good for good and bad for bad, and that feminist analyses may be of use, he does not break with the traditional pattern of gendered assumptions. Keohane gives

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[230] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 84.
[231] Ibid., p. 87.
[232] A.M. Goetz, "Feminism and the Claim to Know: Contradictions in Feminist Approaches to Women in Development in R. Grant, K. Newland (eds.)" Gender and International Relations (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991) p. 135.
[233] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 113.

women rather a supportive role, with Feminism providing International Relations with "a network view, emphasising how institutions could promote lateral cooperation among organised entities, states, or otherwise".[234] Sylvester notes that International Relations' second debate overlaps with Feminisms second wave (debating the forces of inequality and political efforts for change) and third wave (where feminist empiricist fascination for science coincides with the scientific turn in International Relations).[235]

Third Debate Revisited:

International Relations' third debate is concerned with theory building and the underlying methodologies, as well as with the postmodern turn of the discipline. International Relations' scientism had difficulties in accounting for the sudden dramatic shifts in the international arena following the end of the Cold War: "this is our crisis: one puts faith in the assurances of modern progress and finds recurrence of the unexpected, the irrational, the taboo, rather than the triumph and transcendence of strategic reasoning"[236] (for example how to account for Gorbatchev's politics of friendly approach and the final breakdown of the Cold War?) The scientist camp resists these new developments holding on to its power (claiming for example that the Cold War was ended thanks to the US's firm policies towards the former Eastern bloc). Nevertheless more and more people become aware of the exclusionary character of current mainstream International Relations and dissident movements within the field are speaking up. Ashley and Walker argue that these dissidents are 'marginal instances' that "resist knowing in the sense celebrated in modern culture, where to 'know' is to construct a coherent representation that excludes contesting interpretations and controls meaning from the standpoint of a sovereign subject whose word is the origin of truth beyond doubt. In modern culture it is the male-marked figure of 'man'".[237] There is therefore a turn towards postmodernism from these dissident standings, an acceptance of multiple views and standpoints, a celebration of difference. Sylvester thus only offers fragmentary alternatives to scientism, but no viable exit or solution to the posed problematique.

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[234] R.O. Keohane, "International Relations Theory: Contributions of a Feminist Standpoint" in Millennium (Vol. 18, Nr. 2, 1989) p. 248.

[235] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 100.

[236] Ibid., p. 145.

[237] R. Ashley, R.B.J. Walker, "Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies" in International Studies Quarterly (Vol. 34, Nr. 3, 1990) p. 261.

Some of these dissident voices come from the feminist camps, which, for the first time in the brief history of the discipline of International Relations enter the field officially. Not all Feminisms though have the same arguments and challenges, and not all of them are postmodern, yet they find tangential points among themselves and with other dissident voices emphasising race, class, sexual preference, generation, culture etc.

Sylvester interprets Braidotti when she says "to be second wave need not mean that one has lost the race for progressive knowledge. ... Their movement politics in the 1970s empowered some women relative to the hyper-intellectual, hyper-epistemological third wave of the 1980s".[238] Sylvester argues in favour of Feminism with a postmodern turn, aware of its nihilistic danger and the fear of anarchy. Nevertheless her method of empathetic cooperation seems to lead her through the obstacles of fixed identities and power structures:

"... the empathetic cooperation I associate with postmodern Feminism joins the two in ways that do not simply rehearse old inclusions and exclusions or reinforce old readings. Empathy leads to listening to the excluded, listening to their sense of the good, knowing that they will present a fractured and heavily contested discourse because they have been simultaneously inside and outside a master narrative. Cooperation comes in rescripting agendas to reflect the subjectivities that have been etched into the identities of empathetic listeners".[239]

She distinguishes sympathy and empathy, arguing that sympathy leads to a new power structure of taking over and becomes fixed, leading to relativism that accepts differences in the name of tolerance but does not change the underlying power structures.

Homesteading and empathetic cooperation are expanded on and illustrated by practical examples in chapter 5. Sylvester points out the role and challenges postmodern Feminism poses to security issues in International Relations, security being at the core of International Relations: "security studies is one of the most encompassing components of modern International Relations theory".[240] She discusses hardline-war-talkers and softliners in the security approach, only to note the absence of women. When strategists use the term public, they submerge 'women': "the study reproduces strategic reasoning as a western way of securing life that soulfully 'forgets' that 'women' are not entirely 'public' nor secure in the

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[238] C. Sylvester, op.cit.. (1994) p. 155.
[239] Ibid.. p. 165.
[240] Ibid.. p. 170.

spaces that strategism would secure for us".[241] But, on the other hand women do have an influence and do count, this is illustrated by the Greenham Common peace campers who "did challenge national defence at the international fences of a cruise missile base in England".[242] She concludes that there is "no coherent statement, inscription, or morality that makes the definite home, covers all the contingencies of contingent existence, and thereby ends insecurity. Security is always partial and strategy is always, as a result, somewhat undecidable".[243] Sylvester criticises International Relations for setting preferences and hierarchies, for giving priority to concerns on peace and see women's issues as secondary to it.

Sylvester discusses two examples of empathetic cooperation in real-life situations: at the 'Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp' and with 'Women Co-operators in Harare'. (pp. 184 - 207). These shall be discussed shortly when analysing how workable empathetic cooperation really is.

The book's conclusion (chapter 6) summarises her arguments calling to "repaint the canvases of International Relations".[244] She challenges current International Relations to achieve a more difference-aware path and proposes the method of empathetic cooperation with its mobile identities. Sylvester also explains the necessity of a postmodern turn for International Relations to allow differences and therefore empathetic cooperation and homesteading: "simultaneous homesteadings do not add up to 'a' homestead that science can enshrine. The notion that a theorist succeeds to the degree that s/he can stake a claim or universal truth - or pronounce a universal untruth - must be relinquished, and thus we must relinquish key aspects of the three discipline-defining debates of International Relations".[245]

In her final assessment she notes that war and peace are linked together: "conflictual and cooperative relationships are two types of connections that are difficult to disentangle".[246] At the same time she avoids modern binary thinking and presents the anarchy/cooperation

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[241] Ibid., p. 178.
[242] Ibid., p. 179.
[243] Ibid., p. 183.
[244] Ibid., pp. 209-226.
[245] Ibid., p. 218.
[246] Ibid., p. 216.

problematique as "a web of relations more so than a polarity".[247] She recreates International Relations as 'relations international', putting relations in the foreground, and omitting the predefined assumptions of what is or belongs into the international. This would allow the inclusion of 'women', but at the same time bears the risk of changing the balance, for example by associating 'relations' with a maternal standpoint of care and therefore take on board new universal assumptions.[248] To avoid this she uses the method of 'empathetic cooperation', a method that does not colonise, but makes the different sides relate to each other. She defines relations as "acts of telling and recounting (to relate) and showing or establishing connections".[249] The task she endeavours "is to homestead the third debate and its second- and first-debate remnants",[250] by engaging collegially in empathetic cooperation while addressing all sides of third debate concerns. Sylvester's contributions to the field do not lie in the critique that is echoed by many current feminists and postmodernists. Her praxological methodologies contain the original elements of homesteading through the method of 'empathetic cooperation'. However, they only appear as fragments and do not seem to offer any advancement or possible empowerment of women within and outside of International Relations.

c) How Workable is Empathetic Cooperation?

When talking about 'empathetic cooperation' it seems useful to define the term in Sylvester's words so as to be able to analyse its pros and cons and specifically its feasibility. Sylvester constructed this designation out of two terms, each of which she defines separately. She notes that

> "... empathy rests on the ability and willingness to enter into the feeling or spirit of something and appreciate it fully. It is to hear what the nativised say and to be transformed in part by our appreciation of their stories. Applied to International Relations, it is an ability and willingness to investigate questions of gender that open us up to the stories, identities, and places that have been by-passed in 'our' debates. It is to become mobile in our subjectivities rather than fixed to one place of seeing and aping sovereign man".[251]

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[247] Ibid., p. 219.
[248] Ibid., p. 221.
[249] Ibid., p. 222.
[250] Ibid., p. 225.
[251] Ibid., p. 96.

This means that multiple preconditions have to be fulfilled before we can speak of empathy. There are first the 'ability and willingness to enter into the feeling or spirit of something and appreciate it fully': this supposes that people can and want to negotiate, never mind their power status. The want for negotiation may be greater in the less powerful group, but their effective ability to engage in empathetic negotiation diminishes when the stronger side rather applies top down force than negotiation. Thus the power structures may easily invalidate the possibility for empathy. The ability to engage is such a kind of negotiation also supposes the effective ability to understand people from a different background, with different values and different languages. This is also one of International Relations' major problems, not only the unwillingness to accept difference, but the sheer inability to understand. The willingness to empathetically negotiate also requires tolerance from all sides. A tolerance of all points made along the negotiating process, without degrading into sympathy or relativism (which denies "that certain relationships may link or affect all our subjectivities. It reinvents a certain type of anarchy in the guise of disassociating from 'others' by granting them rights to their idiosyncratic knowledge and practices. It sanctions total tolerance from a safe distance. It lets us well-enough or simply enough alone to fall back into the trap of thinking we are alone and not in some relation of connection to separate knowers)".[252] Sylvester says:

> "... the postmodern feminist insight, however, is that sympathy and empathy are not the same. Empathy brings the heretofore 'instances' into politics on their own (fractured) terms and it also makes us think critically about our relations to the stories we hear, our social constitution as men and women, our I-to-i connections. Above all, empathy is the capacity to participate in another's ideas and feelings. Sympathy is a more distanced, socially correct response mediated by a constant 'I', an immobile subjectivity. It represents another's situation through compassion and pity without losing much in the way of personal control".[253]

Sympathy is self-centred and therefore barely allows for any slippage, mobility, and hyphenation of identity when listening to someone else's tales. "Sympathy involves a substitution of oneself for another that may well be a colonisation of the other's position as one's own".[254]

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[252] Ibid., p. 222.
[253] Ibid., p. 166.
[254] J. Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex (New York: Routledge, 1993) p. 118.

Empathy faces problems when the framework for its negotiation grows too vast. It then requires either direct representation or a breakdown into smaller working-groups, necessitating further representation as the scope is enlarged. The problem with representation is the 'professionalisation' or 'institutionalisation' of the representatives which easily leads to misrepresentation of the individuals and exclusions. Therefore, empathy as such demands direct participation of the concerned individuals.

Cooperation embodies the ability to "negotiate respectfully with contentious others".[255] According to Sylvester's own words "cooperation also entails joint probings of meaning and action in the face of that empathetic breakdown in cherished and despised identities that leaves us creatively homeless in old International Relations".[256]

Sylvester tells us that the "move toward a politics of empathetic cooperation, ..., teaches us the important lesson that we all have authority and 'yet [none] of us can pride ourselves on being sure-footed'".[257] She illustrates this method with the Greenham Common Peace Camp and Women Co-operators in Harare.

Greenham Common Peace Camp started August 27th 1981 with a march by 36 'women' and a few 'men' and 'children' to Greenham Common where 96 US nuclear cruise missiles were to be deployed.[258] Calling themselves 'Women for Life on Earth' they evoked images of 'women as nurturers' that made the private role suddenly enter the public stage, but had the political mission to pressurise the Thatcher government to debate the stationing of nuclear weapons at Greenham Common in Parliament. Some protesters stayed on at Greenham Common, more came to the peace camp and others left for home. Sylvester talks about the way the protest was organised: "'women' chained themselves to the fences of the base upon arrival; they later affixed signs of mundane security to that fence - pinning whole tea sets there along with diapers, recipes, tampons".[259] They sometimes clambered over the fences or cut them down, 'invading' the base and thereby proving that security was not warranted if a group of women could so easily breach the base's security, but also that

[255] K. Ferguson, The Man Question: Visions of Subjectivity in Feminist Theory (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993) p. 154.
[256] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) pp. 96-7.
[257] Ibid., p. 99.
[258] Ibid., p. 184.
[259] Ibid., p. 185.

security for one group did not mean security for all. It destabilised gender expectations when soldiers become vulnerable , facing 'warrior women'. Sylvester describes the reactions from the government and the official voices (first ignoring the peace campers, then threatening them with evictions and legal pursuits, finally said to be beaming microwave or ultrasound from the military base to the camp, therefore affecting women's physical well-being. This last point has been denied officially). The methods of negotiating and decision-making among the peace campers are described, presenting them as 'empathetic cooperation' in a real-life situation:

> "The usual Greenham style of deciding built empathy for difference through exercises that encouraged participants to listen to each other and cooperate, at minimum, by refusing to interrupt or to force conformity on others. ... 'there was no directing, no breaking through, no need for a linear progression which gives the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes'. This style led to a subsequent disavowal of hierarchy and of 'tried and true' authority, task assignments, habits of deference, and modes of compliance in favour of cooperative anarchy".[260]

The postmodern turn in this process is represented by the shift in identities, women leaving their secure homes to camp at an insecure location, facing daily eviction notes and to go on struggling, finding tangential points of agreement among themselves, but without forcing agreement or structuring of the movement. Women were homeless not only in absolute terms, but also in terms of listening to other stories and being partly transformed in their own identities through that very process. The postmodern turn is also found in the outcome that cannot be evaluated in absolute terms of victory and defeat, but showed multiple levels and issues with multiple outcomes:

> "... the camp failed in its main mission, one supposes, and succeeded in unexpected realms. It subverted the security-based strategic vision of International Relations by showing that acts of everyday insecurity, borne out of a collective endeavour to write insecurity differently, to homestead it with knowledges gained from leaving 'secure' homes for 'women', could unravel the security studies texts with incisive clarity".[261]

The Greenham Common experience also recalls issues of standpoint Feminism "reminding the postmodernists among us that one can become homeless in many ways while still retaining the ability to seize on the existence of something called women. Finally it teaches us that preferring one issue over another is just down to assumed parameters and fixed

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[260] Ibid., p. 187.
[261] Ibid., p. 193.

identities and structures. "It is easier to think that Feminism needs International Relations more than International Relations needs Feminism, but this, like security, is a chimera".[262]

The problem Sylvester mentions about this anarchic process of decision-making among the peace campers, was that the louder and more vocal women tended to dominate the debate, therefore excluding or forcing on some of the other identities. She also mentions that all along some protesters became angry and left, while others stayed on. Those who left most evidently left by their own choice (or did they?) and therefore lost their voice. Thirdly, the Janus-faced aspects of homesteading became clear: "In order to homestead realist security on behalf of women, some 'women' had to deny other subjectivities, identities and loyalties".[263] This means that the solution she offers is unable to be more open and accept all sorts of variables and hyphenated identities. A hierarchy and power structure sets in and makes the endeavour of homesteading a mere impossibility. The woman-only character of the peace encampment also showed exclusion by admitting biological women only, on the other hand it permitted them to take the homeless position within the apolitical places usually assigned to women. This leaves us again with the mix-up of women and 'women' and the proof that 'women' cannot be detached as a discursive concept of real, biological women unproblematically.

The example of women co-operators in Harare in silk production cooperatives led by two Greek women and applying for EEC funding shows again how different identities with different experiences and different power statuses can empathise, influence each other, and in the end find points of tangency, borderlands where their identities are no longer fixed, but have shifted and are mobile, floating. The Greek EEC donors have invested in the cooperatives - never mind the 'insufficient' economic assurance of success, after negotiating with the two Greek patrons. The Greek women have been influenced by their cooperation with local Zimbabwean women, protecting weak cooperatives with personal funds. The Zimbabwean women have probably experienced the most mobility, forming women-only cooperatives in order to support their husbands and families, identifying as 'African people' but empathetically and strategically moving among the 'needed incompatibles'.[264] This leads

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[262] Ibid., p. 197.
[263] Ibid., p. 194.
[264] Ibid., p. 205.

us on to examine the view of third world women towards the possibility of homesteading and empathetic cooperation.

d) How Can Women, Specifically Third World Women Homestead?

Sylvester defines 'homesteading' as "processes that reconfigure 'known' subject statuses".[265] This homesteading rests upon the negotiation of incommensurables, namely empathetic cooperation. But the reconfiguration is never total and does not lead from one fixed identity to the next (truer, more scientific or better) identities as "simultaneous homesteadings do not add up to 'a' homestead that science can enshrine".[266] As Sylvester is pointing out, homesteading is a process and therefore mobile. Homelessness seems to be one of the premises of empathetic cooperation, in effect expressing the willingness and ability to listen and negotiate with hitherto incommensurable others. Once negotiation has started out and we have listened and negotiated we are left partly transformed, homesteading some of the other's issues. This homesteading could be a colonisation, a taking over of otherness as one's own identity, but due to the method of empathetic cooperation it seems to make the cohabitation of different identities within us possible, and why not, as we are not flat, one-dimensional Hollywood-style characters, but bear within us an uncountable variety of identities, fragmented, some of them in opposition with each other, others more harmonious. "Empathetic cooperation leads to group homesteadings of a field as we move around the web of relations that simultaneously deconstruct our identities and reconstitute them in expansive ways".[267] This nevertheless can include 'men' as well as 'women'; the stories linked to the biological and sexed appearance of male and female. In fact her discourse seems to revert in an exclusion of 'men' and collapses unless she defines 'men' as males in terms of their sexuality as well.

So far, analysing the process from a theoretical prospective, everything seems all right. But what about real-life scenarios? The examples cited about the Greenham Common peace campers and more so about the women co-operators in Harare do not leave us without doubt. The whole problem starts with the 'women'/women question. Sylvester admits

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[265] Ibid., p. 2.
[266] Ibid., p. 218.
[267] Ibid., p. 216.

the necessity, for the time being, to recognise real women, although excluding them from her theoretical analysis. She is aware that some people "cannot afford to distance themselves from their assigned homes or who, as in the case of some Zimbabwean people called women, actually draw inspiration for transformed identity and practice from gender identity and solidarity".[268]

> "'The way we used to do things' can mean the way some men and certain forms of knowledge commanded things to be done. Thus, a woman, a member of a minority ethnic group or subgroup, or a person with an illness that cannot be cured by a traditional healer can be held back by tradition. But an unbridled modernism is also no panacea, in part because it distorts tradition and in part, as socialist-Christians and some contemporary writers point out, because it promotes individualistic differentiation. With racial cleavages still invading the Africanising bourgeoisies, gender differences rising to the fore, and artistic impulses struggling for resources, Zimbabwe's calls for 'unity' are simultaneously chimerical, antidemocratic and potentially celebratory of common identity within a context of respected differences".[269]

Zalewski is "not sure of the necessity of the move from women to 'women' ... it is not clear to me that it is necessary to spell out in great detail that women are not real, in the sense of being ontologically prior".[270] The problem of 'women' is not only the invisibilisation of women in the international landscape, but the denial of the material reality of women's life. Simply by asking questions about third world women or Chinese women makes it clear that 'women' is not enough. Sylvester knows that third world women tend to be more sure about the existence of real women when citing an imaginary third world feminist: "feminists in my part of the world are more feminist standpoint-oriented; that is, more certain that women really exist as subordinated members of the species - to men, to westerners, to capitalism - you name it".[271] This point of view is not only to be found with third world women whose primary concerns often engage around survival-based issues and far less around a theoretico-analytical approach; this conception also reverberates in the equality-of-men-and-women-policies deployed by most western-based international organisations, and most prominently the United Nations:

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[268] Ibid., p. 215.
[269] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1991) p. 161.
[270] M. Zalewski, op.cit., p. 420.
[271] J.N. Rosenau (ed.), op.cit., p. 45.

"Within development organisations and the United Nations agencies, gender training aims to provide planners with an awareness of women's and men's interrelated and changing productive and reproductive roles".[272]

If third world women are to be looked at with more focus, then how do we define third world women? Third world is mostly associated with countries that are poor, non-industrial, peripheral or marginal to the global system and ex- colonial.[273] By now, some of the countries defined as third world in the aftermath of WW II have had major economic success. Third world has been created out of the Cold War to denote the western superiority over certain designated regions of the world. Nevertheless third world can also denote a third way - neither capitalist nor communist - linked to non-alignment.[274] It is clear that third world does not represent a homogenous, unitary category, but once again contains multiple layers of definitions and identities, that is what makes its clear definition so difficult and its character variable and mobile. Johnson-Odim argues that "although on a theoretical level, women in the industrialised societies of the west can achieve a semblance of parity with men through legal and moral challenges to patriarchal systems, issues of class and race undermine the potential success of such a movement for all women".[275]

The issues of class and race are seemingly included in the gender perspective deployed by international organisations, and in Sylvester's 'women'. But are they really; can third world women really homestead to the extent de/prescribed by Sylvester?

Homesteading as we said before is the final process in one cycle of empathetic cooperation that starts with listening, negotiating and empathising, being partially transformed and homestead this new identity. We therefore have to ask whether third world women are willing and especially able to listen, negotiate and empathise to conclude whether and how they can homestead. For this exercise it seems useful to dissect Sylvester's own example of women co-operators in Zimbabwe. Listening: here the process has certainly been fulfilled, not only from the side of the Zimbabwean women, but also from the Greek patrons and the EEC members. They have all listened, some directly (the Greek patrons who in effect were the only group directly in touch with the Zimbabwean women and the EEC donor. The rest of the

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[272] M. Karl, Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making (London: Zed Books, United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, 1995) p. 104.

[273] P. Worsley, "How Many Worlds?" in Third World Quarterly (Vol. 1, Nr. 2, 1979) p. 101.

[274] Ibid.

[275] C. Johnson-Odim, "Common Themes, Different Contexts: Third World Women and Feminism," in C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991) p. 320.

listening was done by representation. When it comes to negotiating "the Greek 'women' answer all the questions. The local 'women' sigh. They tell me that they can neither read nor do sophisticated mathematics".[276] The Zimbabwean women not only do not participate in the negotiations, they also do not have the means to understand the complicated economic terms the EEC wants to be informed on and are totally dependent upon the Greek women's leadership. Although Sylvester promptly mentions that the Zimbabwean 'women' "say that it is best for Europeans to speak to each other about funding because they know each other".[277] This includes several contradictions to her theories: first - it otherises third world women and westerners, in a way denying 'women' as possible, imaginary analytical basis. Moreover, the negotiation proceeds without encountering incommensurables (they know each other), the identity slippage being minimal and not in the direction of the Zimbabwean co-operators. Included is the total reliance of the Zimbabweans on the Greek patrons to represent them and to go on to teach them independence in the future, meaning the ability to hold the cooperatives themselves, without European patrons. During the negotiations the Zimbabwean women can 'think their own thoughts', however not producing any identity hyphenation with the Greek patrons and especially the EEC donors, and only questionably within themselves. The Zimbabwean women are inside and outside International Relations, as their cooperatives depend on EEC funding and Greek patrons for survival, however they do not have a voice and are left at the executing end of the process. To say it more bluntly, they may well think their own thoughts and take advantage of western donations, but the outcome of the negotiations is imposed upon them. To come to the possibility of homesteading we have to give the postmodern answer of yes-and-no. There seems to be an awareness of the African women of their multiple identities simultaneously identifying themselves in the gender separatism of women-only cooperatives and within the families they support. Nevertheless the lack of direct contact and communication to the 'other' side seems to leave them mute sufferers of an International Relations that includes them only on the premises of support and non-disturbance. Sylvester concludes

> "... these cooperating 'women', homeless in the texts of western business
> success and simultaneously homesteading 'success', and 'cooperation' take us
> a considerable distance toward understanding empathetic cooperative methods
> in situations where we cannot assume that the participants are equal in
> economic status, prestige, fluency, education, and so on. The gist of their

[276] C. Sylvester, op.cit., (1994) p. 201.
[277] Ibid.

method is to stand mestiza in a web of interactions in which one loses some voice but gains the resources necessary to continue to think thoughts".[278]

This sounds rather like a new way of colonisation than cooperating empathetically. The Zimbabwean women depend upon the goodwill of the Greek co-operators. If this goodwill is lost, not only do the Zimbabwean women not have a voice, but they also lost the funds and the participation in International Relations or relations international.

Sylvester's book raises important criticisms of current International Relations and feminist theorising and gives an in-depth analysis of International Relations, its debates and theories reviewed under feminist eyes. She proposes alternative methods for a more inclusive and open International Relations through empathetic cooperation which eventually, in her argumentation, leads to the inclusion of other points of view through insecurity. This insecurity, however, seems to increase while we are accumulating more and more viewpoints and renders us completely homeless and therefore unable to decide or act, since the underlying philosophy could be described in Feyerabendian terms of 'anything goes'. However, the necessity to introduce the imaginary notion of 'women' is questionable not only because it seems to make real women invisible, but also because it denies the reality of women's lives. It furthermore renders real women's identification with 'women' difficult, if not impossible if the terms are separated. It is also not certain what is feminist about empathetic cooperation. "Of course, the question of what counts as feminist is open to debate, but it seems to me that what might be seen as feminist component of empathetic cooperation comes rather closer to feminist standpoint theorists than of postmodernists".[279] Actually the choice of associating empathy as well as cooperation with Feminism recalls essentialist claims about the more peaceful nature of women. As a final point Sylvester's preference of relations international instead of International Relations, thus her focus on relations rather than on the international where women may find a place once again puts emphasis on the non-belonging of women in the international sphere.

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[278] Ibid., p. 217.
[279] M. Zalewski, op.cit., p. 420.

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4. Other Philosophical Foundations to Feminism and International Relations:

a) Introduction

The difficulty in talking about 'other' philosophical foundations to Feminism and International Relations lies again in the existence of not one feminist school of thought, but several (cf. chapter 2) and that even within each one of these, different authors advance divergent explanations. This variety within western Feminisms calls for a choice to contrast to Sylvester's work and to underline some of the different philosophical foundations to Feminism and International Relations. It appears once again useful to choose a writer whose concerns do not stop at the feminist border, but spill over into the spheres of International Relations and political sciences etc. Like Sylvester, Elshtain takes a wider focus in her examination of feminist issues. Both take interest in women's roles within the international and political arena. This chapter shall therefore analyse, compare and differentiate Sylvester's work as presented in the preceding chapter to that of J.B. Elshtain discussed in the following pages.

b) Elshtain's work

Like Sylvester, Elshtain addresses her books to an audience of academics and specialists in the field of international political studies. Her 1981 book 'Public Man, Private Woman'[280] traces the historical development of the public/private divide and its implications for women in modern political discourse. By underlining the unclear boundaries of what is political and what is not, Elshtain finds the common trait of all western feminist schools to "redefine the boundaries of the public and the private, the personal and the political".[281] Similarly to Sylvester, she examines different schools of Feminism: radical (equalling the personal with the political), liberal (equalling men with women), Marxist (equalling women with proletarians) and psychoanalytic (tracing the cause of the different roles of men and women). Her focus is on epistemology which coincides with Sylvester's emphasis on epistemological issues: the activities "that resonate with what we think of today as Feminism, link to issues of contemporary epistemology and practice by revealing to us where we have been, what we have come to know and overlook, and what we have or have not done for

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[280] J.B. Elshtain, Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).
[281] Ibid., p. 202.

'women'".[282] Elshtain does not want "to replicate those approaches, whether feminist or not, in which passive subjects simply receive 'truth' as uncovered by some expert or visionary, it must be construed as a dynamic, social search for transformative and reconstructive knowledge".[283] Elshtain tends towards a liberal-critical feminist approach to politics, repudiating absolute terms: "the search for what is called the 'totality' is uncomfortably close to this century's term for unmitigated political terror, totalitarianism".[284]

In 'The Family in Political Thought'[285] she contends that although the household or private sphere is the "necessary condition for the polis" it is not, at the same time an "integral part of, the polis".[286] She discusses this Aristotelian notion of the family noting that on the one hand political man relies on the private support of his family in order to fulfil his public role, but at the same time "women are 'private wives' [this] curtails their participation in public life".[287] This corresponds to Sylvester's note that "'women' are always of another place. Our absence is required, must be invented, to enable the encoding of International Relations as masculine territory".[288] Elshtain refuses the option of 'deprivatisation' as a solution, maintaining that this would be too big a sacrifice from women (especially those appreciating their private sphere of agency) towards political man.[289] She therefore tries to find out what is politics and what isn't.[290] In her endeavour to find partial definitions, for she refuses the claims of absolute and universal theorising, she opts for an individual approach as "all explanations of political life must and can be reduced to statements about individuals".[291] Sylvester also focuses on the individual when she speaks about the actions of singular women cooperators in Zimbabwe or particular women's experiences and actions at Greenham Common Peace Camp. Examining the way domination of men over women has been established and maintained, Elshtain here focuses on ideology as a main element in sex inequality.[292] She affirms Sylvester's observation that the most favoured always try to keep the system that put

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[282] C. Sylvester, <u>Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p. 30.
[283] J.B. Elshtain, <u>op.cit.</u> (1981) p. 310.
[284] <u>Ibid.</u> p. 300.
[285] J.B. Elshtain (ed.), <u>The Family in Political Thought</u> (Brighton: Harvester Press Ltd., 1982).
[286] <u>Ibid.</u> p. 12.
[287] <u>Ibid.</u> p. 8.
[288] C. Sylvester, <u>op cit.</u> p. 211.
[289] J.B. Elshtain (ed.), <u>op.cit.</u> (1982) p. 11.
[290] C. Sylvester, <u>op cit.</u> p. 219.
[291] J.B. Elshtain (ed.), <u>op.cit.</u> (1982) p. 290.
[292] <u>Ibid.</u> p. 301.

them on top alive, but adds "certain psychological needs (socially acquired and reinforced, not somehow innate!) have power over another are at stake as well".[293] In her analysis of the role of ideology she places women as key figures in ideological reproduction (an assertion found once more in the supportive role of the private woman or family for public man). She notes different kinds of ideologies that keep women bound in the private realm by presenting it as the only path to fulfilment of a sentimental femininity (ideology of womanhood) and at the same time painting a fierce image of the public world that women have to be protected from (popular ideology).[294] She concludes that feminist theory must "push away from destructive and sentimental idealisations of their 'specialness'"[295] as does Sylvester:

> "... as of the late 1980s, it is no longer fashionable to speak of universal woman fighting or suffering universal man and his unified patriarchal power relations. One cannot intimidate with the charge that certain practices indicate a sell-out to monolithic patriarchy, capitalism, or heterosexuality. No longer is it kosher to spin feminist theory in a western vacuum or even to speak of women and the goal of equality with men's as givens. Many feminists, however, have not heard all this destabilising news because their material conditions are such that the challenge of countering coercive power relations presses on them more than the urgency of letting a hundred voices speak".[296]

Elshtain is concerned not only about powerless persons being denied their rights, but also, while focusing on a responsible citizen as subject she points at the unhealthiness of denying them simultaneously their duties towards self and others.[297]

'Power Trips and Other Journeys'[298] outlines exactly that, how women have been and are powerful and at the same time powerless. Sylvester for example mentions Morgenthau's deficiency in discussing "how evil in homebound activities could manifest itself in state building, ... [nor] enumerate the ways that evil in statescraft can affect homebound 'women' and other non-statesmen".[299] Elshtain analyses different definitions of power from cooperative agency to domination and situates women within their relative contexts. She interprets the contrasting usages of power to demarcate roughly the boundaries of male and female forms of power historically. "Men have been official wielders of institutional power and

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[293] Ibid., p. 296.
[294] Ibid., pp. 298-301.
[295] Ibid., pp. 301-2.
[296] C. Sylvester, op. cit., p. 66.
[297] J.B. Elshtain (ed.), op.cit. (1982) pp. 301-2.
[298] J.B. Elshtain, Power Trips and Other Journeys: Essays in Feminism as Civic Discourse (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).
[299] C. Sylvester, op. cit., p. 83.

dominion; women the unofficial (hence politically uncontrollable) repositories of non-legitimate, 'non-political' power".[300] Again she notes the dangers of universalising claims when she notes that "women have not been uniformly subjugated and powerless".[301] Elshtain also comments the paradox that "the dominant sex has also been the most expendable - that, historically, male bodies have been sent into battle to kill and to die in order that female bodies of their own group be protected".[302] Elshtain's Feminism repudiates the false transcendence of violence (the discourse of war) and rejects "any order built on doubles and mirrors by which one keeps alive that by which one feels threatened".[303] Sylvester in the same line argues that "we must cooperate - not to avoid our insecurity dilemmas, but to create new ones that include but also take us beyond our fixations on either-or constructs of conflict versus cooperation, war versus peace, strategy versus death".[304]

Elshtain's 'Meditations on Modern Political Thought'[305] refutes the potential of prediction in issues concerning men and women: "not being able to presume continuity in the affairs of men and women, aware of the fragility of human events and our shared vulnerability in light of current arsenals of potential force, we cannot predict. For prediction presumes regularity and requires presumptions along the lines 'If x, then y'".[306] This coincides with Sylvester's unmentioned but inherent definitions of International Relations (cf. chapter 3). She calls for Feminism to take on a communal view in respect of individual particularities and voices since "much can pass under the name of freedom and it must be assayed critically rather than endorsed unthinkingly".[307] Sylvester there again insisted on 'we': "'We' is on the road to being a plural 'we' through feminist appreciations of postmodern politics forming and unfolding in 'strange' corners of International Relations".[308] On the other hand Sylvester's plural 'we' is at the same time fragmented and not continuous.

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[300] J.B. Elshtain, op.cit., (1990) p. 143.
[301] Ibid., p. 142.
[302] Ibid.,
[303] Ibid., pp. 146-7.
[304] C. Sylvester, op. cit., p. 207.
[305] J.B. Elshtain, Meditations on Modern Political Thought: Masculine/Feminine Themes from Luther to Arendt (London: Praeger Publ., 1986).
[306] Ibid., p. 115.
[307] Ibid., p. 117.
[308] C. Sylvester, op. cit., p. 207.

Elshtain's 1993 'Democracy on Trial'[309] examines issues of freedom and equality within a democratic context. She criticises egalitarianism as a dangerous utopia and describes the Nazis as "perverse egalitarians in their rush to exterminate the different".[310] On the other hand Elshtain notes the problem of difference becoming exclusivist and incommensurable. "Difference more and more becomes exclusivist. If you are black and I am white, by definition I do not and cannot, in principle, 'get it'. There is no way that we can negotiate the space between our pregiven differences".[311] This philosophical discussion of difference and equality is missing in Sylvester's work. This shows how empathetic cooperation is an ideal but utopian method than cannot cross real boundaries of radically different subjectivities. It is an important issue to underline the advantages and the dangers of individualism, which Sylvester only does in the context of postmodern nihilism. Equality, in Elshtain's definition, must not be equated to sameness. She rather calls for democratic citizenship that guarantees equality while acknowledging differences and engaging directly in dialogue about these differences.[312] This is not only coming close to postmodern theorising, it also closely approaches Sylvester's method of empathetic cooperation. Elshtain describes the democratic drama (as she argues in favour of democracy and a system of nations) as "the playing out of the story of self-limiting freedom"[313] or "a fusion of freedom and responsibility".[314]

Like Sylvester, Elshtain participated in Rosenau's 'Global Voices'[315] dealing with the war and peace discourse and questions of sovereignty. Once again Elshtain denies the predictive qualities of social sciences, which she rather sees to "describe the politician's opportunities".[316] Within the discourse of war she notes that peace as a concept entails several problematic issues: for one it is still located within the discourse of war and peace emerging "as the absolute opposition to a state of war and disorder".[317] Elshtain opposes

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[309] J.B. Elshtain, Democracy on Trial (Concord, ONT: House of Anansi Press Ltd., 1993).
[310] Ibid., p. 74.
[311] Ibid., p. 75.
[312] Ibid., p. 78, p. 80.
[313] Ibid., p. 88.
[314] Ibid., p. 89.
[315] J.B. Elshtain, "Act V: Bringing It All Back Home Again," in J. Rosenau Global Voices; Dialogues in International Relations, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993) pp. 97-116.
[316] Ibid., p. 102.
[317] Ibid., p. 105.

these absolute views of order and disorder: "There are no pure villains, no pure victims. No harmonious sanctuaries, and very few absolute hells".[318] Although Elshtain sees "some forms of the state [to] represent the most realistic and realisable hope for a more decent, if not perfect world",[319] thus as central actors, she propounds a deeply non-aggressive idea of nation, one that recognises the irreducible plurality of cultures and therefore suggests a move to a post sovereign politics, "a politics that shifts the focus of political loyalty and identity from sacrifice to responsibility".[320] In contrast Sylvester feels that "now we are in the throes of a third debate that could have emerged differently as an ongoing conversation had the field begun considering the voices of not-'men' (and others) and places of not-nation (like households) earlier in its history".[321] Actually Sylvester mentions the definition of nations as sole actors as reasons to deny certain people access to International Relations: "many people could only be visitors to International Relations and, therefore, could only be visitors at best to a realist/idealist debate that took place among bona fide members of nations".[322] Elshtain clearly takes a liberal standpoint approach here and, in contrast to Sylvester, defines empathy as collapsing differences into one, as "some thoroughgoing identification with 'oppressed people everywhere'",[323] calling empathy rather patronising and lacking the necessary critical distance and analytic acuity. This rather corresponds to Sylvester's definition of sympathy.

Finally, Elshtain's new edition of 'Women and War',[324] includes most of the points made earlier. She starts out by inviting theorists to look at hidden narratives, because "much that is important falls through the grid of standard modes and methods and is ignored".[325] Elshtain then analyses the western tradition that assimilates women with peace and men with war and tries to uncover different stories within the framework of war. A long section is devoted to the critique of absolute positions: "men and women over the years have struggled

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[318] Ibid., p. 107.
[319] Ibid., p. 108.
[320] Ibid., p. 114.
[321] C. Sylvester, op cit., p. 225.
[322] Ibid., p. 223.
[323] J.B. Elshtain, "Act V: Bringing It All Back Home Again," in J. Rosenau (ed.) op.cit., (1993) p. 106.
[324] J.B. Elshtain, Women and War with a new Epilogue (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[325] Ibid., p. xi.

to eliminate warfare and to attain a hope of universal peace. The efforts, cast as absolute goals, have failed".[326] She notes that even within Feminism the rhetoric of war resonates and calls for a politics beyond war and peace where the wartime language of absolute positions is replaced by uncertainties.[327] To embody this attitude she describes the chastened patriot as having no illusions:

> "... recognising the limiting conditions internal to international politics, this civic being does not embrace utopian fantasies of world government or total disarmament. For neither the arms-control option (as currently defined) nor calls for immediate disarmament are bold: the first, because it is a way of doing business as usual; the second, because it covertly sustains business as usual by proclaiming solutions that lie outside the reach of possibility. Devirilising discourse, in favour of not feminisation (for the feminised and masculinised emerged in tandem and both embody dangerous directions) but of politicisation, the chastened patriot constitutes men and women as citizens who share what Hannah Arendt calls the faculty of action".[328]

This point can be illustrated by the examples of Zimbabwean women (as described in part of Sylvester's work) who would have fought along with men in the liberation war and the women she describes at Greenham Common who seemingly emphasised traditional women's accessories (knitting, cooking, attaching tampons etc. to the wire). Elshtain shows the spectrum of differences while, although trying to escape biological essentialism, Sylvester falls right back into it with her socialisation of 'women' and 'men' by females.

The point of departure of the two authors is sensibly different. While Elshtain seems to keep very close to a discourse of traditional International Relations focusing on the traditional themes of war and peace, power, sovereignty and nation, placing the analysis of women's role and position within those contexts, Sylvester detaches from traditional International Relations altogether. Elshtain, however, is more complete with her historical and philosophical foundation. She does not escape into epistemological nihilism, but instead criticises it by calling to "account for difference not simply by leaving space for it".[329] Although both concentrate on epistemological questions, Elshtain does not redefine her ontological subject of women. Indeed she "defends traditional 'womanly values' to be found within the

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[326] Ibid., p. 227.
[327] Ibid., pp. 256-7.
[328] Ibid., p. 258.
[329] J.B. Elshtain, op.cit., (1986) p. 107.

family and insists that stable family life is an essential prerequisite for a civilised society".[330]

"Not every neglected and abused child becomes a Charles Manson, but every Charles Manson was an abused and neglected child".[331] On the other hand Sylvester defines a new ontological subject, that of 'women' that still does accept ontologically prior women subjects in a period of transition, but refuses to accept women as a basic theoretical category of analysis. However, she also seems to link notions of empathy and cooperation to women or 'women', which corresponds to thoroughly traditional, and essentialist approaches suggesting a return to see women as 'Beautiful Souls' (Elshtain), thus closer to Elshtain's descriptions of the idealised woman. Sylvester pursues this extraordinary and new way of International Relations inquiry, over and above of the traditional dialogues of warfare, power, highlighting cooperative concepts of empathy. The critique brought on Elshtain is that she does not detach from classical International Relations, mainly remaining within a liberal-realist paradigm of Feminism. Sylvester, on the other hand, tries to find a new way of relating internationally and theorising about it, but not only can she not entirely detach from concepts of power, sovereignty and armed conflict, she also gets herself into a fragmented reality which seems to offer no way out and - although emphasising the mobile and variable is lost in time and space becoming ahistorical and nihilistic. The critique that Elshtain associates "women with peace and men with war"[332] is not justified. Elshtain's analysis is far deeper than a traditional liberal-realist account. She constantly emphasises the importance of difference and a plurality of voices. In fact she underlines the necessity of "a sympathetic willingness to see and to hear"[333] the seemingly incommensurable 'other'. Furthermore she says that "the political theorist must listen carefully and observe sympathetically for everything that individuals do, say, or believe is important and has meaning,[334] closing up on Sylvester's position of empathetic cooperation that includes plurality, willingness and listening. But sympathy and empathy are different, since the first, decried by Sylvester as imperialistic in the way that it assumes superiority, shows pity and as not emerging from cooperation, on the

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[330] V. Bryson, Feminist Political Theory. An Introduction (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992) p. 203.
[331] J.B. Elshtain, op.cit., (1981) p. 329.
[332] J.J. Pettman, Worlding Women A Feminist International Politics (London: Routledge, 1996) pp. 98-9.
[333] J.B. Elshtain, op.cit., (1981) p. 312.
[334] Ibid., p. 315.

other hand empathy and with it Sylvester's empathetic cooperation becomes utopian and therefore unworkable within exchanges between real people.

Elshtain's and Sylvester's goals seem to overlap somewhat, nevertheless their approach and method, as well as their basic assumptions are indeed very different. They both envision a more cooperative world that hears individual voices and hidden narratives, to work towards uncertainties, rather than skip the balance with inversed gender roles within the tradition of dichotomies and absolute truths, Elshtain remaining within a temporal framework works with real people while Sylvester's theoretical approach, even though a useful concept to think about fails to perform in real life exchanges.

This first, theoretical part of the thesis has discussed the relation between men and women as an important historical dimension. In fact chapter one has shown the changing notions of women's roles on academic, institutional levels as well as in daily life. It has tried to show the difficulties arising from these issues: should one focus on the difference between men and women or on equality, are women's productive pursuits separate or inseparable from her reproductive activity? These questions together with increasing communication and globalisation have led to an increased acknowledgement that many women have been excluded in the past but that the identification of 'women' was not enough anymore, other identities such as development, race, religion, culture etc. came equally into play, separately and in combinations. On the other hand international action on women's issues did not occur everywhere in the world, not to the same degree and not at the same levels, nor simultaneously. Chapter two examined the reasons for IR's reluctance to integrate feminist and gender issues pretending to be 'gender neutral'. The questions raised in the previous chapter on Western Feminisms and the global conditions of women were re-discussed under the aspects of different schools of thought: from liberal Feminism supporting the sameness of women and men to postmodern Feminism which ultimately broadened IR's theoretical basis through gender awareness. The last two chapters of this theory part examined diverse

philosophical approaches to IR and Feminism. The basic enquiry focused again on how to integrate issues of Feminism and gender into social sciences, and more precisely into International Relations once again discussing equality and difference. While some remained close to amore traditional IR (Elshtain examining women's roles within discourses of war, peace, power, sovereignty and nation), Sylvester completely detaches from it by creating an ontological subject of 'women' (as opposed to real women). She criticises IR for its hierarchies and priorities (e.g. putting security issues over and above women's matters) and revisits the 3 debates of classical IR with feminist arguments. Doing this Sylvester discusses IR's resistance to integrate gender issues into its mainstream theorising and acknowledges that gender studies neglected to examine the international aspects of women's agency: this makes women invisible internationally. Sylvester therefore proposes 'empathetic cooperation' as a method for 'homesteading', i.e. acquire new knowledge from those 'otherised' and integrate it through empathy and more cooperative approaches thus entering a stage of mutual insecurity and openness. Her preferred term for IR are 'relations international' (emphasising relations).

We shall try and test her arguments in the following part detailing the case study in China. Sylvester's method of empathetic cooperation, the possibilities to 'homestead' and the usefulness of her notion of women and 'women' are to be questioned all along the presentation of this practical report (chapters 5-8) and we shall re-discuss and compare her terms with what we have learned from the real case scenario in the conclusion.

So what can our assumptions be for research on women and an international UN conference on women in Beijing? According to Sylvester we need to open up, acquire new knowledge from outside and let it transform ourselves. This need can be satisfied by the willingness to listen and cooperate, by openness and flexibility. The researcher in China soon realises that more than goodwill and cooperation is needed. As mentioned in the introduction there are several barriers to be surmounted: some of them circumstantial (language and some cultural barriers), some of them more controlled (ideology, culture again). But there is

often also an inability to hear, unwillingness to listen, occasionally a wilful misleading of the other. This is often less due to bad attitude than to holding on (consciously or unconsciously) to own, existing and almost fixed sets of values. The expected problematique when thinking about Sylvester's empathetic cooperation and homesteading capacity is that it not only needs all that openness and goodwill and ability; it needs it in mutual balance. If one of the concerned parties does not homestead new locations, does not empathise and cooperate for whatever reasons, what then? What if they think they do, but the balance isn't right?

Another point has to be made about the women/'women' notion that is fundamental to Sylvester's theoretical outlines. How useful and practical are these notions for real life. Can her theory of 'women' as ontological subject translate into real life situations? When we deal with women or Chinese women or women in Beijing, do we deal with women, or is it 'women'? And how do Chinese academics and women look onto 'women'?

The terrain is set with a factual account of the happenings and preparations in the run up to 1995's FWCW. It starts with a general outline on the requirements of third world women, it then reports on other, earlier conferences on women, mainly within the UN and NGO framework with their specific preparation for the big even in Beijing in 1995.

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C. Sylvester, <u>Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

5. The Requirements Of Third World Women and their Articulation in the Run Up to Beijing:

a) Introduction

After having introduced the problematique of 'women' earlier on, this chapter instructs and tries to define other difficult and unclear notions, namely those of 'third world' and 'third world women'. Popular media expression - there seems to be no clear definition of 'third world':

- Some argue it is down to the political reasons of colonisation and decolonisation:

"Third world refers to the colonised, neo-colonised or decolonised countries (of Asia, Africa, and Latin America) whose economic and political structures have been deformed within the colonial process, and to black, Asian, Latino and indigenous peoples in North America, Europe and Australia".[335]

- Others put economic development in the foreground. This still leaves us with a very vague definition about which nations are really poor and underdeveloped and which aren't; this is especially true when speaking of media reportage and popular wisdom.

"The concept of a third world ... has been both a political and ideological as well as a predominantly economic usage. By the 1960s and 1970s the category third world was used to describe those countries which shared certain characteristics: poor, non-industrial, peripheral or marginal to the global system and ex-colonial".[336]

- Some go back to the unfolding of the Cold War that listed a series of countries as non-aligned between the US-western block (first world) and the communist eastern block (second world):

"The term third world was used to denote a third way - neither capitalist nor communist - not lying in the middle of these two but creating a distinctive route, linked to non-alignment".[337]

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[335] C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991) p. ix.

[336] G. Waylen, Gender in Third World Politics (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996) p. 25.

[337] Ibid., p. 28.

But as Waylen correctly states, it only emerged as such in the world arena when it became "... implicated in the global rivalry of the superpowers".[338]

At this point we find ourselves at a cross-roads with, on the one hand, the vague definitions of 'third world' and, on the other hand, the obscure concept of 'women'. Let us recall Sylvester's notion of women as a 'natural category', and her creation of 'women', as subject of inquiry, non-homogenous, socially constructed, changing subject statuses.[339] In her construction the dichotomy men/women respectively 'men'/'women' seems still inherent. She is, however, careful about identities, knowing about the complexity of humans and therefore avoids 'otherising' within her analyses on 'women', not constructing a cultural and ideological composite 'other' as seen so often in so-called western feminist writing. The juxtaposition of both, the notions of women and of third world seems to endlessly multiply the uncertainties of definition. What is important to note is that what makes these concepts so difficult is not only their unclear definitions, but also the fact that they are in constant fluctuation and change.

This junction is not a single one, we suddenly see that more factors and identities come into play as we must respect race, class, culture, status, values etc. hyphenated identities because: "... all of us, including 'third world' ... women, are marked by heterogeneous multiplicities, such that there is no way to 'be' simultaneously in all, or wholly in any, of the privileged (i.e. subjugated) positions structured by gender, race, nation, and class".[340] The meaning is that all of these identities are linked up to each other in a single person. Some identities are periodically taking the lead, becoming visible and thus, in certain situations representing this person more than other identities; then they finally melt back into the complex identities that make up humans, making space for other identities to come forward. Sonja D. Curry-Johnson writes in 'Weaving an Identity Tapestry':

> "I suffer from an acute case of multiplicity. Each identity defines me; each is responsible for elements of my character; from each I drive some sustenance for my soul. But they do not peacefully coexist within me any more than the duality does in the lives of black men. These elements are in constant conflict, questioning my loyalties, my convictions, my love. ... At times one voice can pull

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[338] G. Waylen, op.cit., p. 26.
[339] C. Sylvester, Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p. 4.
[340] Ibid., p. 48.

stronger than the others; yet, as I struggle to find my place in the world, I am always aware of each presence".[341]

The notion of 'third world women' is more complex than it first appears: as we have seen with the definition of 'women' beforehand, we cannot simply assume the existence of a homogenous group, nor one that distinguishes itself completely - as the other or opposite from western or first world women.

> "What the Orientalism argument enables us to see is this: the white female primatologist, like the great Orientalists, knows the language of the 'natives' and speaks to/of/on behalf of them with great sympathy. But in her doing so, the 'native culture' also becomes her possession, the site of her spiritual war against the 'home' that is the western world. We are thus confronted with what is perhaps the ugliest double bind in the history of imperialism: while the kind, personal intent behind many a missionary exploration of the 'other' world must be recognised - as a benign humanism extended pluralistically across not only nations and cultures but species - such explorations are implicated in colonialism and neo-colonialism in their romantic insistence that the 'wild' stay 'alive' in their original 'natural' habitat. ... Why are you using western feminist theory on Chinese women? ... the questions ... are clearly based on sets of oppositions: the west versus the non-west; dominant versus 'other' national or ethnic traditions; dominant theories of women versus 'other' women; ..."[342]

Several women or women-writers from presumed third world countries feel excluded from so-called western Feminisms for diverse reasons such as race, class or culture and advance numerous critiques to 'western Feminisms' which they generally consider as imperialistic. They often claim that 'western Feminism' tries to dominate feminist discourse by implicitly excluding third world women and by trying to achieve a westernisation of third world women's values and needs if not completely silencing them by rendering them invisible. "[The] average third world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender [sexually bound] and being 'third world' (poor, uneducated, religious, domesticated, victimised, bound to tradition etc.) This, I suggest, is in contrast to the self-representation of western women as educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the 'freedom' to make their own decisions".[343]

For a long time feminist discourse treated 'women' as the basic category of analysis, never mind racial, cultural, economic, situational etc. differences:

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[341] S.D. Curry-Johnson, "Weaving an Identity Tapestry" in B. Findlen (ed.), Listen Up, voices from the next feminist generation (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1995) p. 222.

[342] Rey Chow, "Violence in the Other Country - China as Crisis, Spectacle and Woman" in C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), op.cit., p. 90.

[343] C.T. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" in Feminist Review (Nr. 30, 1988) p. 16.

"... the crucial assumption [is] that all of us of the same gender, across classes and cultures, are somehow socially constituted as a homogenous group identified prior to the process of analysis. This is an assumption that characterises much feminist discourse. The homogeneity of women as a group is produced not on the basis of biological essentials but rather on the basis of secondary sociological and anthropological universals. Thus, for instance, in any given piece of feminist analysis, women are characterised as a singular group on the basis of a shared oppression. What binds women together is a sociological notion of the 'sameness' of their oppression. It is at this point that an elision takes place between 'women' as a discursively constructed group and 'women' as material subjects of their own history".[344]

This tendency towards universalism has, however, subsided to a more inclusive theorisation as awareness about the exclusionary theories grew due to numerous criticisms. Sylvester, for example states

"As of the late 1980s, it is no longer fashionable to speak of universal woman fighting or suffering universal man and his unified patriarchal power relations. One cannot intimidate with the charge that certain practices indicate a sell-out to monolithic patriarchy, capitalism, or heterosexuality. No longer is it kosher to spin feminist theory in a western vacuum or even to speak of women and the goal of equality with men as givens".[345]

Nevertheless, the changing identities and their respect still remain a problem. In fact some identities, seem, over the years, to have acquired more legitimate status than others. Veronica Chambers claims that a person's racial identity seems more legitimate in official discourse and imagery than the gendered one, meaning that a new separation of gender versus race is established:[346]

"To be a young, black feminist today, I believe, is to feel unsure that your needs and interests can be fully addressed in any one camp. It seems that for sanity's sake you must choose sides - your skin colour versus your gender, blacks (implicitly males) versus women (implicitly white). ... When it comes down to picking teams - skins versus shirts - most of us opt to play skin, shedding our gender questions like a layer of clothing that becomes tedious and superfluous ..."[347]

This quote has two interesting sides to it. It demonstrates the problematique of the separation of identities and the more legitimate recognition of certain identities to represent that person than others. Moreover, it shows the role values and associations play in cultural identity-understandings. Let us step back for a moment and think about the associations of black being implicitly male (probably due to the lower status of women and their lesser integration

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[344] Ibid., p. 56.
[345] C. Sylvester, op.cit., p. 66.
[346] V. Chambers, "Betrayal Feminism" in B. Findlen (ed.), op.cit., p. 27.
[347] Ibid., p. 22.

in the economy with problems rather identified about black people (mostly men) to enter the workforce) and women being implicitly white, perhaps stemming from Feminism's beginnings and development among white, middle-class women. We shall look at values later in this chapter, first questioning the universality claims of the categories that form the very basis of our theoretical constructs.

As we have established earlier, the term 'third world women' is problematic insofar as there is no clear definition to it. Also, the intersection of identities such as 'third world' and 'women' multiplies the possibilities of delineation. Moreover, none of these definitions are constant or static; certainly "... contemporary definitions of the 'third world' can no longer have the same geographical contours and boundaries they had for industrial societies".[348] This is also true of the economic, social, cultural and political. The mere term 'third world' appears less and less homogenous the more we try to define it. The increasing globalisation in terms of culture, economics, telecommunications, interdependence should naturally lead to a flattening out of differences. While this process seems to be natural to some, it is perceived as imperialist take-over by others and alternately struggled against, accepted, transformed and always renewed.

What about the location of 'third world women'?

> "... scholars often locate 'third world women' in terms of the underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism, and 'overpopulation' of particular Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American countries. ... Besides being normed on a white, western (read progressive/modern) non-western (read backward/traditional) hierarchy, these analyses freeze third world women in time, space, and history. ... fertility is the most studied aspect of women's lives in the third world. This particular fact speaks volumes about the predominant representations of third world women in social-scientific knowledge production. ... just as 'western women' or 'white women' cannot be defined as coherent interest groups, 'third world women' also do not constitute any automatic unitary group. ... defining third world women in terms of their 'problems' or their 'achievements' in relation to an imagined free white liberal democracy effectively removes them (and the 'liberal democracy') from history, freezing them in time and space. ... What seems to constitute 'women of colour' or 'third world women' as a viable oppositional alliance is a common context of struggle rather than colour or racial identifications".[349]

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[348] C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), op.cit., p. 2.
[349] Ibid., pp. 5-7.

This is an interesting point, on the one hand emphasising the colonising effect of our universal claims and overall normative theories, but also asking how to define and theorise on women who do not fit current analyses and definitions. Mohanty thinks that what makes up 'third world women' as an oppositional alliance is a common context of struggle. Instead of analyses classifying third world women as victims, she focuses on the oppositional agency of women. Using Benedict Anderson's notion of 'imagined communities' she recognises "imagined communities of women with divergent histories and social locations, woven together by the political threads of opposition to forms of domination that are not only pervasive but systemic".[350]

> "The very notion of addressing what are often internally conflictual histories of third world women's Feminisms under a single rubric, in one (...) essay, may seem ludicrous - especially since the very meaning of the term Feminism is continually contested. ... I am suggesting, then, an 'imagined community' of third world oppositional struggles. 'Imagined' not because it is not 'real' but because it suggests potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries, and 'community' because in spite of internal hierarchies within third world contexts, it nevertheless suggests a significant, deep commitment to what Benedict Anderson, in referring to the idea of nation, calls 'horizontal comradeship'. The idea of imagined community is useful because it leads us away from essentialist notions of third world feminist struggles, suggesting political rather than biological or cultural bases for alliance. Thus, it is not colour or sex, which constructs the ground for these struggles. Rather, it is the way we think about race, class, and gender - the political links we choose to make among and between struggles".[351]

We have to understand that not only theory and practice, although linked, pursue different goals, but also that even theorisation itself can aim at different outcomes with at least implicitly different methodologies. The question really is what we want to achieve with our theorising: is it a precise and focused in-depth study of a specific situation, that will lead to a minimum of distortion due to generalisations, or should it be grand normative theory that allows us to see the picture as a more entire one and therefore permits bridge building and links among disciplines previously thought completely separated. It is true that specifically this 'grand theorising' has led to major distortions, and has, in the past few years, come under major attack from feminists feeling excluded by 'mainstream theorising':

> "... it may be said that a nation's mentality is such a diverse and changing phenomenon that it can only be treated on a case-by-case basis with each one's

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[350] Ibid., p. 4.
[351] Ibid., p. 3.

specific social status taken into consideration. To regard a nation's mentality as a fixed monolith is to run counter to the truth ..."[352]

These local discourses seem precise enough to elaborate solutions to the discovered problematiques and establish pointed plans for action. Many otherised women seem to prefer these, not only because of their truth- and identification values, but also because many prefer real action to theorising due to immediate needs and problems: "... this mode of local, political analysis which generates theoretical categories from within the situation and context being analysed, also suggests corresponding effective strategies for organising against the exploitation faced by the lace makers".[353] Nevertheless, theory on a bigger, more abstract scale can discover new links between fields and show a holistic picture of the current situation. Pursuing the question of local discourses further, we have to see that even there the boundaries of what is a "local" discourse and what is not is not always easy to make out. Local, in this sense can take may different appearances, one of geographical margins, one of ethnic or cultural particularities, religious diversity, racial distinction etc. Furthermore even the local level tends to generalise over the individual - on the other hand we do need normative categories in order to theorise. Local discourses started to appear within the theoretical framework with coloured women opposing to separate their identity of 'woman' from their racial identity. They are faced with two forms of discrimination and therefore feel misrepresented by what they identify as being white, western Feminism. With this argument the likes of bell hooks[354] or Gloria Anzaldua[355] prominently opened up the feminist discourse to become more inclusive (of racial, religious, cultural, political orientation etc. issues) which has been a very important contribution in the development of Feminism to what it is now. On the other hand, there were many similarities between radical Feminism and womanism or coloured feminist ideas, but they never united.[356] This means that the new arguments took a while to enter white western Feminism and no attempts to build a more inclusive framework were undertaken. Moreover, this is the root of many arguments nowadays that e.g. only 'women of colour' can speak for women of colour or only 'Chinese women' can speak for Chinese women. The problematique here is twofold: first of all, the category 'Chinese women' is not easily defined (does it mean women who speak Chinese and are of Chinese descent,

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[352] Jianguang Wang (ed.), Westerners Through Chinese Eyes (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1990) p. 31.
[353] C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), op.cit., p. 65.
[354] For example bell hooks, Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism (London: South End Press, 1981).
[355] For example Gloria Anzaldua, Borderlands: The New Mestiza (San Francisco, Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987).
[356] Internet source: http://www.lib.ox.ac.uk/internet/news/faq/archive/Feminism.terms.html, Feminist Terms.

women in China and which women in China?); secondly it excludes opinions. As a western woman one can have an opinion on Chinese women, probably not claim to speak for them. As Sharon Hom puts it: "What lurks in all of this is the danger of a nativism, to say that 'Chinese' speaking are automatically more legitimate than anyone else speaking".[357] Some local writers go as far as to claim that angry third world feminists are driven by an arrogant western imperialism to "support male-defined and male-dominated movements" which have "nothing recommend them except that they are indigenous to the third world and are opposed to the west".[358] It is this point, people being torn between east and west or other dichotomisations that Rey Chow picks up when she says that we are all biased and that, taking the example of China, we cannot separate the 'western' from the 'eastern' any longer.[359]

The question of otherising or Orientalism[360] is not only included in the wilful colonising or universal-normative claims of current theorising, it also occurs in situations of well-meant activism as it is even thought to penetrate the cultural difference boundaries. Trinh Min-hua calls this 'apartheid difference' - one too deep for even the most socially aware person to apprehend, because it is shaped by the philosophical and intellectual environment of its time. Moreover, as Riley claims, so-called western Feminism was built and rebuilds itself on the basis of this otherising:

> "Even though it often, if not always, speaks the language of oppression and victimisation, western Feminism owes its support to the existence of other populations who continue to experience daily exclusions of various kinds, many of which are performed at territorial borders. ... The task of the westernised feminist is not to unlearn that language [of 'native fluency' of our oppressor's language] but to ask that her accented interventions be understood properly, not as an excuse for nativism but as the demand, put to Feminism, for a willingness, at times, to shred this 'women' to bits".[361]

This 'shredding to bits' as Riley names it calls for a less normative and universal categorisation; to see the differences. In this respect she takes up Sylvester's notion of 'empathetic cooperation':

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[357] S. Hom in "Representations of Chinese Women" China Rights Forum at http://www.igc.apc.org/hric/crf/english/ 95winter/e6.html) pp. 3-4.

[358] Internet source: http://csf.colorado.edu/mail/femisa/feb96/0063.html.

[359] Rey Chow, "Violence in the Other Country - China as Crisis, Spectacle and Woman" in C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), op.cit., p. 90.

[360] E. Said, Orientalism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

[361] D. Riley, Am I That Name: Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History (London: Macmillan, 1988) p. 114.

> "We must listen with the ears of people who can no longer go home once they hear, insecured together, aware that all subalterns may not even be speaking to us as long as their conversations and stories are mediated by a western-subject-centred otherness. We must cooperate - not avoid our insecurity dilemmas, but to create new ones that include but also take us beyond our fixations on either-or constructs or conflict versus cooperation, war versus peace, strategy versus death. Then we can homestead without bringing the colonial cavalry with us, without seeking to integrate homelessness into mock Renaissance places or Renaissance places into a golden nostalgia for strategy as a way of life".[362]

Sylvester here puts everybody into a position of 'other', however, it only works if we remain in a state of insecurity or homelessness. This means that we keep in a state of instability and unsettledness all the time in order to avoid setting our standards to new and different circumstances. Hers is a call for tolerance and willingness to cooperate much rather than a magic solution to conflict and imperial behaviour. The question still remains if it is possible to live in this state of continuous insecurity and open-mindedness, and even if it were, if this condition is fulfilling.

Analysing the two above quoted statements by Riley and Sylvester, we can see the similarity of their demands for openness and tolerance. They call for cooperation and mutual understanding, for 'homelessness' in the sense of not putting forward assumptions or pre-fabricated ideas of those people and ideas we encounter. Starting the course in International Relations the professor asked each one of us to define ourselves: the result was obvious, but baffling at the same time. Each description of the self contained comparisons, putting forward pictures that stood in contrast to others. If the very basic definition of the self requires contrast or opposition, where does that leave Sylvester's argument of 'homelessness'?

Edward Said saw Orientalism as in a way productive, producing ideas that describe the represented object in a hegemonic way. The culture of the producers of such ideas "gains strength and identity" by contrasting with the other as a "sort of surrogate and underground self".[363]

Some Marxist feminists express this otherising process equating the division of third and first world to one of capitalist exploitation; what is described sometimes as the King-Kong syndrome: "... the King Kong syndrome. [This] is the cross-cultural syndrome in which the

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[362] C. Sylvester, op.cit., p. 207.
[363] E. Said, op.cit., p. 3.

'third world', as the site of the 'raw' material that is 'monstrosity', is produced for the surplus-value of spectacle, entertainment, and spiritual enrichment for the 'first world'".[364]

Examples of universalising categorisations are numerous in feminist analyses, whether 'western' or 'non-western': e.g. when illustrating women as a homogenous 'powerless' group located as victims of particular socio-economic systems; when descriptive gender differences are transformed into the division between men and women. Women are constituted as a group via dependency relationships vis-à-vis men, who are implicitly held responsible for these relationships; women being constituted as women through the complex interaction between class, culture, religion, and other ideological institutions and frameworks. Instead of analytically demonstrating the production of women as socio-economic groups within particular local contexts, this analytical move of this kind of use of 'women' as a group, as a stable category of analysis, which assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalised notion of their subordination, limits the definition of the female subject to gender identity, completely bypassing social class and ethnic identities. What characterises women as a group is their gender (sociologically, not necessarily biologically, defined) over and above everything else, indicating a monolithic notion of sexual difference. Because women are thus constituted as a coherent group, sexual difference becomes coterminous with female subordination, and power is automatically defined in binary terms: people who have it (read: men), and people who do not (read: women). Men exploit, women are exploited. Such simplistic formulations are historically reductive; they are also ineffectual in designing strategies to combat oppressions [being totally static, there is no escape]. All they do is reinforcing binary divisions between men and women.[365]

In line with Sylvester's confident theorisation, Tani Barlow claims that neither the biologically defined woman nor the culturally constructed and static concept of 'woman' is viable: "Examined historically, neither 'woman' nor 'women' survives as a universal, transcendental signifier; no one sign is ever exactly reducible to the forms, terms, and constructions of any other, ...".[366]

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[364] Rey Chow, "Violence in the Other Country - China as Crisis, Spectacle and Woman" in C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), op.cit., p. 84.

[365] C.T. Mohanty, op.cit., pp. 57-64.

[366] T. Barlow, "Politics and Protocols of Funü" in C. Gilmartin, G. Hershatter et al. (eds.), Engendering China - Women, Culture and the State (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994) p. 358.

We can see at least the beginning of a trend in today's International Relations to move away from the dichotomisation that has developed from the separation of fact and value, going towards more pointed research with less universal assertions. This becomes clear when examining the tenor within the feminist branch of IR, which since the beginning called for and 'individualisation' of IR theories, with its already out-of-date claim of 'the personal is the political'. In fact this becomes clear when we examine almost every single critical movement against realist and Neorealist theorisations putting states in the agent's roles and placing the morality of state's and over and above individual moral assertions. At the same time awareness for the need of interdisciplinary research, a more holistic approach of inter-domain bridge building and a link-up of theory and practice are sought, as shown in the programme for the 1998 Millennium Conference:

> "Millennium's 1998 conference will focus on the following issue areas within international studies in order to engage theories of gender(s) with international practices: - ecology and technology - peace and conflict - refugees and migration. The conference is intended to move away from the women-only focus. It will be inter-disciplinary, featuring presenters theorising on the feminine, the masculine, the homosexual, and the transgendered. It will enable researchers from anthropology, sociology, law and politics -- as well as speakers from the NGO and international organisations communities -- to contribute to a new vision of the international. It is intended to create a thinking space for cross-fertilisation between theory and practice".[367]

The pros and cons of universal categorisation is stated by Prof. Sha: "Current western theorising on women's studies are in part taken over in China, as there are some similarities between women's requirements in China and the west; but there are many specificities to be respected about women in China: cultural, ethnic, and social pressures; rapid economic development etc".[368]

As we have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter there are different definitions of 'third world women', some putting third world down to economic development, others to a specific political line, others see geographical limits. In developmental terms, development "is often seen as synonymous with wider forms of social and economic change, particularly the

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[367] Gkelson@kentlaw.edu, "Millennium Conference" (by email, 14.5.1998, 14:58:53).
[368] Prof. Sha Lianxiang, Director of the People's University's Women's Studies Centre, Beijing (Beijing Renmin Daxue Nüxing Xuexin), in an interview 5.5.1998.

spread and development of capitalist social relations. The question of what constitutes development and how to go about achieving it has been hotly debated".[369]

Different development approaches are gendered in different ways, according to Waylen:

> "Modernisation theory said very little specifically about women. In addition to recognising that in the transition from 'traditional' to 'modern' societies, some of the traditional values deemed necessary to modern society were maintained by women in the family (such as affectivity), it was believed that modernisation would be emancipatory for women, as industrialisation, technology and modern values would undermine the patriarchy of traditional society giving women increased access to economic resources. ... the 'welfare approach' to women and development, [which] identified women as a vulnerable group, needing help particularly in their reproductive role. ... (the) 'equity approach' acknowledged women's productive as well as reproductive role and started from the negative assumption that economic development strategies had often had a negative effect on women. ... The anti-poverty approach [therefore] stressed income-generating projects for poor women, often ignoring their reproductive roles and their interconnection with productive roles and without the emphasis on increasing women's autonomy that the equity approach had implied. ... [Empowerment] ... brings questions of power and politics, widely defined, to the top of the agenda. In a rejection of the top-down imposition of many development schemes the focus has shifted towards bottom-up development. This entails a vibrant civil society created through grassroots collective organising. Acknowledging difference between women, this also necessitates greater consideration of the construction of identities and interests and highlights the need for alliances between different groups of women".[370]

In terms of the cultural, political, and the social, the notion of third world means for women that differences are interpreted according to the dominating system of values: "At its most abstract level, it is the fact of the differential assignation of tasks according to sex that is significant; however, this is quite different from the meaning or value that the content of this sexual division of labour assumes in different contexts".[371]

Concretely, the value attributed to certain statuses is probably not one locals would attribute to given situations. "That women mother in a variety of societies is not as significant as the value attached to mothering in these societies. The distinction between the act of mothering and the status attached to it is a very important one - one that needs to be stated and analysed contextually".[372]

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[369] G. Waylen, op.cit., p. 36.
[370] Ibid., pp. 36-44.
[371] C.T. Mohanty, op.cit., p. 67.
[372] Ibid., p. 60.

As we examine here the conditions and requirements of Chinese women we must first ask how Chinese women fit the image of 'third world women'. As we have explained before, this is not a static and homogenous definition and the following questions ensue:

- Does China really represent or is it part of the 'third world'?

This question looks at the rural (i.e. underdeveloped) - urban (i.e. developed) split that is fundamental in China mainly due to the government's constant efforts to develop the cities and urban industries first. It also examines where and how the country China fits into existing definitions of 'third world'.

- Are 'Chinese women' 'third world women'?

As a suite to the first question the terms of 'third world women' and 'Chinese women' have to be defined and analysed.

- Is the term 'Chinese women' useful and real?

Following the determination of the term 'Chinese women' we must ask how useful this term really is and decide when it is useful to make more individual analyses or when a generalised notion is more appropriate.

- What are their requirements/needs?

Developing the argument from the general (women - third world women - Chinese women - individual women) we must look at their needs and requirements at each level of analysis. From there we can follow their articulation in the runup to the Beijing FWCW

In China, over the past 5 to 10 years, more and more Women's Studies Centres have appeared within universities, institutions and at several governmental levels. In contrast to western women's studies, in China they have never stood alone, but women's studies are always linked up to other disciplines, especially from the social sciences domain, such as philosophy, economy, management, history, linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology etc. Women's issues are thus found at the junctions of two or more disciplines, building bridges ... a trend only now developing in western academia as shows the programme of the Millennium Conference of Sept. 1998 quoted earlier. It is also in part, where this thesis wants

to locate itself, one of its goals being bridge building between the discipline of IR, women's studies/Feminism and the widening of the concept of 'international'.

Examining the question if China is part of the 'third world' we quickly go through our definitions again: the colonisation approach would not be a satisfactory reason to count China among third world countries. In fact many Tibetans claim that China is a colonising country instead.[373] China's economic growth rate centring around a yearly growth of 8%[374] its industrial build-up[375] and partial political non-alignment (China is not a member of NAM (non-alignment movement) but attended NAM's more recent conferences as an observer. During the Cold War, China often sought the role of speaker for non-aligned countries, never joining the movement itself, which was founded in the early 1960s by Thailand and Yugoslavia) all of certainly speak in favour of China being part of the third world. But it nevertheless considers itself to be non-aligned when the Foreign Affairs Vice-Minister, Wang Yingfan, claims in an interview: "We do not seek alliance nor do we agree with bloc politics. Therefore we pursue a policy of independence and non-alignment to the point that we are not even a member of the non-aligned movement".[376]

Within the Chinese population third world people or third world women are less evident to position. This is due to the fact that there are multiple ethnicities all with their own cultural and historical baggage, that the country is vast and hosts a population that lives in totally different conditions of climate and geography, and that economic development is more likely to happen in urban centres, leaving the countryside further and further behind (linked to this is a social net of protection and education).[377] As it is the case of third world women, there is no homogenous group of people that we can call Chinese women without major distortions.

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[373] Internet source: http://www.tibet.com/Humanrights/Unpo/con.html, Tibet.

[374] See IMF Report 17/09/97 at http://www.recoletos.es/expansion/dossier/noticia11.htm (China's GDP growth continuous at 10%), also see Big Emerging Markets: Economic Profile 1996 at http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/hies97/b/tab3.htm, p. 1 (GDP growth rate: 9,7%, Industrial production growth 13,1%).

[375] See C. Mackerras, A. Yorke, The Cambridge Handbook of Contemporary China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 160 and Big Emerging Markets: Economic Profile 1996 at http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/hies97/b/tab3.htm, p. 1 (Industrial production growth 13,1%).

[376] Internet source: http://www.asian-affairs.com/vol1-n1/2wangyingfang.html: Serge Berthier, One World, Many Systems.

[377] See map in Appendix 1, China's Special Economic Zones, http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/hies97/b/fig3.jpg.

On the other hand, if we take up Mohanty's argument of 'common context of struggle' we can perhaps discover more links among Chinese women or third world women. The problematique of this concept lies not only in the extreme complexity of its realisation, but also in the deliberate decision that this 'common context of struggle' makes the categories of 'third world women' or 'Chinese women' more viable than the one of 'women'. Here again it is mainly a matter of choosing what is acceptable as basic category. Is it 'women'? (And isn't there a 'common context of struggle' to be found of women); is it 'Chinese women' or 'third world women' (or isn't it just nativising the problematique if we prefer the latter categories to the category 'women'?). These are decisions that cannot be taken lightly and have to be taken in accordance of the goals the project/ research and theorising are oriented towards.

Women's issues are not new to China, in fact post 1949, the revolutionary government has emphasised the importance of women over and over, protecting them through laws and decrees and enlarging their social and civil rights in order for them to carry the revolution.

> "China implemented the most determined social engineering policy aimed at eradicating the sexual division of labour and associated attitudes. The Marriage Law of 1950 laid down the principles of equality between the sexes, monogamy, freedom to choose marital partners and the right to sue for divorce, marking a break away from Confucian patriarchal values which supported an essentialist conception of the difference between the sexes and sharply segregated roles for men and women. ... Success was greatest in eradicating centuries-old perceptions of sex differences in ability and in the practice of male dominance in the household. There was also substantial success in eradicating the sexual division of labour: a low-wage full-employment policy made it necessary for all adults to work and hence for couples to share domestic work as well. However, in 1988, after the economic reform programme begun at the end of the 1970s had introduced a new climate of opinion, there was a major public debate over a new trend for women to withdraw from wage work and their reasons for doing so. A survey carried out in Beijing in November 1993 showed that one-quarter of all women, one-third of wives and two-fifth of men accepted the sexual division of labour as the ideal to aim for".[378]

Going back in history for a moment we take a look at the Taiping Uprising (which saw the opposition of Confucian values with pseudo-Christianity from the 1840s under Hong Xiuquan) and included many women, especially from minorities like the Hakka. This example shows that even before the reform years and subsequently the Communist take-over, women have been included in what was traditionally understood as male domains (fighting wars,

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[378] C. Hakim, Key Issues in Women's Work: Female Heterogeneity and the Polarisation of Women's Employment (London: Athlone Press Ltd., 1996) p. 95.

holding higher offices etc.) "Women were organised into special residential administrative units, were allowed to hold supervisory offices in the bureaucracy and to sit for their own special examinations".[379] The land conquered from the Qing was divided among all Taiping families with women and men holding equal shares.[380]

After a phase of social unrest in China at the beginning of the 20th century it came to the revolution opposing the Qing government and finally overthrowing it. 1.1.1912 the First Republic of China was formed under Sun Yatsen's interim presidency in Nanjing. Only a month later the Qing Emperor abdicated and two thousand years of dynastic system in China came to an end. In the first revolutionary phase leading to the founding of the First Republic, some women played important roles and many asked to join the Revolutionary Army and in some Chinese cities, like for example Shanghai, women's forces were established in rapid succession.[381] Women at that time placed revolutionary goals before feminist ones, in order to change society and the old, hated system. Also, they no longer accepted to differentiate between men and women assuming same abilities and capabilities with same training. It is not surprising that many of these revolutionary women came out of the ranks of physical education institutes. Most of them came from the top layers of society, with access to education and information and instead of asking for a reform of the national family system or programmes to educate rural women, they were quick to ask for equal rights, according to their status within the new republic. Out of touch with the masses and unaware and unable to comprehend the nature of the existence of women factory workers or peasant women, this early feminist movement in China was out of touch with the largest part of the Chinese female population. Sun Yatsen seemed willing enough to concede the right of vote to women and treat them as equals to men, were it not for pressures particularly from the United Party (supporting a constitutional monarchy) to uphold "the beautiful customs and good laws of traditional China".[382] In fact the Provisional Constitution of March 1912 stated in section II, art. 5: "all the people of China are equal, without distinction as to race, class or religion".[383] No mention was made on gender, sex or women. Giving in to demands of women's suffrage groups that had sprung up all over the country after the proclamation of the First Republic

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[379] J.D. Spence, The Search for Modern China (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999) pp. 174-5.
[380] Ibid., p. 175.
[381] Fan Hong, Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom - The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1997) p. 96 .
[382] Ibid., p. 98.
[383] Ibid., p. 99.

Sun Yatsen promised to enlarge the National Provisional Parliament to include women delegates, but the conservative Yuan Shikai replaced him in April 1912 already. Under this new presidency a wave of Confucian revivalism swept the country, restoring the worship of Confucius and making learning his doctrine compulsory in all schools. The official version of cultural repression of women stated that they were best suited to attend to family duty, as social duty was too heavy a burden for them. Bearing children was seen as the natural destiny of women. The past reactionary ideals became the present. Women that had participated in the revolution and had become public figures were attacked as being immoral. The ideal woman once again was seen as gentle, passive, subordinate and fragile and physiological difference served once over as cover-up for male domination and control. Elitarian Feminism and its oppression by a reactionary post-revolutionary government, although somewhat loosened with the May Fourth Movement triggered by the Versailles Treaties in 1919, was to be taken one step further and spread within the entire population under communism.

Mrs. Chiang Kaishek or Song Meiling, as well as Mrs. Song Qingling (Sun Yatsen's wife), her elder sister, probably were among the first women of modern power. The three Song sisters had all been educated in America before their return to China and their subsequent marriages to leading men of their time. Both heavily involved in politics through their husbands as well as personally, they had access to international power. In a letter Qingling wrote about Meiling: "she has given the widest publicity to China's cause and as she herself remarked to a gathering of admiring throng, 'I have shown Americans that China is not made up entirely of coolies and laundrymen!'".[384] Furthermore, when Chiang Kaishek was captured in Xian, Meiling asked Qingling to get an influential communist to Nanjing (the capital).[385] Both women stood very clearly in the political limelight of their times, as well as, later on, Jiang Qing, Mao Zedong's first wife.

A big step towards this liberation of women were the rural Soviets set up between 1929 and 1934. The CCP (Chinese Communist Party) was established in Shanghai in July 1921. It made the liberation of women a major point in its policy platform in order to gain support and

[384] I. Epstein, Woman in World History - Soong Ching Ling (Mme. Sun Yatsen) (Beijing: New World Press, 1995, 2nd Edition) pp. 418-9.
[385] Ibid.. pp. 318-9.

strengthen the party thanks to the endorsement of the 'other' half of the Chinese population: women. As soon as in 1923 the CCP already recognised women's right to vote after declaring the equality of rights for men and women and aiming for the freedom from feudal culture and society. Mao Zedong, one of the founders of the CCP himself noted the oppression of women: "Mao Zedong (1883 - 1976), ..., explained ... that women were especially oppressed. As well as being dominated by three systems - political, clan, religious - a condition they shared with men, they were also dominated by men within the family".[386] The Chinese communists endorsed Marx's observation that the degree of women's emancipation was the measure for emancipation in general.[387] Nevertheless, they did not actually support feminist groups and emancipatory ideologies criticising them as western and bourgeois. In other words what came first was the 'people's liberation from feudal oppression', only now and then coinciding with women's issues and demands. The process of women's liberation was thus only part of a bigger scheme belonging to the larger process of the liberation of the working class. Mao linked the equality of women to the good outcome of the revolution, therefore putting women's issues at the basis of the revolutionary process: "Mao Zedong stated: 'The day when women of all China stand up, will be the time of the achievement of the Chinese revolutionary victory'".[388]

In 1927, after the Nationalist Party's coup, the CCP split from it, retreating to rural bases, while the NP occupied the cities. In the country the CCP started to carefully organise the peasants and established the so-called Soviets, which stood for any area controlled by the CCP, which were mostly rural military bases. In these areas women obtained rights put down in official documents granting women the right to vote and equal pay for equal work. It also included sets of Marriage Laws (1931 and 1934, giving women the right to choose a husband and the right to divorce, later withdrawn, as well as the right to dispose of property and have control of the children from a marriage).[389] Women were also encouraged to take up military activities in order to build up the Red Army corps to oppose the Nationalist Army under Chiang Kaishek, as well as provincial warlords and the militant images of women in the Chinese Soviets helped not only the Red Army to grow from 10'000 in 1928 to 70'000 in

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[386] Fan Hong, op.cit., p. 150.
[387] K. Marx, F. Engels, The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Critique (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956) p. 67.
[388] Fan Hong, op.cit., p. 204.
[389] D. Davin "Women in the Liberated Areas" in M.B. Young (ed.), Women in China: Studies in Social Change and Feminism (Ann Arbor: Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1973).

1930, but also to give women a burst of self-confidence and to put aside age-old ideas about women's destiny and stereotyped femininity. In 1934 the Nationalists were successful and the Communists retreated further into the countryside to reorganise and began the Long March, which by October 1935 took them, after unbelievable losses, to Shanxi in the northwest. The Japanese invasion transformed China's civil war into a national war and once again the Communists and Nationalists united into a 'United Front' against their invader. China-internally, however, they remained split, controlling separate parts of the country. Although the Communists only controlled a small part of China in 1936, but one not invaded by the Japanese (with ca. 1 million population under their control)[390] they managed to make use of the Japanese invasion and over the following 15 years spread all over China. The continuing advocacy of women's emancipation certainly helped them on the road to success. This "liberation" was a slow and gradual process, however, Chinese women fell prey to another regulating and commanding culture, namely that of communism! - Nationalists on the other hand held on to traditional ideas of femininity and womanhood. But the era's pressures forced them too to selectively work towards the advancement of women. The difference in goals just was that while the Communists sought to establish a new order, the Nationalists wanted to revive the old order! - In 1949 the Communists won the civil war that raged from 1945-49 and Chiang Kaishek and his government had to flee to Taiwan while the Communists took over mainland China. On March 24 1949 the First National Women's Congress convened, announcing the formation of the All China Federation of Democratic Women. 1950 saw a new Marriage Law issued giving women anew the right to choose and divorce their husbands; and it was revised in 1980. De facto these rights were frequently violated with the "sale of women and girls into marriage, forcible marriage of widows, purchase of brides, or parental negotiation of children's marriage in exchange for various forms of 'bride price'".[391]

The First All-China Women's Congress of April 1949 recognised that women had to be active in production in order to raise their position and improve their standards of living.[392] But being traditionally restricted to domestic labour, they needed to get involved in socially productive labour and with the advent of the Great Leap Forward in 1957 women and

[390] Fan Hong, op.cit., p. 191.
[391] Ibid., p. 300.
[392] Ibid.

children were mobilised by the women's movement to actively participate in agricultural and industrial production:

> "... when I was six, I started going to primary school about twenty minutes' walk from home, mostly along muddy cobbled back alleys. Every day on my way to and from school, I screwed up my eyes to search every inch of ground for broken nails, rusty cogs, and any other metal objects that had been trodden into the mud between the cobbles. These were for feeding into the furnaces to produce steel, which was my major occupation. Yes, at the age of six, I was involved in steel production, and had to compete with my schoolmates at handing in the most scrap iron. ... In my school crucible-like vats had replaced some of our cooking works and were sitting on the giant stoves in the kitchen. All our scrap iron was fed into them, including the old woks that had now been broken to bits. The stoves were kept permanently lit – until they melted down. ... We did not have many lessons, as the teachers were too preoccupied with the vats. So were the older, teenage children. The rest of us were organised to clean the teacher's apartments and baby-sit for them".[393]

The government established facilities such as kindergartens, nurseries, and seweries as well as public dining places to free women from domestic labour. But many of them, especially in the countryside, needed to take care of the fields, added on to their domestic tasks: "Agriculture was also neglected because of the priority given to steel. ... The fields were often left to women and children, who had to do everything by hand, as the animals were busy making their contribution to steel production".[394] This resulted in minimal harvests and a great famine in China. Even in this crisis situation women were made responsible and the old Chinese saying of 'no matter how capable, a woman cannot make a meal without food' was transformed into 'capable women can make a meal without food'. These exaggerated rhetorics increased pressure on women and had suddenly become concrete demands.[395] The economic and political failure of the Great Leap Forward put a temporary end to this and although the women's movement felt once again deceived, many women remained in productive roles outside their homes and families. In 1966, the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, launched by Mao Zedong, the conservative view of women was yet again challenged with the attack on all inequality and women taking part in all sorts of cultural and political activities. But the Cultural Revolution failed to achieve its preset goal of permanently radicalising the nation. It was a disaster on all levels: political, economic, cultural and intellectual. However, from the point of view of the women's movement its significance lay in the redefinition of femininity, to change self-image, which in a way is revealing about the

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[393] Jung Chan, Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China (London: Harper Collins, 1993) pp. 291-2.
[394] Ibid., p. 299.
[395] Ibid., p. 295.

relative impotence of laws in the face of tradition.[396] Mao died in 1976 and subsequently the 'Gang of Four' were arrested by his successor Hua Guofeng. 2 years later, namely in December 1978, Deng Xiaoping came to power. But women in China are far from having achieved equality in conditions of work, pay or education.[397]

It is often stated that the influence of Confucianism has made women fail to achieve equality with men under communism. Marxism as well as communism are to blame. Marxist writing seems often 'gender-neutral', giving the economic context supremacy over any other issues. In fact they believed that the oppression of women would automatically disappear with the destruction of the oppressing class and the redistribution of the means of production. In China, women's interests were always submitted to a bigger framework. Although Chinese women have risen up at several occasions this century, they have done it either for the nationalist achievements of the First Republic, or later within the wider goals of the Communist Revolution. It seems that even now women's lot is subordinate to economic development and political realities, organised under the umbrella of the All-China Women's Federation, a state-controlled and -organised organ of the Communist government taking its roots in the revolutionary state of 1949.

The CCP had to deal with bigger questions of ideology and doctrine when its assumption of power became a possibility around the 1940s and it no longer was a marginal opposition movement with limited territorial dominance involved in continuous conflict. It therefore had to set out its political aims clearly in order to obtain direction and support for the revolution. This strategy was formulated by Mao Zedong in several works including his 'New Democracy' which, according to Christiansen and Rai[398] best sums up the transformational policies in China at the time. The meaning was that the new democratic revolution including the Chinese proletariat and bourgeoisie and led by the Communists stood in opposition to the 'old democratic revolution' of 1911 that had failed. Its only success had, according to the Communists' understanding, been the abdication of the infant Emperor, but it did not achieve to abolish feudal land rights still relying on the gentry for political power, nor did it free China from foreign domination expressed in the unfair treaties of Versailles in 1919. Mao therefore

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[396] Fan Hong, op.cit., p. 302.
[397] M. Wolf, Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China (London: Methuen, 1987).
[398] F. Christiansen, S. Rai, Chinese Politics and Sociev - An Introduction (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall Europe, 1996) p. 71.

saw 2 stages in his 'new revolution', the first achieving the ideals of the 'old revolution', the second realising the socialist revolution.

Mao's reformulation of 'dialectical materialism' is based upon his claim that all phenomena are composed of main and subsidiary contradictions. It was important to resolve first the main contradiction - in this case the Chinese people versus its enemies; a notion only indirectly based upon class analysis as it grounded on the assumption that the owning classes were opposed to the 'new revolution', while the poor classes supported it. This definition was problematic and turned around from defining classes according to their economic status to defining an individual's class by his adherence or non-adherence to the new revolution.[399] The economic development focused on small capitalist production units in the rural areas, while the cities were to be dominated by large capitalist enterprises under state control. After the approximate achievement of the goals of the new revolution's first stage, Mao pressed for the second stage. People identified as 'bourgeoisie' suddenly changed position from supporters of the new revolution (phase 1) to enemies of the people (phase 2) as exploiters of the working classes. The second stage aimed at transferring the means of production into public ownership. When this was achieved, according to Marxist theories, the concept of classes became obsolete, as there were no longer exploiters and exploitees. More on the political foundations of modern China from 1945 to Beijing's FWCW will be reviewed in a special chapter (7a).

Molyneux argues that this interest in women by the Chinese Communists was not genuinely for the good of women, rather a coincidence of goals found in the effort to mobilise women to support the revolutionary cause: "... there is a coincidence between the goals of socialist development and women's emancipation. While the reforms remove some of the material and ideological bases of extreme inequalities, however, they do not secure the conditions for equality and this was not their primary aim".[400]

The legislation made in the effort to engage women into political and economic activities, eroding patriarchal authority coincided with the changing views on sexual division the government promoted at different times. During the mobilisation efforts, women entered

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[399] Ibid., p. 73.
[400] M. Molyneux, "Family reform in socialist states: the hidden agenda" in Feminist Review (Nr. 21, 1985) p. 49.

the public sphere, overthrowing traditional imagery, At first, essentialism seemed to help improve women's status as during the Chinese revolution: "A new female image replaced that of the traditional woman who, slight of build and restrained of body, had been characterised by an aura of feminine restraint and resignation. ... Smiling, rosy-cheeked and wide-eyed, 'Iron Girls' wore the unisex blue trouser suit and displayed strength and gesture of no different from their male peers".[401]

On the longer term, though, it proved rather counterproductive, as the uniformity of the sexes disadvantaged women, mainly for their specific reproductive functions. "As 'Iron Girls', women penetrated male spaces hitherto denied to them to become men of women or as one of Mao's poems would have it, young female militants were likened to 'sons of China'".[402] In Chinese communist literature and plays this image is reflected over and over again. In 'The White Haired Girl' a peasant girl serving the local tyrant that had tortured her father to death manages to flee to the mountains where she hides and lives in great hardship, the cause of her hair turning white. With the liberation of her village by the PLA she joins the Red Army corps, living now for the goals of the revolution and therefore becomes a heroine for peasant's liberation. Peasant liberation is also the theme of 'The Red Detachment of Women', where a poor peasant girl joins the PLA, but lacking discipline she kills the landlord that previously enslaved and beat her at first sight. Through the revolutionary teaching she learns though, that she has to devote her life to the good of everyone, pursuing the revolution's goals, and cannot act to take vengeance for personal reasons. Jiang Qing, Mao's second wife, an ex-actress from Shanghai, chose six theatre pieces and 2 ballets as so-called 'yanban' (models) in order to teach the masses about the goals of the revolution and gain support. We make a more in-depth analysis of Chinese communist art and its importance and impact in chapter 7.[403]

However, the change to a differential focus, where the sexes are no longer equated, but indeed seen as specific, did not correct this likening of the sexes - it raised age-old precepts again seeing women primarily as 'good wives and mothers'. In fact Confucian,

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[401] E. Croll, Changing Identities of Chinese Women - Rhetoric, Experience and Self-Perception in Twentieth-Century China (London: Zed Books, 1995) p. 71.

[402] Ibid., p. 100.

[403] Information on plays from M. Ebon (ed.), Five Chinese Communist Plays (New York: The John Day Company, 1975) and discussions with Chinese friends.

traditional concepts have never totally been eradicated in China, although forbidden and widely criticised as bourgeois under the communist regime, its age-old presence have made Confucianism an integral part of Chinese culture and philosophy at all levels. Apart from the concepts of male superiority contained within, it mainly gives rules of behaviour in social interaction and disciplinary guidelines. (cf. chapter 7)

Although modern China has put gender equality on its priority list, equality has not been achieved yet, however, women's lot has changed to more freedoms and choices.

> "China, like other socialist states, ideologically commits itself to gender equality, and through strong policies has promoted high female participation in the workforce; mobilises and organises women in the All-China Women's Federation [ACWF]; ensures a high rate of female representation in political bodies; and actively protects women from violence and hardship. Chinese women, however, do not have real political equality with men. ... they normally do not have positions of significant power".[404]

Not only do women not normally hold high power positions in the government; if they do, it is mostly in a 'predestined area' for women, because "for women, the main pathways to political recognition and political posts are within the sphere specifically earmarked for women within the system, e.g. the All-China Women's Federation. ... Chinese political life is predictably male dominated, but individual cases of women within leading positions indicate a certain tolerance towards women in politics, and also provide some scattered role models for younger women".[405]

Women's status remains a big issue under the reform and post-reform governments. Not only have more laws been promulgated (e.g. after 1950, the 1980 amended Marriage Law;[406] Constitutional amendments in 1982 contained in §§34, 48 and 49;[407] the 1992 National Law for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women).[408] Davin argues that "despite the obvious limits and constraints there is also much greater tolerance for private

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[404] F. Christiansen, S. Rai, <u>Chinese politics and society: an introduction</u> (London: Prentice Hall, 1996) p. 115.

[405] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 117.

[406] See **Appendix 2** (1950 Marriage Law , selected articles) from F. Christiansen, S. Rai, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp. 277-8; 1980 Marriage Law from Y. Hayase, S. Kawamata, <u>Population Policy and Vital Statistics in China</u> (Tokyo, Institute of Developing Economies, 1991) pp. 227-230.

[407] <u>Constitution of the People's Republic of China (adopted at the Fifth Session of the Fifth National People's Congress and Promulgated for Implementation by the Proclamation of the National People's Congress on December 4, 1982)</u> (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994, Third Edition, transl. by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress).

[408] See E. Croll, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp. 184-192.

and grassroots debate or dissent".[409] But it is still a long way away from the equality ideal; not least because the laws were not, or not sufficiently enforced, hence implementation is difficult: "law is a process in which implementation is an important procedure. The implementation of many laws guaranteeing women equal status has in fact proved difficult. Gender inequality exists everywhere in China".[410]

Davin argues that Chinese society and therefore women's lives have undergone big changes during the twentieth century, in real terms as well as on an academic level "After 1949, most writing on women reflected current party policy. ... It informed its audience about policy and contrasted the misery and oppression suffered by women in the old society with the enormous improvements offered under the new".[411] But during the reform era women's specialness has been emphasised in combination with a relaxation of policies concerning women. Achieving this equality has always been a slogan and issue for the PRC. We have discussed earlier the change from the private sphere as women's domain to their projection into the public domain with the onset of the Chinese revolution. This has reversed under the reform government and the awakening economic development pushing women back into the private.

> "... since the beginning of the reforms, official sources have often emphasised the special role of women and their physiological limitations, implying or even arguing that at least a degree of division of labour based on gender is necessary and desirable. An officially backed campaign for women to be 'virtuous wives and good mothers (a Confucian concept once condemned in Maoist China), and to create good harmonious families has flourished since the early 1980s. ... such contradictory views reflect the comparative lack of consensus on social development in China today".[412]

While during the revolution years women's rights were stressed for mobilisation purposes, their identity as 'women' or women were simultaneously suppressed by the leading identity of 'revolutionary'.

> "The explanation for women's lower participation in all kinds of political activities is again the change in the political climate. There is no longer any real pressure to appoint even token numbers of women to political office and indeed male political officials may be reluctant to see them in plum jobs. On the other hand women are less willing than in the past to take on the voluntary political

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[409] D. Davin, 'Chinese Women: Media concerns and the politics of reform' in H. Afshar, Women and Politics in the Third World (London: Routledge, 1996) p. 93.
[410] Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Min Kanfeng "Empowering Women Through Formal Education" (University of Utrecht, Institute of Social Studies Den Haag, October 1994).
[411] D. Davin, in H. Afshar, op.cit., p. 93.
[412] Ibid.

responsibilities of a party member or a low-level street committee member because it is no longer regarded as praiseworthy for them to take this time away from family responsibilities. There can be no doubt that although women as part of the general population have benefited from China's growing prosperity, the reforms have adversely affected women in certain specific ways. Growing discrimination against women has been noted in many spheres of employment". [413]

Women's political participation decreased for several reasons, not only due to the change in political climate that did no longer require women's full support, but also due to economic development and the inconveniences of market-economy which makes them less eligible for jobs: "... once political pressure not to discriminate was reduced, employers simply felt freer to follow their prejudices". [414] Additionally Davin mentions women's lower willingness to voluntarily serve the state's cause, not least due to the renewed change in social mentality that led women back into the private sphere. "Much discussion centres around the conflict between socially approved qualities of 'virtuous wives and good mothers' and the ideal of the newly independent modern woman. A popular TV series entitled 'Women are not the Moon' [415] centred on this female dilemma". [416]

Davin sees several sources of influence for Feminism in China: (1) western Feminisms, although often decried as bourgeois have found an entry into China through study of foreign books, travel and globalisation through the media; (2) exchanges between academics and the establishment of Women's Studies Centres in China; (3) development and aid agencies in part working with and for women. [417]

Croll agrees that women in China still have some way to go to reach their full potential, underlining problems such as "equal pay for equal work, full representation in leadership groups, the breaking down of traditional role differentiation in the domestic and public spheres". [418] The problems she sees women in China face nowadays are the ambiguity of self-image: "Young women, especially, feel themselves to be hovering within a plurality of expectations originating from a variety of sources including state, family and male, so the identification of 'proper' or 'appropriate' female behaviour and priorities seem difficult in the

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[413] Ibid., p. 96.

[414] Ibid., p. 97.

[415] "A woman is not the moon. She can shine by her own light" from Bai Fengxi, The Women Trilogy (Beijing: Panda Books, 1991, transl. by Guan Yuehua) p. 75.

[416] E. Croll, op.cit., (1986) p. 157.

[417] Ibid., pp. 100-1.

[418] E. Croll, Feminism and Socialism in China (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) p. 331.

absence of a single rhetoric defining proper female needs and interests appropriate to a modern woman".[419] The confusion is also a cultural one, with an attempt to define a Chinese womanhood in contrast to a perceived western womanhood, relying on specific cultural, often traditional imagery.

> "Official rhetoric might continue to have a hand in shaping a hybrid or ambiguous Chinese-western image for today's modern Chinese women, women of most ages might experience tension and confusion in meeting a pluralism of mixed Chinese and western expectations, but more than ever before China's youngest daughters expect to assume a cosmopolitan culture".[420]

Nowadays, women are frequently discriminated against in their effort of economic participation (a phenomenon observed in the post-war west of the 1950s, after the reconstruction years).

> "The prejudices against women [in work] mainly focus on (a) child-birth, maternity leave, menstrual instability and the effects of menopause on productivity; (b) less physical strength than men; (c) less assertiveness in negotiations; and (d) the expectation that women will yield to popular views of the role of women, e.g. they will marry, will support the husband's career rather than their own, and will follow the husband wherever he may be relocated".[421]

The ACWF, creation, development and functions:

Although the communist regime of the PRC called the ACWF into life as early as in 1950, women's debates have never really left the political cadre given by the government and the ACWF's efficiency is therefore questionable. Not only have the laws and amendments been made top-down, the creation of the ACWF did not follow grassroots demands but was a 'gift' from the government.

> "The movement for the emancipation of Chinese women is a component of the Chinese revolution; it has not become an independent movement. Chinese women have no history of struggle to win the right to vote and to stand for election; rather, the victory of the Chinese revolution granted Chinese women to participate politically. The Chinese revolution gave women legal equality. ... The women's rights movement in China thus possesses a special form different from that of women's rights movements in the west, for it does not strive to win women's rights from a government by men".[422]

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[419] E. Croll, op.cit., (1996) p. 171
[420] Ibid., p. 179.
[421] F. Christiansen, S. Rai, op.cit., p. 249.
[422] B.J. Nelson, N. Chowdhury (eds.), Women and Politics Worldwide (Ann Arbor: Yale University, 1994) p. 162.

Due to its dependence from the government, the ACWF cannot always take the required decisions for the advancement of women, but must primarily follow the party line. It is, at times, more an organ for the dissemination of party policies than for the empowerment of women in China. The constitution of the ACWF describes:

> "The Women's Federation is a social mass organisation which unites women from various nationalities and all walks of life to strive to further women's emancipation under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The Women's Federation acts as a link between the party and government and the female masses. The major function of the Federation is to represent and protect women's interests and promote their equality with men. The principles of its work are to unite and educate the masses of women, to carry out the party's policies, to defend women's legal rights and interests, and to develop a positive role in carrying forward the cause of women's emancipation in the process of constructing the country for a prosperous and strong, democratic and civilised socialist modernisation".[423]

In her thesis, Min Kanfeng mentions more than once that the ACWF has more often been an obstacle to women's liberation in China than not; mostly due to its direct dependence from the central government.

> "The relationship between the central government and the ACWF is one of 'control-over' and 'under control'. ... There is the assumption that their policies are harmonious and simultaneously working towards the twin goals both contributing to China's socialist development and of benefiting women. The ACWF consequently functions as a voice of the central government in China. ... the government controls the women's movement in China, actually leading the women's movement to pursue the government's core interests first in social and economic development, rather than women's own specific interests".[424]

Probably more recent, informal efforts (especially since the FWCW in 1995) that focus on local problematiques seem more promising, according to Zhang,[425] they may also lead to an improvement of the ACWF's autonomy.

> "... the existence of informal organisations and their activities being carried out at present are helpful for the All-China Women's Federation in better understanding the context of development constraints and identifying the problems faced by women, in recognising the development programme needs of poor women and in making policy recommendations to relevant government departments. This may indicate the long-term development potential for women's organisations in rural China and for fulfilling the targets set by the Federation".[426]

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[423] Zhang Junzuo, "Development in a Chinese Reality: Rural Women's Organisations in China", Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics (Vol. 10, Nr. 4, Dec. 1994) p. 74.

[424] Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Min Kanfeng, op.cit., p. 164.

[425] Zhang Junzuo, op.cit., p. 89.

[426] Ibid., p. 90.

In this way, the ACWF does not become obsolete and superfluous, but stands as an umbrella organisation where all the 'local' threads come together in order to organise holistic policies and lobby efficiently at the concerned places. There are many people, especially women, involved in the work of the ACWF at all levels. Some of them work at grassroots level really trying to improve local shortcomings and therefore acting as important contributor's to local women's lot. The ACWF gives them the means and infrastructure to do this, at least as long as their actions do not stand in gross contradiction with the official policy line.

Nowadays women's participation in politics depends no longer on their support for the state, but largely in their economic participation. "Women's political participation is not regarded as an independent activity; it must be based upon economic participation".[427]

This argument of market-regulation and rights according to economic performance seems precarious, especially for women who, as we have previously seen, are frequently discriminated against in the job-market.

> "The Cultural Revolution improved the position of women by state-mandated official quotas. Reform led to the decline of women's status in some areas and the rise of some elements of civil society in other aspects. Put another way, the most salient question has been the relationship between modernisation and government intervention in promoting women's participation. As WF leaders have suggested, 'women's liberation' will improve along with the development of the productive forces. Indeed, surveys continue to show huge gaps in status between urban and rural women, suggesting the modernisation perspective is indeed relevant. However, a decision to rely solely on the market, with a concomitant reduction of state intervention, seems likely to lead to less rather than more participation in social life by Chinese women, at least in the short term. At the same time, it has contributed to the resurgence of traditional cultural prejudices which have prevented women from taking an active part in public life".[428]

In China the problems are multiple: Traditionally, many factors enforced male dominance, such as philosophies (Confucianism, Chinese Buddhism, Tao), language, the changing political climate, cultural practices etc. (we shall discuss all these points when talking about China's philosophical and cultural backgrounds in chapter 7). But even recently we see an internal Orientalism, due to the heterogeneity of the Chinese population and the increasing rural/urban gap and a persevering dichotomy of the public/private and male/female

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[427] Zhang Junzuo, "Gender and Political Participation in Rural China" in S. Rai, H. Pilkington, A. Phizacklea (eds.) Women in the Face of Change: The Soviet Union. Eastern Europe and China (London: Routledge, 1992) p. 51.
[428] S. Rosen, 'Women and Political Participation in China' in Pacific Affairs (Vol. 68, Nr. 3, Fall 1993) p. 399.

divide. Here it becomes clear that within China the category 'Chinese women' is as generalising as 'women'. Many women in China, apart from being female, live in backward, rural areas and are subjected, consciously or not, to strong traditional formulas. Often they have less access to education, to paid employment etc. They are thus facing multiple disadvantages when compared for example to an educated Beijing city woman. Issues like family planning, that in our sense disrespect the individual's freedom of choice and economic development towards a market-regulated social economy bring new problems for women in China. "To a great extent, Chinese women's problems are social problems. Family planning, for instance, is not only a personal issue for couples but also a national issue about the speed of economic development and, more important, about the future existence of the Chinese nation. ... The future of Chinese women will be closely linked with political and economic development".[429]

The outside world has in the past and still does influence China, not least concerning women's issues: "The discussion and treatment of women's issues in China has been influenced from the outside in various ways. ... Though 'western Feminism' is frequently decried as bourgeois in China, or more politely rejected as irrelevant, there can be no doubt that some of its ideas and methods have had an influence both direct and indirect".[430]

Equality, in any sense, is - like in other parts of the world - far from being achieved, in real terms and even in mentality. Increasingly we become aware of differences among individuals, among individuals of female denomination in China and elsewhere. "At least within the two strata of rural and urban dwellers, differences were essentially eliminated [same food, dress, books and issues with the revolution]. ... In the period since the reforms began in the late 1970s, however, a rapid process of differentiation has appeared in China's cities and countryside".[431]

In fact it is the question of the 'chicken and the egg' ... differentiation has probably always been there, but did not find channels to be expressed. This puts us back at where we started, namely the discussion on theory. We started with the definitions of third world and

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[429] B.J. Nelson, N. Chowdhury (eds.), op.cit., p. 172.
[430] D. Davin, in H. Afshar, op.cit., p. 100.
[431] C. Gilmartin, G. Hershatter et al. (eds.) Engendering China - Women, Culture and the State (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1994) p. 75.

Chinese women and whether China can at all be regarded as 'third world' and whether this step automatically included 'Chinese women' into the wider category of 'third world women'. We have then analysed issues of Orientalism or otherising, specifically in the context of Sylvester's notion of homelessness. Briefly looking at doctrines and their meaning for women in China we took a closer look to their representation through the ACWF. After having discussed the theoretical framework and criticisms brought forward by so-called third world feminists and/or third world women and having taken a closer look at the situation of women in China we come to the conclusion that unless we practice local, specific analyses that lead to real solutions, these women will feel excluded and dominated by western grand theorising with which they cannot identify, where they cannot find truth for themselves. To this we have to oppose two points: first this contains inherent criticism of Sylvester's empathetic cooperation, which does not seem to be practically applicable, not even when starting from the point of view of the oppressed ... but how to homestead without transforming, attaching to specific values that we claim as ours? - Secondly, the increasing specialisation splits fields into sub-fields and separates disciplines from each other. But we have observed that women's issues certainly transcend the borders of disciplines. Women's issues cannot only be treated in specialist fields such as women's studies, but appear at all levels and all locations of theory and practice. This is very much in line with the way women's studies are approached in China, integrated within different social sciences like history, sociology, economics and management, etc. The same phenomenon is observed here, where apart from the specialist fields such as gender studies, women's studies and Feminism, women's issues have found their entrance into the broader domains of, mainly, the social sciences, such as politics and International Relations, history, sociology, anthropology, religious studies etc.; in fact any science dealing with the human individual as its main issue. The scholarly texts used in this thesis, as well as the thesis itself are proof of the entry of women's issues into its disciplinary field of research. The question is whether the extrapolation of such new additions to existing disciplines is required and/or even useful. Our tendency to split up disciplines in order to achieve 'in-depth' knowledge and create new specialists appears to achieve the contrary in the very end: the specialists seem to lose touch with reality, often trying to find grand, overarching theories, detached from all circumstance and background. In theory this may well work, unfortunately the concerned subjects then lack the ability and possibility to identify with these theorisations. The consequence is a dual disciplinary system

that works on two different lines - one practical, one theoretical that is constantly trying not to lag behind the first. It is true that both, as we have discussed earlier on, are a necessary part to a field of research and fulfil different exigencies. We intuitively subscribe to the claim that there is some basic common denominator to women's issues: "... many aspects of women's issues transcend borders. Women worldwide, despite their differences, face many common problems. ... We need communication both at home and abroad, because we have different methods, different thoughts, and different starting points, but the same goal".[432] However, we cannot pinpoint the exact location of these commonalties, nor can we, in the same breath, oversimplify and normatise all theory in our pursuit of truth and trying to be as correct as possible.

It therefore makes sense to consider the usefulness of both, local theorising in view of practical solution-finding and planning for the future; and grand theory in order to get a holistic view and link-up several disciplines with each other.

The requirements of all women, whether western or non-western are to be found on several levels, some personal, some local, some even within a wider community. Women can be split into 'third world women', 'western women', 'African women', 'Chinese women' and far smaller categories. They can also be put together in large classifications, at the limit the category of women (the sexual as well as the constructed changing being with all its identities and complexities).

This should be the new quest of IR in general, the local or even personal inquiry on the one hand, the holistic analysis that brings together different disciplines and fields and hence brings out new evidence of interconnectedness.

In this respect we re-examine the question about the term of Chinese women' and its usefulness. There are several contrasting sides to this term. First of all it seems to draw a line, separating out the group of 'Chinese women' as if within this group there was to find more coherence and homogeneity than, let's say, in the term 'women' itself. Secondly, and as a consequence, we hereby practice a certain form of Orientalism (although China and the Far

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[432] L. Stearns, M.A. Burris (eds.), Reflections and Resonance (Beijing: The Ford Foundation, 1995) p. 302.

East were left out of Said's milestone book): it puts the group of 'Chinese women' apart - on the other side - otherising its subjects, assuming a 'Chineseness' different from our ways. Thirdly it makes the term 'women' itself superfluous, in fact Chris Connery writes: "the danger here is of course that any positioning of the category of 'Chinese women' as a category of political agency will preclude the emergence of women on their own terms".[433]

As we have observed earlier on, both needs exist; one for a more universal category of analysis in order to theorise and the need for more regional or local group as well as individual regard to effectively solve real and pressing problems. This point is not so much in dispute as the question on which theory should be used to analyse vast issues such as 'women's issues'. Can we go ahead and analyse questions in other parts of the world using our theories. Here come the above quoted criticisms of many third world women who feel outspaced, even oppressed by imperialist western theorisation. Some even go as far as to deny us the right and capacity to analyse 'their' issues at all: so much for empathy and cooperation! We have discussed these local discourses earlier in this chapter. Others, like Mohanty, point to the existence of a 'common context of struggle' but it is unclear on how far different theorisations and analytical tools come into play and the concept is so complex it seems hardly realistic. In the case of China, and this may not be valid for all other countries, we have Rey Chow arguing that western theory definitely has a standing. Noting China's resistance to theorising at several occasions she puts this down to its status as semi-colony. Let us remember that several countries had concessions in China and for many of the foreigners living there, not Chinese but only their own country's law was binding. For Chow 'the modernisation in China went hand in hand with its westernisation'[434] and it would therefore be falsifying to use a 'purely' Chinese theory - whatever that would look like, this kind of 'Chineseness' therefore would turn out to be a fake! Other than that it also is a move towards orientalism in a way to see China as 'other' or opposite. As a third point, Chow's willingness to use western theorisation for analyses about China also contains the assumption of the hegemony of the western discourse (e.g. within feminist studies).

[433] C. Connery, The China Difference (website: http://bion.mit.edu/ejournals/b/n-z/PMC/2/connery.192, posted Aug. 10th 1994, 12:37:12 hrs.).
[434] Rey Chow, "Violence in the Other Country - China as Crisis, Spectacle and Woman" in C.T. Mohanty, A. Russo, L. Torres (eds.), op.cit., p. 84.

With these diverse and conflicting notions on the importance and placement of third world-, Chinese-, or simply 'women' in mind we shall examine their meaning during and after FWCW, its preparation, and earlier conferences on women.

b) Other, Earlier UN Conferences on Women

The history of conferences on/for women is fairly brief, as is the history of Feminism and women's studies as well as of the UN itself. In the light of our project of examining the impact of our theoretical developments around the FWCW, it appears useful to briefly mention the historical suite of UN-related conferences on women up to 1995. Naturally besides this there have been held many governmental and unofficial congresses, meetings and movements on women worldwide and more particularly within the PRC.[435]

1946: the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) called a subcommission to the Commission of Human Rights on the Status of Women to life, after female delegates had demanded special attention for women's issues at the UN's first General Assembly in San Francisco.[436]

1946: This subcommission becomes a full commission with the mandate to promote women's political, economic and social rights. A Division for the Advancement of Women, which was now acting as the Conference Secretariat for the FWCW in Beijing, was then set-up by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.[437]

1968: ECOSOC starts a reporting system on the execution of the provisions for the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (adopted the previous year).[438]

1975 celebrates the International Women's Year with activities around the world. The First World Conference on Women is held in Mexico City calling for the preparation and adoption of an international convention against all forms of sex discrimination and recommending procedures for its implementation. It also sets the beginning of the 'Decade of Women'

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[435] United Nations, The Advancement of Women (New York: UN Dept. of Public Information, DPI/1674/WOM/CON, April 1996, pp. vii - x).

[436] Document 4, 'Statements made at the first session of ECOSOC regarding the composition of the Sub-commission on the Status of Women (extract)' in United Nations, The United Nations and the Advancement of Women 1945-1996 (New York: UN Dept. of Public Information, UN Blue Book Series, Vol. VI, 1996) p. 110.

[437] Document 5, 'Statement made by the Chair of the Subcommission on the Status of Women to ECOSOC recommending that the status of the Subcommission be raised to full Commission (extract)' in United Nations, op.cit., pp. 111-112.

[438] Document 36, 'General Assembly Resolution adopting the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women', in United Nations, op.cit., pp. 175-6.

proclaimed by the General Assembly under the themes of "equality, development and peace".[439]

1980 sees the Second World Conference on Women held in Copenhagen to review progress made in the first half of the Women's Decade and adopting a programme of action.[440]

1985, the end of the Women's Decade sees the advent of the Third World Conference of Women held in Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies call for increased participation of women as equal partners with men in all political, social and economic fields, including their full access to education and training.[441]

1990: revision of the Nairobi-Forward-Looking Strategies as well as the recommendation to hold a Fourth World Conference of Women 10 years after Nairobi.[442]

1990-95: the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development adopted by ECOSOC in 1988 begins identifying ways for promoting the advancement of women, both, within the UN system, and throughout the work of various agencies and offices of the UN system.

1995: FWCW takes place in Beijing, reviewing 12 critical areas of concern (poverty, education, health, violence against women, effects of conflicts on women, economic participation, access to power and decision-making, advancement of women, women's human rights, women's contributions to society, women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment, the girl-child) and adopting a Platform for Action in the year of the UN's 50th anniversary.[443]

1996-2000: A second system-wide medium-term plan for women and development is in the pipeline. The plan outlines more ways of strengthening the work of the UN for women's equality, including its own hiring practices, policies and programmes.

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[439] Document 45, 'Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975; including the Agenda, the World Plan for Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, and resolutions and decisions adopted by the Conference (extract)', in United Nations, op.cit., pp. 187-211.

[440] Document 70, 'Report on the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in Copenhagen from 14-30 July 1980; including the Agenda, Programme for Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women and resolutions adopted by the Conference (extract)', in United Nations, op.cit., pp. 250-284.

[441] Document 84, 'Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in Nairobi from 15-26 July 1985; including the Agenda and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (extract)', in United Nations, op.cit., pp. 310-362.

[442] Document 97, 'ECOSOC resolution recommending that a world conference on women be held in 1995 and requesting the CSW to act as preparatory body', in United Nations, op.cit., p. 443.

[443] Ibid.

The First World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in the International Women's Year of 1975 marked the starting point for achieving international consensus on women's rights. The conference determined that women's roles are closely linked to the political, economic, social and cultural conditions that constrain them for advancement and that factors determining the economic exploitation, marginalisation and oppression of women stem from chronic inequalities, injustices and exploitative conditions at all levels. Deliberations were hampered by cultural and regional misunderstandings, especially by differences in perception between North and South. The greatest accomplishment was opening the channels of communication for establishing an international network of players involved in women's issues, a network including the UN, governments and NGOs that expanded in the ensuing years.

The UN Decade for Women (1976-85) with its themes of 'equality, development and peace' underlined global issues of women's rights and women's roles in development and motivated a wide range of activities throughout the world, especially the establishment and reinforcement of national bodies to monitor and promote the advancement of women. The decade was conducive in bringing to light the diversified needs of women and in publicising the role of women in development and the need to develop a perspective in policy-making and planning.

In 1980, the UN held the Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen. The conference declared that equality entails not only legal recognition and elimination of de jure discrimination, but de facto equality of responsibilities and opportunities for the participation of women in development, both as beneficiaries and as active agents of change. Dialogue was characterised by political controversy, particularly the demands for including the situation of women under apartheid and zionism on the agenda. However, the grounds for consensus were growing with common support for progress in the fields of education, health and employment.

A breakthrough occurred in 1985, at the end of the UN Decade for Women, in Nairobi at the Third World Conference on Women. Many referred to this meeting as no less than the 'birth of global Feminism'. Dialogue was aided by a flood of information gathered during the

decade and by heightened understanding and mutual respect particularly among advocates for the advancement of women that had been fostered in the years between conferences. The major issues at Nairobi were still closely linked to women's basic survival strategies with emphasis on poverty and education. At the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, participants adopted by consensus the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies to the Year 2000 (NFLS). The comprehensive strategies call for the participation of women as equal partners with men in all fields of work, equal opportunity for education and training, protection of women at work and recognition of women's needs to become effective producers or managers of political, economic and social affairs. The document called for efforts to overcome prejudices and stereotyped thinking as well as obstacles to women joining previously male-dominated professions including promotion to decision-making positions. It further declared that the role of women in national liberation struggles should be recognized and their equal participation in the nation building process afterwards be encouraged.

The UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) recognised the ubiquitous role of women in sustainable development and in environmental protection. Women constitute a large number of the world's agricultural producers and in many cultures are responsible for securing water and fuel supplies for their families, therefore they are vital in many efforts to safeguard the environment. The Plan for Action for Sustainable Development, Agenda 21, called for the involvement of women in the management and protection of natural resources, particularly in rural areas.

The World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993) reaffirmed that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the human rights of women are an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of universal human rights. It also recognised violence against women as a violation of their human rights as well as the systemic violation of those rights in situations of war and armed conflict. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted by the consensus of 171 Member States of the UN. The Conference recommendation to establish a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and to adopt the Declaration on Violence Against Women were subsequently agreed to by the 48th General Assembly later that year.

The International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) emphasized that the empowerment and autonomy of women are bases for development. It reviewed the status of women worldwide, especially in light of their access to adequate health, maternal care, and family planning facilities. The final conference document reinforced women's right of choice in childbearing, and underlined the critical importance to society as a whole of education of girls and women. Problematic here again an essentialist approach to women and men that is to be commonly found in documents and encounters within the framework of the UN. The discussed topics all have to do with women's traditional role in the family, as a mother and wife, with specific emphasis on childbearing.

The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) called attention to the pivotal role of women in development. It also focused attention on women's social issues and the discriminatory practices that prevent their full participation in society.

From this brief summary[444] we can see that a lot of work concerning women's issues has been achieved within the framework of the UN. It has to be recognised that a big, international forum such as the UN automatically works slower and advances are less spectacular than within a smaller cadre. Positively the global UN framework has opened discussion about these issues on an international level that has had important repercussions for disciplines directly examining women's questions as well as all other fields within social sciences with the sudden appearance of 'other' voices. On the negative side we can quote that no member state is ever bound to sign any document, nor is there any system of penalties that would penalise signatories that to not conform to the documents. In other words the UN does not dispose of any mechanisms of control, punishment or enforcement and their documents take the non-legal form of guidance and recommendations. Secondly, we can observe a tendency of essentialism within the choice and formulation to the UN's concern with women's issues, concentrating its main efforts on basic survival issues or questions that put women into a traditional role in the family and as child-bearers. Thirdly the UN as an organisation, although having a vast and differentiated membership is mostly led by the more powerful nations: the western/USA-led nations, as we have stated earlier. The

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[444] Document 97, 'ECOSOC resolution recommending that a world conference on women be held in 1995 and requesting the CSW to act as preparatory body', in United Nations, op.cit., p. 443.

question also remains open about what voice nations or even individuals outside of this international forum for encounter and discussion that is the UN really have.

Taking a closer look at the Beijing FWCW held in 1995, we shall in a first phase discuss the UN's, respectively the NGO's and other participant's preparations for Beijing. In chapter 6 then, we shall analyse form and content of the Beijing Conference and its reflection in the views of the NGOs, the UN, the Chinese government, Chinese respectively western popular and media responses.

c) UN, NGO and Other Preparations for Beijing

The decision to hold and the announcement of the Beijing Conference sparked a multitude of activities and research worldwide, either within the national borders, international fora - particularly the UN and within the international media. Why this event has been so publicised is not entirely clear: a reason is certainly the approaching millennium and the knowing of the need and therefore popular success of actions concerning women's issues. Another lies in the choice of the PRC as hosting country, which sparked a long series of disputes about human rights issues overshadowing the preparations to and the conference itself. Due to this heavy publicising there is no lack of materials informing about the conference's aims and targets, its background and its structure, mostly distributed by the UN or related organisations.

After the absence of a World Women's Conference in 1990 that saw the revision of the NFLS, the UN's General Assembly took the decision to hold the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, endorsing an ECOSOC resolution and requesting that the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) serve as a preparatory committee for the conference.[445] It was to review and report on the success and implementation of the NFLS as well as making recommendations for action. These recommendations were to be embodied in a Platform for Action which should serve as a blueprint for the implementation and fulfilment of commitments for 'equality, development and peace' for women. The CSW decided to focus on critical areas of concern seen as major obstacles to the advancement of women. During

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[445] United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, NGLS Roundup: Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) (New York/Geneva: Nov. 1995).

its preparatory meetings the CSW identified 12 major critical areas of concern, each of which was analysed issuing respective lists with recommendations for action.[446] In addition to the annual CSW meeting, the preparatory process consisted of regional preparatory meetings organised in 1994 by the UN regional commissions in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and western Asia. These regional meetings assessed the situation of women from a regional perspective, and agreed on regional action plans. However, there were similarities between many of those regional plans for action being concerned with the feminisation of poverty, the lack of sex-segregated data, women's access to decision-making, the recognition of women's human rights, and the negative portrayal of women in the media. These regional meetings not only provided discussion fora for pressing regional issues, but also a springboard for intensified regional action. This international and regional mobilisation that involved NGOs, youth groups, media, workers' organisations and parliamentarians - was supplemented by national preparations as all participating governments were called upon to form national preparatory committees, with representatives from research institutes, trade unions, NGOs, and other experts. They would work out national priorities and action plans, and prepare national reports on the situation of women. Sometimes the NGOs prepared a separate NGO national report on the status of women. The preparatory process also included a number of expert group meetings arranged by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), which serves as a secretariat for the CSW. These meetings dealt with such issues as education and training, gender and the agenda for peace, women in international decision-making, and the institutional and financial arrangements for the implementation of the FWCW outcomes. Near the end of the preparatory process a contact group meeting was held on the concept of gender.

Many UN organisations, funds and specialised agencies reviewed their own policies towards women to mainstream women's issues and to enhance contacts among them. There was also a report issued by the UN's Joint Inspection Unit on substantive UN programmes for women's advancement, the status of women within the UN secretariat, and the role of the UN focal points on women.[447]

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[446] See **Appendix 3** at the end of this chapter on the "Strategic Objectives from the Platform of Action", NGLS Roundup, op.cit., p. 8.

[447] United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, NGLS Roundup: Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) (New York/Geneva: Nov. 1995).

April 7th 1995 the CSW ended its work on the draft Platform for Action to be adopted in Beijing. It was the final meeting of the four annual preparatory sessions of the Commission. The lack of consensus surrounded, among other things, issues of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including the controversial issue of abortion, and the definition of the word 'gender'. Central to the Commission's debate were the issues which had defined the Cairo Population Conference held the previous year: gender, equality and equity, the empowerment of women, women's reproductive rights and the elimination of violence.[448] Nonetheless, agreement was reached during the meetings of the Preparatory Committee on fundamental strategic objectives, including the promotion of women's economic opportunities and their equitable access to resources, as well as the eradication of illiteracy among women by the year 2000. Provisions were made for the elimination of inequalities in access to health care and violence against women. The Platform also addressed questions of armed conflict and the reduction of human rights abuses against women; the equitable contribution of men and women to their economies; the establishment of gender balance in governmental bodies; the elimination of gender-based stereotyping in the media; and the consideration of women's needs in formulating environmental policy. Emphasis was also placed upon making women's advancement and the protection of their human rights, as well as the protection of girl children, priority issues in governmental formulation of policy. The remaining text of the Platform of Action was to be worked out on the floor of the Beijing Conference, which was to be the largest United Nations conference - and parallel NGO forum - ever held.

Apart from the UN's preparations in view of the Beijing Conference, NGOs played a specific role through local preparations and discourses and, as mentioned above, their separate national report on women's status. While this work is important, and specifically the NGOs could engage into more country-specific claims and regional discourse, we should not forget that all of them, to be admitted, had to be accredited by the UN and therefore work within the UN framework. This slims down the chances of encountering real difficulties from 'rebel-groups' - as these 'disruptors' would not even have been admitted to the FWCW. Other preparations to the Beijing 1995 Conference on Women were mainly made by organisations with interests in human rights (such as Amnesty International) or foundations with an interest in issues of women and human rights such as the Ford Foundation with an office located in

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[448] United Nations, The United Nations and the Advancement of Women 1945-1995 (United Nations Publications, New York: Blue Book Series Vol. VI, 1995) p. 59.

Beijing. This foundation organised an international women's symposium in Beijing in 1995 on Chinese Women and Feminist Thought.[449] As with most of the preparatory meetings as well as the conference itself, this was an encounter of academics (many of them European or attached to European organisations) and therefore did not reflect the practical situation of women in China and how they perceived their situation in different parts of China and very diverse circumstances.

Examining at first the content of the preparatory documents from Amnesty International we find a large amount of criticism towards the hosting country of the FWCW, China, in respect of human rights issues. "Grave human rights violations have continued in China in 1995. They range from the arbitrary detention of people who peacefully express their views, to gross violations of the physical integrity of the person and the right to life".[450] In the same report it urges "the Chinese government to allow independent domestic organisations to operate freely to monitor the human rights situation and to allow relevant international organisations free access to the country".[451] As we have seen and will further discuss in chapter 6, the UN has never officially questioned the NGO status of the All-China Women's Federation that was the main responsible organ to host the FWCW. This tendency of criticising China has been reflected by many participating and observing organisations to the FWCW from outside China, especially from within the human rights caucus and it has also resonated in non-Chinese media reports about FWCW and its host China. Pre FWCW, in June 1995, Amnesty International published a report on women in China 'Women in China: Imprisoned and abused for dissent'[452] with the motto 'human rights are women's rights' within its 1995 campaign to protect and promote women's human rights, just in time before the start of the UN FWCW in August/September of the same year.

The same is true about for example the 'China Rights Forum' - but these organisations are mainly concerned with 'human rights' and not so much with women's issues. On the other hand the UN statement that 'women's rights are human rights' could be

[449] "International Symposium: Chinese Women and Feminist Thought" held in Beijing, June 21-24, 1995, Grand View Garden Hotel (Beijing: Programme, Abstracts and List of Participants).
[450] Amnesty International, "People's Republic of China: Gross Human Rights Violations Continue" (Internet source: http:www.amnesty.se/aixweb97/2822.htm, Amnesty International External Archive) p. 2.
[451] Ibid., p. 12.
[452] Amnesty International, Women in China: Imprisoned and abused for dissent (London: AI Index ASA 17/29/95, June 1995).

better reflected within the reports of the above-mentioned human rights organisations. How much has to be digressed from the area of 'main concern' in order to include side- or branch-concerns is as questionable as the issue on how much local discourse is to be taken into account into theorising; or - vice-versa - how much normative theory should enter local discourses.

The International Symposium on Chinese Women and Feminist Thought CWFT held in Beijing in June 1995 and organised with the funds of the Ford Foundation (US based with a Beijing branch office), is interesting not only for its mainstream theory character and its participants (as mentioned above), but also for its emphasis on grand theorising. Examining some of the papers, mainly about the issue of whether Chinese Feminism is necessary, needed and useful (abstract 1). Another theme is the making of women, determined by society's pressures, rather than due to biological differences (abstract 2). Women and economic development is another theme developed within the forum (abstracts 3 and 4): in these cases the emphasis clearly lies on categories such as 'Chinese women' or again 'third world women'. Typical for discourses on women in China or Chinese women is the ever-returning discussion of reproductive rights (abstract 6). Only one abstract actually deals with the problematique of analysing women in China - although less insisting on difficulties of a theoretical nature (e.g. definition of category), but more insisting on the politico-historical background of China. The last abstract by Wu Qing is particularly interesting - a 'critique' of one of the western academic participant's (J. Grimshaw) presentation on 'Biology, Society, Imagination: Explaining Gender Difference'. As so often found in so-called academic writing within the social sciences in China - and most specifically within the wide area concerned with women's issues, the critique appears superficial and touches rather to the form than the content offering a historical reiteration of feminist history and modern western philosophy. She then goes on to her own research on how often men respectively women are being mentioned in different roles in children's schoolbooks. On the other hand this may be a hint of cultural misunderstanding, because as long as the form appears totally incongruent to one of the parties in dialogue - how should they even begin to tolerantly accept and understand the always culturally influenced content?

The ensuing chapter shall deal with the UN and the NGO views on the achievements, successes and problems of Beijing, in further points we shall also review the subsequent views by the Ford Foundation, the governmental views in Beijing and the press reviews in China and Europe in the conference's aftermath.

Appendix 1:

Special Economic Zones in China:

(Internet source: http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/hies97/b/fig3.jpg)

Figure 3. China: Special Economic Zones

Appendix 2:

The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China – Excerpts:

(source: F. Christiansen, S. Rai, 'Chinese Politics and Society - An Introduction' (London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996) pp. 277-278)

Chapter I
General Principles

Article 1
The feudal marriage system based on arbitrary and compulsory arrangements and the supremacy of man over woman, and in disregard of the interests of children, is abolished.

The New Democratic marriage system that is based on the free choice of partners, on monogamy, on equal rights for both sexes, and on the protection of the lawful interests of women and children, is put into effect.

Article 2
Bigamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference in the re-marriage of widows, and the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriages, are prohibited.

Chapter II
The Marriage Contract

Article 3
Marriage is based upon the complete willingness of the two parties. Neither party shall use compulsion and no third party is allowed to interfere.

Article 4
A marriage can be contracted only after the man has reached 20 years of age and the woman 18 years of age.

Chapter III
Rights and Duties of Husband and Wife

Article 8
Husband and wife are in duty bound to love, respect, assist and look after each other to live in harmony, to engage in productive work, to care for their children, and to strive jointly for the welfare of the family and for the building up of the new society.

Article 9
Both husband and wife have equal rights in the possession and management of family property.

Chapter V

Article 17
Divorce is granted when husband and wife both desire it. In the event of either the husband or the wife alone insisting on divorce it may be granted only when mediation by the district people's government and the judicial organ has failed to bring about a reconciliation.

Article 19
In the case of a member of the revolutionary army on active service who maintains correspondence with his or her family, that army member's consent must be obtained before his or her spouse can apply for divorce.

Appendix 3:

Strategic Objectives from the Platform of Action:

(source: NGLS Roundup Magazine, UN Dept. of Public Information, Nov. 1995, p. 8)

Women and poverty:
- Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty;
- Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources;
- Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions;
- Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty.

Education and training of women:
- Ensure equal access to education;
- Eradicate illiteracy among women;
- Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education;
- Develop non-discriminatory education and training;
- Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms;
- Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

Women and health
- Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate affordable and quality health care, information and related services;
- Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health;
- Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues;
- Promote research and disseminate information on women's health;
- Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health

Violence against women
- Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women;
- Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures;
- Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking;

Women and armed conflict
- Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision making levels and protect women living in situations of armed conflicts or under foreign occupation;
- Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments;
- Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations;
- Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace;
- Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women in need of international protection and internally displaced women;
- Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories;

Women and the economy
- Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources;
- Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;

- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women;
- Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks;
- Eliminate occupational and all forms of employment discrimination;
- Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men;

Women in power and decision making
- Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making;
- Increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and leadership;

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies;
- Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects;
- Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation;

Human rights of women
- Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice;
- Achieve legal literacy;

Women and the media
- Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through the media and new technologies of communication;
- Promote a balanced and non-stereotypes portrayal of women in the media;

Women and the environment
- Involve women actively in environmental decision making at all levels;
- Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development;
- Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

The girl child
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child;
- Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;
- Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential;
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training;
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
- Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work;
- Eradicate violence against the girl child;
- Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life;
- Strengthen the role the family in improving status of the girl child.

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6. The Political Difficulties of Beijing:

This chapter will start by giving an overview on the participants to the Beijing Conference in 1995, their expectations and fears, and their reactions during and after the conference. It will mainly examine the UN views, different NGO views, and responses to the conference in east and west either through the media channels, official publications or again singular stories. These singular stories, as mentioned in the introductory methodology seem more interesting than massive statistics because, although not quantitative and therefore not a measure for general/average reactions or statistically quantifiable, they pick out singular experiences - closer to reality: this is really an important issue of this entire thesis. This is also in the spirit of many current Feminisms who place main focus on individual stories and want to move away from mainstream normative theory in International Relations. A final chapter 8 will give more insight into these personal views with interviews and discussions that have been led all along the research in China.

a) UN Views

The UN pats itself proudly on the shoulder for its long-standing and successful work for women, as we can see from most of its publications. "[The UN Conference in Beijing] was held in the most populous country on earth. But it was not global purely because of its size: the interactions among its various constituencies was unprecedented for an international event".[453] The US Ambassador to the UN sees the Platform as a major UN achievement: "many traditional or authoritarian societies still have a very long way to go, the FWCW offers a roadmap every country can use to move forward, whatever current practices and policies may be".[454]

Concerning the FWCW, being its last worldwide conference, Boutros Boutros-Ghali in an introduction sees the Beijing Declaration as having "consolidated five decades of legal advances aimed at securing the equality of women and men in law and in fact".[455] In this

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[453] NGLS Roundup, Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) (New York: Non-Governmental Liaison Service, Nov. 1995) p. 1.

[454] M.K. Albright, "The Fourth World Conference on Women" in SAIS Review: A Journal of International Affairs (Vol. XVI, Nr. 1, Winter-Spring 1996) p. 150.

[455] United Nations The United Nations and the Advancement of Women 1945-1996 (New York: UN Blue Book Series, Vol. VI, 1996) p. 63.

sense the choice of Beijing in the PRC as the location for the FWCW certainly had the world's media attention and all eyes were turned on the conference that, like the UN itself, profited of maximum publicity.

> "Noting with appreciation the offers made by Austria and China to act as host for the Fourth World Conference on Women ... and the forum for non-governmental organisations. ... preference should be given to the region that had not yet hosted a world conference on women ... [the UN] accept[s] the offer of the Government of China to act as host of the FWCW ... in accordance with General Assembly resolution ... that the conference should be of a duration of ten working days ..., that the conference should be held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995".[456]

There is to be acknowledged that the UN have played a vital role in the advancement of women on an international level, even though the efforts first have to come from the 'victims' themselves. At least the forum of discussion and exchange that is the United Nations did give these issues a framework and served as an international umbrella organisation where the singular threads of women's issues could be heard, discussed and find international diffusion. "The United Nations has provided the venue and the framework to move issues of gender equality to the top of the global agenda".[457]

Due to the composition, size, and scope of the UN organisation, and the FWCW being an intergovernmental meeting,[458] it is obvious that the UN seeks to find commonalties among women worldwide, to come up with international definitions and plans for actions. "The message of this conference is that women's issues are global and universal".[459] This tendency to standardisation which would also allow a more bureaucratised discussion of the issues becomes even clearer when reading through the requests of ECOSOC: "[ECOSOC] calls for the development of a standardised questionnaire with a focused set of indicators on critical areas of concern as a framework to assist national governments in their assessment and reporting on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action".[460] This normative trend goes through all of the UN work, for reasons we have stated in earlier chapters. The

[456] Internet source: gopher://gopher.un.org/00/esc/cn6/1986-93/e1992-24.en%09%09%2B.

[457] Press release WOM/BEI/37: 15. Sept. 1995, United Nations, advance text, p. 2.

[458] United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women (New York: UN DPI, 94-24102/DPI/1468-Sept. 1994 – 10M) leaflet.

[459] Press release WOM/BEI/37: op.cit., p. 2.

[460] Economic and Social Council and Commission on the Status of Women, Follow-Up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (United Nations Internet source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/rev3d.htm) p. 2, § 4.

function of the UN, as it sees it, is not only to act locally/regionally via its member states, but also as an umbrella organisation taking a more holistic approach and seeking a 'grand theory picture'. In addition to this, the complex bureaucratic apparatus of the UN is inclined (like all bureaucracies) to generalisations for the sake of theorising and finding consensus. Even the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is said to reflect spiritual and moral roots that are central to all cultures.[461] In her text, Albright further emphasises the concept that women's rights are human rights, when she states that "it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights separate from human rights ... If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, it is that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights",[462] as it is stated also in the Beijing Declaration.[463]

This is also reflected in the FWCW Secretary-General's, Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania, vision, when she stated "the problems of women are not different from country to country or region to region. They only differ in intensity".[464] The UN sees its role not only reflected in the progress made by its member countries, but also in a trickle-down effect and normative change achieved thanks to its constant efforts.

> "UN records concerning the advancement of women during the 50 years of the organisation's existence - and particularly in the past 25 years - are astonishing. Though much remains to be done, these years will mark an epoch in women's history, and the changes, which have taken place, are irreversible. In all of this, the UN System has taken the lead. On average it represents significantly more advanced norms and practices concerning women than those of member countries".[465]

The UN is also defined as "simply an instrument of governments ... [where] the implementation of UN resolutions depends decisively on the governments of member states, the UN being composed of governments".[466] This may be true to a certain extent, although it is questionable how little or how much responsibility lies with the UN, and if they really aren't more than and intergovernmental forum or instrument, seen that member countries accredit ambassadors to the UN, a procedure usually only followed among states. "It is up to the governments and the civil society groups - NGOs, GROs, PVOs etc. to implement the

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[461] M.K. Albright, op.cit., p. 146.
[462] Ibid.
[463] United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women - Beijing Declaration (Internet source: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm) p. 2, § 14.
[464] H. Pietilä, J. Vickers, Making Women Matter: The Role of the United Nations (London: Zed Books, 1994) p. 159.
[465] Ibid., p. 162.
[466] Ibid., p. 163.

Platform for Action and hold governments to the specific commitments they made in Beijing".[467] The UN has admitted shortcomings in information and education: "... the normative impact of the UN in the advancement of women could be vastly more efficient if its information programmes and education programmes were better".[468]

In its brochure to the FWCW the UN again puts itself at the centre of the achievements for the advancement of women: "Since the United Nations held the first conference on women 20 years ago (Mexico City, 1975), important progress has been made toward achieving equality between women and men".[469] Not only does the UN (probably not entirely without reason) place itself at the centre of achievements for the advancement of women - in fact it is seeing itself closely linked to the women's movement: "In the United Nations, the women's movement has a staunch ally",[470] it also publicises FWCW, underlining its achievements with the Platform for Action and the additional Beijing Declaration; and points out without being more precise that there are new resources for implementing the Platform. It strongly emphasises the FWCW as being the largest UN Conference ever held.[471] As mentioned above, not only the government of the PRC sought a publicity stunt by hosting the conference, the UN as well anticipated wide media and public attention by its choice of the host; particularly bearing in mind that the conference coincided with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

This chapter deals with the political difficulties of the FWCW, preparing, holding and attending it, from different points of view. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the FWCW encountered many obstacles on its way to its advent; some of them refer to its preparation and content and have nevertheless political implications. Others (the ones particularly discussed in this chapter) have their origin in general political divergence and are interpreted and valued differently by the various groups of participants and attendants. Stipulating at first three major problems of preparation, which mirror the UN's main issues, namely reservations agreements made at prior conferences, concern with language in documents and the

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[467] World Women in Development and Environment, WorldWIDE Network, Inc., WWIDE Newsletter, December 1995 (Internet source: http://e05.eccsi.com/wwide/PAGES/UN4TH1.htm) p. 2.

[468] Ibid., p. 162.

[469] United Nations, Platform for Action: Summary (New York: UN DPI, DPI/1762/Wom-November 1995-50M) brochure.

[470] Press release WOM/BEI/37: op.cit., p. 2.

[471] United Nations, Women (New York: UN DPI, DPI/1749/Wom. 95-30876 - October 1995 - 20M) p. 5.

accreditation process, it goes on to discuss the multiple issues of the NGOs. This includes statements from the UN side in preparation and execution of the separately held NGO forum, then it discusses the definition of the ACWF as a participating and organising NGO. At issue is also the importance of the FWCW to the NGOs as a forum for speech and exchange of ideas. Responsibilities for the problems encountered at the NGO forum are reviewed. Human rights claims are canvassed towards the background of the forum. This also reflect tensions between the US and China which have been mirrored at the forum and the conference as well as in ongoing and subsequent articles. Access to the forum and complaints of its venue change, hosting as well as content stand in contrast with China's efforts of organisation.

Apart from the much discussed problems about the choice of the host country being China, three major problem areas come out when studying UN material.

1. Reservations to prior agreements

"Attempts by some delegations to use the opportunity to 'upgrade' reservations to earlier international agreements raise a serious question for the UN conference process".[472] This 'upgrading' did not only concern prior international agreements, it also focused on 'resetting' the agenda to be discussed at Beijing: "within the G77/China, some delegations were accused of attempting to use the power of the bloc to entrench conservative elements in the Platform, inserting qualifiers and 'escape clauses' by calling for respect of cultural and philosophical conditions".[473] A further discussion of this is found below, in the issues on language. In fact, Beijing clearly showed the importance of language, the difficulties of translation and the cultural, philosophical and political implication of such choices. The reservations and discussions on specific terminology to be used within the platform document is discussed at the end of the Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women.[474] Note that there was no statement by the PRC on clarification, interpretation or reservation for any part of the Platform document.

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[472] Internet source: http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/vol14/1409013e.html, Closing Plenary, p. 2.
[473] Ibid.
[474] United Nations, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995) (New York: preliminary version, A/CONF.177/20, 17. Oct. 1995) pp. 157-176.

2. Various language questions

The Closing Plenary document indicates a shift from the victimised approach to a more action-oriented approach to women's issues within the UN framework. Initially, the February 1995 'draft Platform's language of victimisation and under-development integration' was a frequent point of criticism. Meanwhile, Beijing 1995, known as an international conference on women's issues emphasising action, not complaints, shows that shift within its Platform. Women's empowerment and social justice stand in the foreground all through the document and instead of looking to improve the circumstances around women, their active participation is required in order to achieve the envisioned higher standards by granting equal access to training and education; funds, resources and employment; affordable healthcare; increase women's participation in conflict-resolution at decision-making levels and promote their contribution to fostering a culture of peace; promote the harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men; ensure women's full participation in power-structures and decision-making; achieve legal literacy for women and men; promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life etc.[475]

A big issue was the definition of the term 'gender'. This definition was not only problematic in translation, but even more so with its relative cultural connotations. It was important find a common understanding of the word 'gender' in the context of the Platform for Action. For example in China the terms 'gender' and 'sex' are not linguistically distinguishable: both being translated by 'xìng'.[476] A more precise discussion of this topic is to be found in chapter 7. However, "the debate could become a textbook case study on the state of global Feminism and feminist epistemology. The issues raised central debates on the relation between language, knowledge and power; the political contest over 'natural' and socially negotiated identity; and ideas informing the current 'backlash' against some of the feminist advances made in the US. Several countries expressed discomfort with the term 'gender', and asked to bracket the word throughout the text. Others felt that this would impede the process, and pointed to years of use of the term in the UN (and in contemporary academic literature) and the lack of any questioning until this point. Those who wanted to

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[475] Ibid., pp. 23-121.
[476] 'Sex, sexuality' (also: nature, character):   .

bracket the term suspected that there was a hidden/unacceptable agenda behind its use, for example, tolerance of non-heterosexual identities and orientation".[477]

3. Accreditation process

For the Beijing Conference and specifically the NGO forum, the accreditation process was twofold: once through the United Nations, organising the Conference, then again through the host country's organising committee. It was the second accreditation process that made waves and was pushed in the foreground all along the media, mostly in the west, reporting on the conference and the forum. Nevertheless, the UN accreditation process had been criticised by several members for its opacity and the UN's leniency towards the Chinese hosts wishes and claims. "... the non-governmental accreditation process was questioned from the first day, when accreditation of certain groups was challenged for their beliefs and exclusion of whole categories of NGOs, such as those from Taiwan or Tibet, were revealed".[478] In addition to this, the model of accreditation used within the UN framework was criticised for its lack of democracy, yielding to the stronger voices: "... the accreditation and access debates in the UN's evolving role as the facilitator of an unprecedented dialogue involving the representatives of sovereign states and global civil society. Since Nairobi, women have been in the vanguard of this promising but difficult marriage of an essentially American model of democratic lobbying and a forum with a built-in democratic deficit, which reflects the current global dispensation".[479]

b) NGO Views

An estimated 26'000 participants from 185 countries plus 5'000 Chinese participants made the NGO Forum the largest gathering of women ever.[480] For this NGO event, a record 2'602 NGOs received accreditation and a total of 4'035 NGO representatives attended, almost as many as the 4'995 government delegates.[481] As a parallel yet independent event to the FWCW, the forum had three objectives: agenda-setting for NGOs into the 21st century,

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[477] Internet source: http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/vol14/1409013e.html, Closing Plenary, pp. 2-3.
[478] Ibid., p. 3.
[479] Ibid., pp.3-4.
[480] NGLS Roundup, op.cit., p. 6.
[481] Ibid., p. 5.

networking, and influencing the main document of the intergovernmental conference, the Platform for Action.[482]

As the brochure published through the UN DPI says: "The NGO Forum on Women '95, a separate event, is open to all".[483] In the same publication the location of the forum is also set: "... it will be held from 30 August to 8 September 1995 at the Beijing Worker's Sports Services Centre, a few miles from the Beijing International Conference Centre, where the World Conference will take place from 4 to 15 September 1995".[484] The fact that this location was later changed, was a central point of criticism and stood in the limelight of media reproach concerning the conference and the parallel forum in Beijing. However, it was emphasised over and over that NGOs play a very central role in the advancement and empowerment of women and we shall analyse to which degree this is rhetorical, or has been expressed in actions by the UN and member states. "Since the first UN Conference on Women, NGOs have helped to mobilise national and international support for UN initiatives on issues related to women". Through NGOs and their networks, "women have been able to voice their ideas, hopes and aspirations to shape their own lives and to participate fully in development of society", said Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference, speaking at the NGO consultation on the Beijing Conference in March 1994, Mrs. Mongella said that NGOs had "provided a forum for women from all walks of life to work together, to strategise, and to influence social, political and economic life".[485] Hillary Clinton, in her 'famous' speech at the forum in Beijing further emphasised the role of NGOs in the international arena:

> "The United States and many other countries [so] strongly support the efforts of NGOs and have worked very hard to ensure that NGOs could participate in this forum. As many of you know, our government and other governments recognise the important role that NGOs play in policy and planning, in development and implementation and monitoring of programmes that advance the progress of women. ... It is the NGOs who have pressured governments and have led governments down the path to economic, social and political progress, often in the face of overwhelming hostility. Again, NGOs have persevered, just as you have by coming here and staying here and participating in this forum".[486]

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[482] Ibid., p. 6.
[483] United Nations, NGO Forum on Women (New York: UN Department of Public Information, DPI/1615/Wom 95-02878, February 1995).
[484] Ibid.
[485] Ibid.
[486] Internet source, Hillary Rodham Clinton's speech addressing the NGO Forum (http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/ EOP/First_Lady/html/China/ngo.html) p. 1.

The NGO Forum was thus instituted by the UN and organised through the COC (China Organising Committee) made up by government officials and cadres and members of the ACWF (All China Women's Federation). It was assumed that the ACWF, as the first and biggest women's association in China was an NGO and therefore able and entitled to participate and even handle some of the organisational part of the 1995 NGO Forum on women. The UN seemed to accept its status as NGO without further mention. In fact the China Daily reported "The UN with its various commissions and agencies specialising in women's and children's affairs, has become ACWF's biggest partner".[487] In fact the ACWF is listed as a participating NGO within the UN's CSW (Commission on the Status of Women).[488] By other definitions, however, "the ACWF is a mass organisation under the direct supervision of the CCP's Central Committee".[489] Or again: "What is known as the largest women's NGO, the All-China Women's Federation, shares the government's ideas in every way and never mentions 'Feminism'. In its practical work, because of its virtually-official status as a 'mass organisation', it is very difficult for the ACWF to provide effective protection for women when their rights have been violated".[490] Rights Watch further states that "in reality the ACWF since its inception has had as its prime mandate the mobilisation of women on behalf of national goals. At present, those goals include economic reform, socialist modernisation, opening up to the west as well as resisting 'bourgeois liberalisation'"[491] and that "the structure of the ACWF mirrors all party structures, in that power is concentrated in a select group".[492] Zhang notes that "the All-China Women's Federation has existed under official sponsorship since the early years of the communist regime, and performed significant functions in promoting the position of women in society and the economy, operating through branches at all levels. However, it mainly served to mobilise women to the goals of the government".[493] In its constitution the ACWF defines itself as:

> "a social mass organisation that unites women from various nationalities and all walks of life to strive to further women's emancipation under the leadership of

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[487] China Daily, 8/3/1993, p.1.

[488] Internet source (UN Documents, http://www.apc.org/apcwomen/39.html) p. 73.

[489] Internet source (Rights Watch, Your Rights in Beijing, http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/4wcw/rights.html) p. 2.

[490] Internet source (China Rights Forum, Overshadowing Feminism - Thoughts on the Beijing Women's Conference, http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/95winter/e5.html) p. 3.

[491] Internet source (Rights Watch, Your Rights in Beijing, op.cit.) p. 2.

[492] Ibid.

[493] Zhang Junzuo, "Development in a Chinese Reality: Rural Women's Organisations in China" in The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics (London: Frank Cass, Vol. 10, Nr. 4, Dec. 1994) p. 71.

the Chinese Communist Party. ... The principles of its work are to unite and educate the masses of women, to carry out the party's policies, to defend women's legal rights and interests, and to develop a positive role in carrying forward the cause of emancipation in the process of constructing the country for a prosperous and strong, democratic and civilised socialist modernisation".[494]

The ACWF is closely linked to the government and is under state control. Its work depends on what the state plan decides for women to do and when policies change, current projects of the ACWF may be discontinued.

"The All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), and its local branches are the official 'voice' for Chinese women, as they often remind foreigners and domestic critics. The issues they are working on are really important, ... But because of their two conflicting roles -- as the official voice of women and as the official arm of the CCP in implementing policy on women -- they are ideologically and politically limited in any efforts to address democratic reform or criticise the economic policies, because this would be seen as critical of the Party and thus very dangerous".[495]

Concerning the FWCW, "the ACWF has the final say on what workshop topics and cultural activities are appropriate for Chinese women to offer at the forum. ... Chinese women at the NGO Forum will be united in their public support for their government's platform".[496] Although academics are often more careful in issuing their statements on independent movements in China, such as Christiansen and Rai stating that "there is clearly much greater independence given to the already-established mass organisations, like the All-China Women's Federation, to set up their own agenda, which might not always be conducive to the Party/state policies";[497] other sources, especially the ones insisting on human rights and criticising China for not respecting them, rather claim that "there are no NGO's in China independent of government control".[498]

Another topic that was hotly debated during the forum and in its aftermath was the importance of the FWCW to the NGOs. Most reactions had a rather positive undertone emphasising the size of the forum: "Despite the pelting rain, the unwieldy size of the event, its distance from Beijing, and some complaints about exaggerated security and surveillance, the NGO Forum on Women '95 was a true showcase of women's activism. The sheer number of

[494] Funü zuzhi vu huodong, 1989, Nr. 4, pp. 23-8.
[495] Internet source (CRF Spring 1995, http://www.igc.apc.org/hric/crf/english/95spring/e8.html, Going to Beijing with open Eyes) pp. 2-3.
[496] Internet source (Rights Watch, Your Rights in Beijing, op.cit.) p. 2.
[497] F. Christiansen, S. Rai, Chinese Politics and Society: An Introduction (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall Europe, 1996) p. 286.
[498] Internet source (Rights Watch, Your Rights in Beijing, op.cit.) p. 2.

participants gathered in Huairou posed a technological challenge as all vied to make their inputs through modern communications technology". [499] Apart from the size, the exchange of ideas and positions as well as the emphasis and acceptance of diversities stood in the foreground and the importance of FWCW to local NGOs was said "to make this worldwide platform a collective development, to articulate diversities, to broaden women's movements, to build up proposals based on pluralism, to increase our negotiating power, to learn how to communicate among ourselves and with theirs, to incorporate new associations, to put pressure with our demands, to use our creativity and resource efficiently". [500] And emphasising its novelty:

> "The Beijing Conference is different, not because of the UN or the governments, but because it means a challenge for us. It challenges us to move, to open collective spaces where we have not worked yet. It stimulates our creativity and enthusiasm. ... We want to bring an alternative culture, with our own colours and our music, with our voices and our images. Beijing is only a symbol, but it is the symbol of a culture of women that wants to be in a plural world". [501]

The Conference has allowed women from different areas, with different backgrounds and experiences to voice their particular priorities and issues at the regional preparation meetings, only to try and find a consensus at the conference itself. [502]

Furthermore, through international conferences like the one in Beijing, women's movements not only had the opportunity of and exchange of views, but also at the same time to strengthen their identities and feeling empowered through their international input. "We have started to consider ourselves as active participants and to change our victim-like attitude. For the women's movement, the most important issue in this process towards Beijing is to strengthen our identities. To recover an image of power, of pressure, proposal and interaction capacity is as important as defining the main issues of the platform". [503] This empowerment becomes specifically clear when NGOs actually do influence the UN's or some of its member states' decisions considerably:

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[499] NGLS Roundup, op.cit., p. 7.
[500] Internet source (http:www.chasque.apc.org/lola/lola3b2.htm, Upstream Towards Beijing) p. 1.
[501] Ibid.
[502] See Internet source (World Conference on Women, http://thumb.cprost.sfu.ca/gcnet/iss4-42d.html, Regional Preparatory Process Completed - Women agree on areas of concern ... but have different priorities).
[503] Internet source (http:www.chasque.apc.org/lola/lola3b2.htm, Upstream Towards Beijing, op.cit.) p. 1.

"The suggestion by a government delegate that commitments be recorded by the secretariat and annexed to the official report of the conference was dropped, but some NGOs decided nevertheless to follow their government's commitments, evaluating them on a public 'scoreboard'. The scoreboard drew attention from the press. By the end of the conference more than 100 governments had made public commitments to improving the status of women. NGOs concerned with the implementation and follow-up to the conference will use the commitments as well as the Platform for Action as part of their advocacy efforts at the national level".[504]

In spite of these positive reactions, the negative reports overshadowed the parallel NGO Forum to the FWCW. Even within NGOs opinions were not unanimous whether such a meeting was to be welcomed as a positive opportunity or rather dismissed as a negative distraction from the particular goals of the different NGOs. "Many debates have arisen on whether the world conferences distract us from our objective as autonomous women's movements. Actually, a movement organises, articulates and expresses itself (creating legitimate decision-making and development spaces as well as organic representations) by making its negotiating and dialogue building power visible".[505]

More neutrally there is the problem of who gets to go to the conference and who doesn't and how important and representative theses delegates and their contributions may be. "All women participating in this process will not go to Beijing, and maybe those who go are not the most representative of the movement (this is always a problem); but those who go should feel themselves as part of a more wide and organised process and those who stay in their countries should accompany the process of the forum and the conference".[506]

On the negative side of the international meeting of NGOs within the wider UN framework, power play comes into the picture. This is not only true for the choice of the NGOs and delegates who may attend (this will be discussed in a separate point), but also on how much influence the NGO has at the heart of the UN or the international community: "the issue of international cooperation is a game of strength where rules and results are already written and defined before the game is played ...".[507] This excludes or makes difficult the

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[504] NGLS Roundup, op.cit., p. 3.
[505] Internet source (http:www.chasque.apc.org/lola/lola3b2.htm, Upstream Towards Beijing, op.cit.) p. 1.
[506] Ibid.
[507] Ibid.

participation from under-represented or marginalised groups such as disabled women, lesbians and indigenous people.[508]

We all are aware that Chinese NGOs have been government-organised, but within that group there are women working on a grassroots level. ... There will be people who have different perspectives from the official view, but that may not be immediately clear, because they are not about to voice them publicly.[509]

Another problematique tackled was the one of shared responsibilities between the UN, member states and NGOs. The fear was that instead of working towards the achievement of the goals set at Beijing, the member states' governments would try to transfer the responsibility for the implementation onto them. "During negotiations, several NGOs highlighted the need to distinguish between the role of NGOs -- which must be recognised in order to accomplish the objectives of the Platform -- and the responsibilities of NGOs -- which should be determined by the groups themselves. This distinction was ignored, creating the risk that governments will shift the burden for implementation onto NGOs and making recognition of the rights of NGOs as actors in civil society all the more important".[510]

Another important point wildly denounced in many of the western press and therefore important to analyse within the context of NGOs is the question of human rights, respectively women's rights in China. The slogan of the forum, at least according to the western press, centred on the human rights of women.

> "During the course of the forum, women from many countries gathered to celebrate their common advances toward equality; analyse their differences; and debate the economic, social, political, and cultural impediments toward greater women's empowerment. The slogan 'human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights' was the most dominant; bolstered by recognition at the Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993, this concept was inserted into the Platform of Action as well".[511]

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[508] NGLS Roundup, op.cit., p. 5.

[509] Internet source (CRF Spring 1995, http://www.igc.apc.org/hric/crf/english/95spring/e8.html, Going to Beijing with open Eyes) p. 4.

[510] Internet source (CRF Winter 1995, http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/95winter/e4.html, Envisioning Women's Human Rights - What Was Achieved at Beijing?) p. 3.

[511] Internet source (WWIDE: '95 NGO Forum, Huairou, China - Summary, http://e05.eccsi.com/wwide/PAGES/95NGOFS.HTM, WWIDE Newsletter, December 1995) p. 1.

UN non-governmental links see the "human rights of women as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights".[512] This definition of human rights being women's rights came up, as previously mentioned, in the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna "when violence against women was recognised as a form of human rights abuse".[513] "Taking the Nairobi Conference as the baseline, a decisive shift is visible after the Vienna Human Rights Conference of 1993. Whereas rights had been perceived as hierarchical, a shift to recognise them as interrelated, inalienable and universal has been achieved. Women's rights have come to be considered indivisible from human rights in general".[514]

However, the problematique is more complex in the context of China. "Although they [law/human rights and women's studies] must be related, maybe for China internally there needs to be a bit of a distance. ... [we need to] recognise[d] the strategic use for the women in China of having them distanced to avoid political interference".[515] In the same interview Sophia Woodman goes on saying "in the context of China, people tend to see human rights and women's rights as two separate things. Human rights is viewed as a political issue, related to political prisoners, torture, calls for democracy and so on. Women's rights is seen as a discrete area where the same problems to not apply".[516] More of this will be discussed in the point on interpretation and language.

Some governments tried to avoid the equation of human rights and women's rights by ultra-conservative interpretations and term definitions:

> "... in March 1995, the Holy See and a small number of governments made a systematic effort to substitute a focus on women as mothers within the traditional family for measures to promote and protect women's full humanity. In its most surreal moments, the campaign included objections to the use of the term 'gender' itself. ... The intensity of the assault on previous gains was to some degree a measure of our success. It reflected a realisation on the part of political and religious fundamentalists that the human rights and reproductive rights paradigms are powerful tools for transforming gender relations of power".[517]

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[512] NGLS Roundup, op.cit., p. 1.
[513] Internet source (Going to Beijing with open Eyes, op.cit.) p. 1.
[514] Nomtuse Mbere, "The Beijing Conference: A South African Perspective" in SAIS Review: A Journal of International Affairs (Vol. XVI, Nr. 1, Spring 1996) p. 168.
[515] Internet source (S.K.Hom in an interview, CRF Winter 1995, http://www.igc.apc.org/hric/crf/english/95winter/e6.html, Representations of Chinese Women) p. 1.
[516] Internet source (Going to Beijing with open Eyes, op.cit.) p. 3.
[517] Internet source (CRF Winter 1995 - What was Achieved at the FWCW, http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/e4.html, Envisioning Women's Human Rights - What Was Achieved in Beijing, op.cit.) pp. 1-2.

The general problem with defining women's rights as human rights is first: that the UN cannot sanction violations of this human right and secondly: that there is no index that would make the degree of violation measurable and therefore could introduce an appropriate penalisation. "While the UN often ignores human rights violations or fails to introduce sanctions against abusers of human rights ... Even after Beijing, however, we lack an adequate definition of indicators to measure violations of women's rights. The UN Human Development Index should include a gender-sensitive factor for violence against women. This would serve as an indicator of the general status of women in a society".[518]

Moreover, the question remains about which yardstick to use. Is our understanding of human rights correct and if so applicable to other nations, cultures and systems. Should we intervene for the sake of what we believe is the correct course of action, or should we first and foremost respect other countries' decisions. These issues are clearly demonstrated in the quote by Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme: "we trade a 5 litre can of oil for 30 days of school attendance by a young girl. Yes, it's bribery. We don't apologise for that. We are changing behaviour, we are giving hope and opportunity to young girls - and that is all that counts. Each small change in behaviour will one day pay off in a change in attitude".[519]

Partly linked to the difficulties of the 'women's rights are human rights' slogan are difficulties linked to language, translation and interpretation, the latter also implying cultural connotations and meanings.

> "Just as the very term 'human rights' is a difficult one for women in China to relate to their own experience, 'equality' and 'Feminism' are words that many intelligent Chinese women want nothing to do with. 'Equality' they see as the empty slogan the government has used to push them into 'sacrificing themselves for the revolution', while 'Feminism' is associated with a kind of toughness they don't like. ... This is not only a problem of differing worldviews, or an issue, which only relates to China. I've spoken to people in the UN translation section about the difficulties in translating in meaningful ways words and concepts like 'Feminism'. ... the obstacle of linguistic chaos presents not just a 'translation' issue. Unless we are willing to accept merely paper gains, activists, NGOs, and UN bodies must pay explicit attention to the substance of how and what we communicate to/with each other".[520]

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[518] Nomtuse Mbere, op.cit., p. 169.
[519] NGLS Roundup, op.cit., p. 3.
[520] Internet source (Going to Beijing with open Eyes, op.cit.) p. 5.

In fact it is not only difficult to translate terms like Feminism (usually 'nǚquán yùndòng'[521] or 'nán nǚ píngděng zhǔyì'[522]) but even more so the corresponding cultural reference and meaning that are altered. "The model the Chinese use to talk about women's rights is 'equal to men'. This is the formulation reflected in the Constitution, in the Law for the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests and so on. So what would that mean if you had all the rights that were equal to men? The term 'Feminism' also creates many difficulties of association (having been decried as bourgeois). In China "Feminism has long been treated as a form of pollution. The moment you mention the word, people usually link it with such things as sexual liberation, single motherhood and combative women who are in opposition to men. Since the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, the mainstream of women's struggle for rights and freedom was first referred to as 'women's liberation' and later as the 'women's movement'. But Feminism has been entered into the register of heterodoxy as the ideology of the bourgeois women's movement".[523] The translation of 'femininity' is also complex. In Chinese the feminine is expressed by either the sexual implication 'nǚxìng de'[524] or by 'fùnǚ de',[525] which again has a biologically determined notion, since gynaecology and obstetrics include the same character 'fù'[526] ('fùchǎnkē'[527]). Generally, Chinese terms seem often constructed in a gender-neutral way: this is for example true of many professions where the activity takes on a gender neutral suffix like '-yuán'[528], '-rén'[529] or '-jiā'[530] (e.g. 'shòuhuòyuán'[531] for shop assistant, 'gōngrén'[532] for manual worker or 'zuòjiā'[533] for author or composer etc.) This simply avoids gender altogether, a bit like many of our academic fields have claimed gender neutrality by avoiding its expression. Nevertheless the character for 'rén' (person) is the same as for man. Most characters with reference to people 'nǐ'[534] (he/him) '-men'[535] (plural personal form) etc., have the 'rén' character as a root. Also many

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[521] Women's rights movement:
[522] Ideology of the equality between men and women:
[523] Internet source (China Rights Forum, Overshadowing Feminism - Thoughts on the Beijing Women's Conference, http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/95winter/e5.html) p. 2.
[524] That of female sex: 女性的 .
[525] That concerning women: 妇女的 .
[526] 妇
[527] 妇产科 .
[528] 员 .
[529] 人 .
[530] 家 .
[531] 售货员 .
[532] 工人 .
[533] 作家 .
[534] 你 .
[535] 们 .

characters that are for actions traditionally associate with men such as 'zhǎng'[536] (hold on to [sword]; battle) Characters with 'nǔ'[537] (woman) at their root refer to females or associations to the female in general, the most prominent example being 'hǎo'[538] (good) which shows the combination of woman ('nǔ') as its root and child ('zi'[539]) on the right. A further discussion of language issues is to be found in the following chapter that examines the 'Chinese view' more in detail.

Concerning the slogan of 'women's rights are human rights' it is interesting to take a closer look at the Chinese perspective.

> "The title of the workshop 'women and human rights' is significant as it represents a conscious, strategic decision not to link the two concepts more closely together by the use of the 'and' ('yǔ'[540]), to denote two distinct categories (rather than saying 'women's rights are human rights'), thus creating some political and ideological space to continue to work on the human rights aspects of women's work while avoiding the government's allergic reaction to human rights".[541]

This space may be needed to avoid heightened government interference and be able to formulate independent issues and can thus be of strategic use. Therefore, what you see/hear is not necessarily all that is there. The criticism by many western scholars that Chinese women's studies are superficial and tend to be directly deductible from government policy should be taken carefully for this reason. "What a Chinese scholar or cadre working on women's issues can say in public when that is directed only at a Chinese reader or Chinese audience is to some extent 'neibu' (internal), not for foreigners. Speaking internally, of course all the problems can be aired and people can be quite critical - to a point".[542] In fact Chinese delegates to the conference felt compelled to defend their country and government policies, as they not only feared reprimanding if they would not do so, but also considered that many criticisms were internal and would reflect a negative image of China at an international gathering such as this. They were thus bound by fixed boundaries previously set for the debate.

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[536] 掌
[537] 女
[538] 好
[539] 子
[540] 与
[541] Internet source (S.K.Hom, Representations of Chinese Women, op.cit.) p. 1.
[542] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

On the other side there is the issue of who can speak and what. It has been found inappropriate at many occasions that western scholars should express their critical view of China. Many views appear to be founded on a lack of understanding or depth of analysis. Also, it is difficult to accept that for example the US First Lady Hillary Clinton should be speaking for 'Chinese women'. On the other hand everybody should be able to voice her/his well-founded ideas. Everybody is biased - whether inside or outside - therefore everyone can make a contribution. The problem with this is that nobody can claim to speak *for* somebody else.

> "Western human rights feminists talking about the human rights situation in China are often almost too careful to avoid being imperialistic and say things like 'let the Chinese articulate the problems'. The pitfall is that this collapses 'the Chinese' into one monolithic identity, not recognising the difference between Chinese official voices and the complex voices of Chinese people, situated in different class, geographic or political backgrounds. ... What lurks in all of this is the danger of a nativism, to say that 'Chinese' speaking are automatically more legitimate than anyone else speaking. And the problem with this legitimisation claim is it does not adequately take into account how difficult it is to speak within China, and secondly, that some 'Chinese' speaking can take positions that are absolutely disastrous in terms of their consequences for Chinese women".[543]

The view that on each and every issue, and this includes human rights, there is an accurate analysis, which is one's own, must fail because of the partial nature of everyone's understanding. The danger is, as mentioned before, if anyone claims the legitimacy to speak *for* another's experience or for the whole.

For the first time at an NGO forum there was an official lesbian tent.[544] This was proof of an opening within the official discourse to issues of sexual orientation. Nevertheless, the fact that the ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation was deleted from the 'Platform of Action'[545] show the relative insecurity of the establishment towards such issues, vehemently disputed by some of the participants, i.e. from Muslim regions.

> "In Beijing, the debate over the clause on sexual orientation demonstrated the power of the heterosexual paradigm. This ideology has resulted in the violation of human rights of lesbians, as well as gay men, in employment practice and inheritance rights. Lesbians are often subjected to rape as a means of

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[543] Ibid., p. 3.
[544] Internet source (Beijing News from the Lesbian Caucus, http://egale.ca/~egale/pressrel/950914.htm, Lesbians at the FWCW continue the fight against discrimination) p. 1.
[545] Internet source (China Women, http://www.suba.com/~outlines/october/china.html, UN women's conference deletes lesbian rights) p. 1.

attempting to force them to embrace heterosexuality. The heterosexual paradigm may also contribute to the high rate of violence against women in general. For instance, it permits the systematic use of rape for ethnic cleansing and during war. Rape is also used to indicate domination over conquered countries".[546]

Nevertheless the recent backlash to women's issues was identified at Beijing. It also served as a critical argument against the US, who also stood in the line of fire with demonstrations and rallies held against US imperialism.

"The Beijing Conference distinguished itself by recognising the rise of conservatism in the last decade. ... The end of the Cold War confirmed the United States' role as the world's only superpower. The US can now dictate its political and economic ideology to the rest of the world. Yet the US has not ratified CEDAW, it was one of the last to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and it still has not ratified CRC. The US threatens to withdraw or curtail its contributions and assistance to institutions that do not conform to its ideology. ... In this way the US is undermining the UN while simultaneously dominating it".[547]

An example of this US-dictate is their retraction of funds to the UNFPA if their line of policy was not being followed: "Because the UNFPA would not condemn the use of abortion (especially in their Chinese operations) the US withdrew their substantial contributions to the fund".[548]

The issue on 'women' and 'men' mainly starts from the point of view that women's issues cannot be disconnected from men's. Although in the west the women's and feminist movements went through radical phases where women's lot was completely disconnected from men, in China women's empowerment has always been closely linked to men's development. As Prof. Sha Lianxiang pointed out in an interview: "in order to advance women's rights, men must change and advance too".[549]

"There has been a growing tendency within the women's movement for women's groups to communicate mostly with one another, sometimes excluding men entirely. This introverted focus does not advance the cause of women. Some men recognise that women seek to achieve empowerment not by marginalizing men, but by working toward equality. ... If men are partners in the advancement

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[546] Nomtuse Mbere, op.cit., p. 170.

[547] Ibid., p. 173.

[548] Email from the femisa list (femisa@csf.colorado.edu, sent by Jill E. Keesbury, UN & Mexico City, 17.4.1998, 02:10:04).

[549] Interview with Prof. Sha Lianxiang of the Beijing Normal University, 5.5.1998.

of women, they will not feel threatened or undermined by women's empowerment".[550]

Another aspect of the women-men dichotomy is the forum slogan 'look at the world through women's eyes'. This precludes that there is only one category of women - logically then in opposition to the category of men.

Probably the most widely discussed troubles of the 1995 NGO Forum at Huairou concerns problems of access, both to the country (selection and admission as delegates) and to the forum site itself. This criticism was linked to the choice of China as a host and the sudden change of venue for the NGO forum. It mainly focused on China's human rights records and its main propagators were the western media and the human rights caucus. Criticism focused on several difficulties, mainly blaming Chinese authorities for even logistical obstacles accusing them of bad intent. Although the reasons given for the choice of China as the host of the 1995 FWCW, officially because there had not been such a conference in the region yet, but certainly also to get the world's media attention in the year of the UN's 50th anniversary; certainly also, as often mentioned, to provide opportunities for advancing human rights work in China at the same time: "One of the rationales that NGOs and the United Nations quite frequently proposed for having the conference in China was that it would provide opportunities for advancing human rights work and women's issues inside China, despite the concessions needed to achieve it",[551] the UN can easily justify this focus with the slogan often mentioned at the FWCW that 'women's rights are human rights'. Other reactions seem rather more paranoid: "The choice of China as the conference venue was questionable: was this an indication on how the UN treats gender issues? Would Cuba, Iraq or Vietnam have been chosen as venues? Did the UN select Beijing because it was, after all, only a women's conference"?[552]

With the problem of physical access to the forum also came the problem of materials and free speech and exchange of views. "According to the China Organising Committee, materials that address women's concerns may be brought into China but, if illegal under

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[550] Nomtuse Mbere, op.cit., p. 172.
[551] Internet source (S.K. Hom, Representations of Chinese Women. op.cit.) p. 6.
[552] Nomtuse Mbere, op.cit., p. 167.

Chinese law, will not be permitted outside of the conference sites".[553] This definition is vague enough for the responsible cadres in charge to use their own interpretation. This is especially true knowing that no anti-Chinese material will be allowed into the country and the vague definition of what is 'counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement' i.e. inimical to state interests and is considered to be a crime.[554] It is not clear who decides what is appropriate, relevant, legal, or anti-Chinese; whether there is an appeals process, or what will happen to those who violated the directive. Nor is it clear how the 'off-site' rule will apply to materials stored in hotel rooms or carried between the several conference sites.[555] The 1993 State Security Law and the June 1994 Detailed Rules for the Implementation of the Security Law of the People's Republic of China assert that activities compromising state security include fabricating or distorting facts, publishing or disseminating written or verbal speeches, or producing or propagating audio and video products. State security personnel are responsible to interpret the regulations and may do so as to permit searches of hotel rooms or even confiscation of materials. This same State Security Law states that contacts with foreign non-governmental groups being hostile to China is a crime.[556] Similar restrictions at the forum concerned the distribution of materials and statements, which was - like all rallies or demonstrations - limited to the forum area: "press interviews or distribution of caucus statements or position papers cannot take place in the hotel bar or coffee shop. And it means that the non-permanent press corps will be denied access to Chinese citizens who are not part of the conferences. To further limit contact between temporarily accredited journalists and conference participants, the two groups will be housed separately".[557]

The most audible complaints about access came once again from the western press and specifically the human rights caucus - in some ways the interested parties in criticising China's government and its policies. Among those complaints there is truth and exaggeration, it appears, however, no such criticisms have/perhaps could have been advanced from Chinese delegation members directly, although the western human rights caucus did not cease to publicise them:

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[553] Internet source (Rights Watch, Your Rights in Beijing, op.cit.) p. 4.
[554] Ibid., p. 3.
[555] Ibid., p. 4.
[556] Ibid.
[557] Ibid., p. 10.

"Newly formed women's groups wishing to send representatives to the NGO Forum would have to abide by the 1989 'Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Groups'. To organise or undertake activities without registering is, by definition, illegal. And to register, a group would first have to be approved by the 'relevant professional leading organs', in this case the ACWF. A further impediment to independent organising is the 'monopoly' stipulation in the regulations. An 'identical or similar social group cannot be set up within the same administrative area'. Informal women's groups are subject to surveillance; Chinese authorities often limit attendance at their meetings, dictate who may or may not participate, and decide what subject matter is taboo". [558]

Through the choice of emphasis of the 'women's rights are human rights' slogan, the host country China came under sharper scrutiny and criticism than it would normally have. The questions remain whether this 1) turned away some of the attention that should have been focused on women's issues on issues of human rights and specifically on issues of China's human rights status; 2) the UN expressly chose China in order to focus on - what in their eyes is China's critical respectation of human rights; 3) the choice was merely a publicity stunt in order to gain the maximum media attention for both, the UN, as well as China who might not have realised all the implications of this selection at first. One thing is certain, the western media found daily fodder to criticise China and with this emphasising the higher standards that apply in the west to questions of human rights, freedom of expression and association as well as women's issues.

"The severe restrictions placed on association, expression and individual activism in China today, which affects all Chinese people, have constrained women as political actors as well as limited information and debate about abuses of women's human rights. ... When the protection of the human rights of women comes into conflict with the government or Party policy, neither the established organisations which are supposed to represent women's interests nor individual women are able to criticise publicly the policies in question, let alone organise to change them". [559]

Censorship still takes place in China in a very evident manner. Personal experience for example saw centre pages of a Hong Kong based newspaper ('The China Morning Post') taken out daily at the time of the big flooding in China. Negative national reporting, whatever the subject - does not seem to stand high on the agenda:

"The Chinese government continues to regulate the media, publishing, broadcasting and the content of education as well as restricting public speech by requiring permits for all news conferences and for any type of demonstration or assembly. One of the primary rubrics governing news coverage is 'positive

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[558] Ibid., p. 3.
[559] Internet source (CRF Fall 1995, http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/95fall/e13.html, Operating in Circumscribed Space; Women and Controls of Freedom of Expression and Association) p. 1.

propaganda' ... since the mid-1980s, the official formula has been that news coverage should be 80 percent positive, 20 percent negative. In practice, many journalists have said, the negative proportion is usually smaller than that. This means that insofar as information about women's status is negative, journalists may have difficulties reporting it".[560]

On the PRC's positive record there is to mention a real effort (at least at the beginning) to make the conference and the parallel NGO forum work (see chapter 6a). Within this effort stood the creation of several educational and support organisations for women:

"In the period prior to the FWCW, the Chinese authorities have permitted the establishment of a number of new women's organisations. For example the first Women's Hotline [which now unfortunately has to advertise for financial support in order to avoid its closure] was established in 1992 under the auspices of an academic group, the Women's Research Institute, ... There have been fewer such initiatives outside of Beijing, although some other large cities have radio call-ins that focus on issues such as the family life and sexuality. ... these groups are new, primarily urban and founded and run by a small, educated elite; therefore their impact and outreach is necessarily fairly limited, particularly in view of the fact that rural women are the principal victims of many of the human rights abuses ... Good research on problems affecting women should have some influence on policy, but in the absence of strong lobbying efforts such an influence is far from guaranteed".[561]

Nevertheless, pessimism and fear of public criticism and loss of face overshadowed the latter stages of preparation of the FWCW. This becomes clear from some internal documents:

"Specific internal documents governing reporting relating to the FWCW have been issued by the Chinese authorities. An April 1996 article in a normally reliable Hong Kong newspaper said, Xu Weicheng, operating deputy director of the CCP Propaganda Department, warned leaders of central-level news organisations in a speech at an internal meeting in recent days: '[NGOs] make trouble wherever they go, and news organisations absolutely cannot report on their activities in Beijing without observing the principles. In news reports about the World Conference on Women, all news organisations from central to local level must strictly observe the unified line and policy set by the centre. In everything, it is forbidden to act independently".[562]

Any UN conference with the size and extent of the FWCW planned for China poses immense logistical challenges, as the arrangement of adequate meeting rooms, communication facilities, transportation, and housing. "... the conference facilities and the secretariat and host country arrangements had difficulties accommodating the sheer number

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[560] Ibid., p. 3.
[561] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[562] Ibid., p. 4.

of NGO participants or taking into consideration the needs of those with disabilities".[563] Other logistical problems mentioned concerned insufficient seating space, severe lack of interpretation service etc. We have to ask ourselves how much of the responsibility for this lies with the Chinese Organising Committee and the PRC's government, and where the UN organisation stands within all of this, specifically as they voiced the desire to make this Fourth World Conference on Women as cost-effective as possible.[564]

There was some nervousness at all levels in China about holding the FWCW and the parallel NGO forum, as we have stated before. This was due to the sheer size and scope of these meetings, but also the media attention linked with them and different expectations. After the 1989 Tiananmen debacle, China was looking for an opportunity to rebuild its international reputation and this seemed to be the perfect occasion. "As the WCW will be the biggest international assembly held in China since its founding in 1949, it will be a rare opportunity for image and product promotion. At the official level, the Chinese think the conference is about letting the rest of the world know what the status of women in China is. Of course, for official and cultural reasons, they are not going to report the bad things in a public setting. So there will be a lot of information/propaganda about the achievements".[565] The expectation was to build up a good image through the achievements in women's empowerment, a pet subject of the Communist Party - perhaps itself unaware of the deeper implications with unwanted human rights discussions, because "what the domestic Chinese media has to say about women's situation, [it] generally sounds very upbeat".[566] Even after the previously mentioned efforts in the first phase of preparing the FWCW, China became very nervous the nearer the Conference date came: "starting in the spring of this year [1995] (if not before) the Chinese government became very nervous about the political implications of the women's conference. Changing the site of the NGO forum was part of that, but it also had an impact on the Chinese women involved with the preparations for the conference, since their activities and what they were planning for the forum began to be subject to much more intense scrutiny and control".[567]

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[563] Internet source (Upstream Towards Beijing, op.cit.) p. 2.
[564] Internet source: gopher://gopher.un.org/00/esc/cn6/1986-93/e1992-24.en%09%09%2B.
[565] Internet source (Going to Beijing with open Eyes, op.cit.) p. 2.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Internet source (S.K. Hom, Representations of Chinese Women) p. 2.

The situation of nervousness from the official side, leading to tighter controls and mistrust also lead to the very low profile and careful participation by Chinese delegates at the forum. In relation with their western counterparts this often led to disappointment and misunderstandings. On the one hand many of the Chinese delegates felt compelled to show the world a good image of China and therefore not only became uncritical but often nationalistic and thus narrow-minded. They could often not accept that people from outside of China would comment on what they considered purely Chinese matters. Sharon Hom reports:

> "[I was saying things they could not accept.] ... I think they were confusing their analysis of what they could do within China, which I absolutely understand as legitimate for them, with what was appropriate for our strategy outside of China. Of course it is very important for those of us outside to understand that our strategy could have negative consequences for people inside; while they have to recognise that choosing a strategy that is slower and more careful has consequences too, which can also be negative. There is nothing wrong with pressure and critiques from outside, as a complement to these slow, incremental measures".[568]

The problem here - to briefly return to Sylvester's empathetic cooperation – is about understanding the different kinds of intervention every participant can make and appreciate the value and the contributions of these different actors. But this has not always happened and nowhere has it been clearer than in relation with the lesbian presentations, which were opposed by walls of narrow-mindedness and conservatism. This is very well illustrated by the remark of Afaf Ahmed of the International Organisation of Muslim Women, on lesbians "They are sick".[569] This narrow-mindedness and fear of western imperialism upon other opinions is found all along the feminist discourses, for example: "A lot of Western women were outraged by the practice [of genital mutilation of women] but were told by their African sisters to butt out, that it needed to be changed within the culture".[570]

As for Chinese women's voices, there were obviously many outside the official Forum.[571]

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[568] Ibid., p. 5.

[569] V. Brittain, "Been There, Done What?" in the Guardian (18/9/95) p. 12.

[570] Internet source (http://sonomacountyfreepress.org/features/china_women.html, China, Women - My Cup Runneth Over) p. 3.

[571] Internet source (S.K. Hom, Representations of Chinese Women) p. 5.

> "Once these Chinese delegates went to the conference, they could not speak outside their role as Chinese citizens in an international arena, since that meant anything they said would be construed as a reflection of China and of their individual position vis-à-vis their government. The Chinese delegates where constrained by what had been set as the permissible boundaries for the debate. ... If every time a Chinese woman goes to participate in an international conference of NGOs, or a discussion with other women's organisations, she's expected to be a representative of the Chinese state, it makes it virtually impossible for real dialogue to happen".[572]

Thus for Chinese participants at the NGO forum it was very difficult to separate nationalistic discourse and their work on women's issues. The control of this image towards the outside was achieved through a separate registration process for Chinese participants.[573] A Chinese woman living in Canada distributed her 'Note of a Chinese Woman' at the conclusion of the forum not only criticising the repression from the Chinese government, but also emphasising the fact that the problems faced by Chinese women could not even be addressed.[574] So why this nervousness and fear from the Chinese official side. Undoubtedly it was a mix of fears of a stir-up (as seen at other NGO fora) and loss of face standing in the limelight while facing troubles with activists and NGO members. It was also due to the sudden realisation that there may be many topics raised that will not improve China's image in the world. Furthermore there might have been a real fear of things like 'AIDS' or 'lesbians'. What was really worrying though were "different ideologies and feminist thinking, because these contain the subversive character of heterodoxy".[575]

What were, concretely, the difficulties encountered by participants and potential participants to the Forum and Conference?

1. Logistics

The logistics problems contained all from (as mentioned above) lacking space and services of translation, controlled and limited access (most prominently to the Hillary Clinton speech) as well as the last minute change of venue for the NGO forum, being moved from Beijing's centre (Worker's Stadium) right next to the Conference site to the northern outskirts of Beijing (Huairou) with limited access - being barred for taxis.[576]

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[572] Ibid., p. 2.
[573] Ibid., p. 1.
[574] Internet source (Overshadowing Feminism - Thoughts on the Beijing Women's Conference, op.cit.) p. 3.
[575] Ibid., p. 1.
[576] This was confirmed by participants and taxi drivers alike.

"NGOs are concerned about the change in venue for the NGO Forum, which will be held in parallel to the FWCW in Beijing. Last Saturday, NGOs were informed that the original site was structurally unsound. The site that has been proposed in its place is said to be close to the airport and cheaper lodging, aesthetically more pleasing, and to contain better facilities for small working groups. NGO's priorities, however, seem to be focused on proximity to the government conference site and the requirement of a large meeting hall. NGOs were told that the new site is 45 minutes from the government meeting place, but independent sources suggest that the distance would be closer to an hour away. The NGO's plans to hold opening Plenary Sessions each morning would be impossible in the largest meeting hall at the new site, which has capacity for 1'700. Some NGOs suggest that they would need a facility that could accommodate 15'000. Members of the NGO Forum will travel to Beijing this week to visit the proposed site, and possibly to explore alternatives".[577]

2. Politics

Politically, the discussions centred around criticising the 'repressive' Chinese government for its control at the forum, its refusal to give access to certain groups and its influence within the UN to overthrow some of the applications. The UN and its member states have to bear a certain responsibility for these issues, as they could or did not hold against the Chinese rejection. The example of the Tibet Rights Campaign shall give background to this claim:

"China opposes the Tibetan Rights Campaign as aimed at splitting off Tibet from China. It also rejects any involvement in UN affairs by Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade Chinese province. ... (3/5/96) ECOSOC today rejected the accreditation of the 'Tibetan Rights Campaign' to the forthcoming Second UN Conference on Human settlement (Habitat II) by a vote of 21 to 15, with 16 abstentions. Speaking at the meeting, Chinese Deputy Representative to the UN Wang Xuexian criticised the United States for taking up the settled issue 'out of its own political purposes'. The so-called 'Tibetan Rights Campaign', Wang noted, 'is an organisation based on the territory of the United States that takes splitting Tibet from China as its primary objective'. It was precisely for that reason that the ECOSOC last year rejected accreditation of this organisation for participation in activities related to the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. He said that the ECOSOC decision 'is based on the fundamental principle that no organisation whose objective is to sabotage the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states of the UN should be allowed to be involved in activities related to the UN'. ... The NGO Liaison Coordinator for Habitat II, Farouk Malawi said, ... the Tibetan Rights Campaign had stated that it had participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women and that it had been recommended for accreditation to that Conference. However, ... it was found to be erroneous'. 'This accusation is completely false', says Yuthok. 'Our application does not say that we were accredited to the FWCW. It states that our activities included work for the FWCW. The Tibetan Rights Campaign

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[577] Internet source (The Stanley Foundation, http://www.womensnet.org/beijing/barriers.html, Beyond Beijing: NGO Participation and the UN Fourth World Conference on Women: Report on Barriers of Access, With Recommendations for Change) p. 11.

was part of the Tibetan Women's Delegation to the FWCW and served as its US coordination body'. Yuthok has not discounted bringing a legal action against the Secretariat. 'This lie has seriously affected our organisation's reputation and integrity within the UN governing bodies. The false accusation was made by an UN official before the ECOSOC body during final deliberations on our status. A public apology, before the same body, and an explanation are clearly in order. The record must be set straight.' ... 'The inability of member states to effectively stand up to China on basic issues of fairness allows China to flaunt the UN Charter with impunity', says Carole Samdup of the Canada Tibet Committee. 'Even though the Canada Tibet Committee is a federally registered non-profit organisation which has taken an active role in the preparations for the Habitat conference, the Government of Canada put forward no objection to our rejection by the Habitat II Secretariat. Canada's position further validates China's flagrant political manoeuvring by refusing to register a vote in favour of the Tibetan Rights Campaign.' ... China won [a vote against censure and against Tibetan participation] by commanding an overwhelming majority of African and Asian nations, whereas western countries and some Latin American and eastern European states voted against China's position. ... Banning Tibetan NGOs from the Habitat conference on housing and sustainable communities, which takes place in Istanbul in June, continues the UN policy that Tibetan human rights groups, which include self-determination issues in their work, are unwelcome at the UN. ... The vote to exclude Tibetan groups has raised the question in the human rights community as to whether groups advocating self-determination, which is one of the human rights named in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, may be barred from UN conferences and other fora. China's ability to martial votes among third world countries to keep its non-governmental critics out of the UN system is clearly a controversy the UN would like to avoid".[578]

But even the often anti-Chinese oriented human rights caucus saw, that these issues were not only to blame on China (similar situations having occurred at previous meetings, and after, as the example illustrates). Their statement responsibilises the UN and its member states to take action in order to avoid similar events in the future and allow a maximum spectrum of participating NGOs.

"The human rights caucus believes that the problems NGO participants have experienced here, as well as similar problems at previous UN conferences, must be addressed in planning for future UN conferences, so as to ensure that NGOs are able to contribute fully and effectively. From the beginning, the preparations for the FWCW and NGO forum were beset by difficulties, including political interference in accreditation of NGOs, the late change of site for the NGO Forum, lack of access to preparatory conferences, and within them, to the activities of governments, and ejection or exclusion of some NGO participants from such conferences. All of these obstacles have distracted attention and energy from the primary purpose of the work of NGOs and have left the strong impression that the full diversity of NGOs is not welcome at UN events. Government and UN rhetoric about the importance of NGOs to the process has not been translated into practice".[579]

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[578] Internet source (China Attacks Tibetan Rights Campaign, http://members.aol.com/Tibetan/TRCvChina.html) pp. 1-3.

[579] Internet source (The Stanley Foundation, op.cit.) p. 12.

3. Incidents: Denial of Access, Harassment, Surveillance

The Working Group on Openness was created by the Women's Human Rights Caucus in response to possible incidents. During the Forum, the Working Group collected incident reports and presented them to the NGO Facilitating Committee.[580] The report gives a detailed account on several sorts of incidents, including 1. denial of access during official preparatory meetings, government interference in the process of NGO accreditation, lack of transparency in that process, denial of visas to accredited delegates, de facto exclusion of participants with disabilities by failing to provide adequate access and facilities; 2. arbitrary restrictions on participation though ill-defined or ad hoc procedures for NGO participation as observers, interference with NGO decision-making about representation in the plenary sessions of the conference, the great distance between the forum and the conference sites with inadequate transport making full participation and contributions almost impossible; 3. restrictions on freedom of expression and association through arbitrary controls on the importation of materials, confiscation of materials, censorship of conference newspapers and harassment of journalists, intimidation of forum participants by host country personnel and by other participants and governments, arrest and/or questioning of Chinese dissidents and their families (the 'clean-up' of Beijing), harassment directed at specific groups or particular members (e.g. lesbian women, Tibetan women, human rights activists etc.).

> "Both governments and the UN have a responsibility and an interest in successful NGO forums, and they should in future involve themselves more fully in ensuring that such meetings provide a safe space in which participants can speak and organise freely without surveillance or fear of retaliation. In order to facilitate communication, guarantees must be obtained that independent newspapers, which are not subject to censorship of any kind, may publish during NGO forums and government conferences and the forum and conference sites must be located near each other. NGO coordinators of forums must communicate regularly with participants about the process and any problems that may arise. Unfortunately, at the NGO Forum in Huairou ... the FC, as a whole, appeared to speak more frequently to the press about these matters than to forum participants, clearly manifesting a lack of accountability to NGO participants.[581]

All governments and the UN though share the responsibility for what happened at Huairou.

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[580] Ibid., pp. 1-27.
[581] Ibid., p. 8.

c) Different Western Responses

The responses in the west were diverse, according to the source - as were those in China. The media mainly focused on the problems of the forum, its logistical and relocation issues as well as the controls and, linked to that, on China's human rights situation. More official channels of member states and the UN hailed the successes of the events over all and, in a more academic context, human rights issues as well as the meetings' successes and downfalls with a special critical eye on media reportage are discussed.

> "The gathering in Beijing serves as an apt reminder that all kinds of women's concerns become enmeshed in politics. China's recent human rights violations and military exercises aimed at intimidating Taiwan persuaded some delegates to stay home. ... As an estimated 20'000 representatives of non-governmental organisations arrived last week in Huairou, 52 km from Beijing, for an unofficial companion conference, complaints arose immediately that Chinese authorities were curtailing promised transportation and interfering with delegates' freedom of movement. 'My fear is that the reporting of Chinese problems will overshadow the women's issues', ... said a member of Germany's Parliament".[582]

Although this brief excerpt gives a certain insight on the reporting focus in the western media, it nevertheless packs a maximum of information on harassment and human rights issues on the Chinese side into a few lines. In addition to this, by mentioning that by Chinese interference and logistical inconsistencies women's issues became enmeshed in politics can be interpreted as a view that puts women's concerns outside of politics, therefore referring them back to a private sphere, only sporadically, by sheer misfortune, getting into the public light.

More critical on western reporting is an article by Dr. Vandana Shiva: "The coverage of the Beijing Conference by the global media suggests the world's largest conference is on China, not on women".[583] She means that reporting in fact was not so much concerned with the contents of the forum and the FWCW as with China being the hosting country and the problems this entails in hosting the conference and as background with human rights issues. She goes on to say "most of the media focus has been on the site of the NGO forum at Huairou. ... Of all the UN Conferences at which I have been present over the last decade, the

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[582] Jill Smolowe, "All for One?", in Time (11/09/1995) pp. 45-46.

[583] Email: Dr. V. Shiva (author, physicist, third world and women's activist, visiting professor and Head of the Research Institute for Science, Technology and Environment in New Delhi, Beijing Conference: Gender Justice and Global Apartheid, Tue. 19. Sept. 1995, 11:08:26) p. 1.

NGO forum site and the arrangements at Beijing have surpassed what was available to NGOs in Nairobi, Rio, Cairo and Copenhagen".[584]

Many articles outside of China though insisted that the change of venue was due to China's unwillingness to have a large number of activists gathered in their capital's centre, as for example in Correspondence, July 1995, No. 66:

> "The government said the original site in central Beijing for the non-government forum had structural problems. Left unsaid, but understood, was its refusal to allow the possibility of thousands of activists gathered in the centre of the city and promoting causes like human rights. The forum organisers insisted on a better site closer to the UN conference. No, said Beijing. The organisers gave in. they announced earlier this month they were dropping their protest because enough improvements had been made at Huairou. These changes included promises of shuttle bus services to Beijing, a satellite link to the UN conference through the internet, and closed-circuit television coverage of the UN conference shown in Huairou".[585]

Or again: "The Chinese Government had moved the NGO forum to Huairou because it feared that the virus of free discussion might be uncontrollable if it took place in Beijing".[586] Also: "No sanctioned news sources acknowledged the climate of censorship and oppression incurred by being hosted by China".[587] And : "It is still not known how much China will try to control access to the forum. Nearly 500 groups were denied the right to attend, and their appeals are expected to be heard in July".[588]

We have to be careful to distinguish between propaganda (from the west and China) and reality. Clearly the reporting in the British press had its main focus on human rights issues in China. On the one side we could argue that this deviated some of the attention from women's concerns to issues of human rights. "The fact that it [FWCW] was meeting in Beijing also threatened to subordinate the agenda to arguments over Chinese human rights and the current state of US-China relations".[589] On the other hand, it is not entirely impossible, as we have mentioned in chapter 6b, that the choice of China as hosting country was not entirely

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[584] Ibid.

[585] Internet source (Correspondence No. 66, http://www.creighton.edu/~coke/PUBLIC/CORRESPO/JUL95/ CORR9.HTM, Huairou, Women's Conference, July 1995) p. 1.

[586] J. Pringle, "Feminists hail UN China meeting as key to next century", in the Times (16/09/95) p. 12.

[587] Internet source (Commentary, http://www.fnsa.org/v1n4/enero.html, Beyond Beijing's Cue Cards by Ruth Enero) p. 1.

[588] Internet source (Correspondence No. 66, op.cit.) p. 2.

[589] "Beijing's week - It was not just about Hillary" in the Guardian (11/09/95) p. 3.

naive from the side of the UN, hoping to promote its vision of human rights. This claim is all the more reinforced through the focus the conference had on' women's rights being human rights'. Nevertheless, we cannot be entirely uncritical of the Chinese side either, who obviously wanted to improve its international image by hosting a big international event and trying to push the events of 1989 in the background. Many people have reported on a official campaign by the Chinese government trying to raise nationalistic feelings and denigrating forum and conference participants as lesbians, carriers of AIDS etc. "A whispering campaign which some diplomats thought was officially inspired, portrayed the forum as a gathering of Aids-infected prostitutes and lesbians, and taxi-drivers were told to be on the lookout for foreign women undressing in their cabs prior to nude demonstrations".[590] In personal discussions with Chinese and western hotel staff in Beijing, as well as with taxi drivers and Chinese people from all walks of life, some of these claims have been confirmed. Staff from the Beijing Kempinsky were apparently told to hold blankets ready, in order to cover up activists trying to attract the attention by taking their clothes off. On the other hand the responsibility for many of the deficiencies and lacks at the Beijing Forum were not entirely in the hands of the Chinese organisers. "The Chinese decision to shunt off the NGO conference to an inadequately prepared venue in Huairou should have been rejected at the start by the UN officials whose approval was required".[591] Some of the accusations brought forward were merely anti-Chinese propaganda trying to conceal the deficiencies caused by the UN or member states.

> "By falsely targeting the Chinese authorities for the problems faced by movement groups and individual women, the attention has been diverted from the role played by the NGO Facilitating Committee. Such committees are appointed to facilitate NGO activities at UN Conferences. Since they merely facilitate, they are largely invisible. The Beijing NGO Facilitating Committee did everything but facilitate. First they fixed an arbitrary $50 fee for registration, which excluded large numbers of women activists, especially from the third world. Then they focused everyone's energies on the debate over the site in Huairou, and diverted attention from substantive issues. Later, uncertainty about the NGO forum because of the non-acceptance of the site by them was to block off registrations in a totally arbitrary manner. I personally was refused NGO registration for the forum though I was registered at the UN Conference and finally made it to the forum through accreditation as media on which the NGO Committee had no control. Thousands of women who arrived in Beijing were denied access to the forum on grounds that they had not registered in time. While all along it was the NGO Committee blocking participation, a well orchestrated campaign had been run by the US administration, US human rights

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[590] J. Pringle, in the Times. op.cit. (16/09/95) p. 12.
[591] "Beijing's week - It was not just about Hillary" in the Guardian, op.cit. (11/09/95) p. 3.

groups and the Forum Secretariat complaining of Chinese attempts to exclude NGOs".[592]

Not only were responsibilities shared on the change of venue and difficulty to or even exclusion from access to the forum, but also some of the frequently quoted logistical insufficiencies, such as the lack of space, were not entirely in Chinese hands:

> "The NGO facilitating Committee also overstepped its role by usurping the space from women's movements and groups and monopolising the largest halls and plenaries for events they themselves organised. Never before at an NGO Conference has an NGO Facilitating Committee (FC) taken over activities in this manner. The attempt quite clearly was to manipulate the women's agenda at Beijing and post-Beijing. The FC plenaries focused on making women adjust to the New World Order. Women's movements on the other hand are demanding that the global order adjusts to the needs of women, which best reflect the needs of society as a whole".[593]

In the eyes of V. Shiva, this led, in a figurative way, to two separate fora to be reported on: an official one directed through power politics, a second one in restricted form through power politics (and probably other limitations):

> "There were, as a result, not one but two NGO forums. One was the outcome of the Forum Secretariat's manipulations, which were a reflection of the priorities of the economically and politically powerful global interests. ... The second forum was the free and independent NGO forum, reflecting the concerns of movements, through events and activities created through self-organisation. Since the allocation of rooms for events had been manipulated, the real concerns of women were to be seen in the activities they organised in the open spaces - the rallies, the sit-ins, the protests"[594]

Another event hotly debated in the press and therefore in the public eye was Hillary Clinton's speech at the forum, its content, the delays and its importance and contribution:

> "I know that many of you went through great efforts to be here. I know many were kept from attending this forum. I know that for many of you that did get here, getting here was far from easy. Many of you did not even know until the last minute that you would be permitted to travel here, and others bore great personal expense in order to come. In addition to the weather, which is not in anyone's control, and is always unpredictable, I know that you have had to endure severe frustrations here as you have pursued your work".[595]

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[592] Email: V. Shiva, op.cit. p. 5.
[593] Ibid.
[594] Ibid.
[595] Internet source (Hillary Rodham Clinton, http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/China/ngo.html, Remarks to the NGO Forum, 6/9/95) p. 1.

The Chinese press did largely not report on the content of her speech (Hillary Clinton attacks China's treatment of some delegates, its human rights record and (implicitly) its one-child policy. Chinese media does not report her speech),[596] the western press, on the contrary, widely reported on her criticisms of China and the COC: "most media coverage dwelt on the most obvious points of conflict with China and on the starring role of Hillary Clinton. These were legitimate news stories yet the complex issues raised by the conference should not have been reduced to a struggle between our 'free speech' and their 'secret police'".[597] This insight of some western journalists came after Chinese complaints about the emphasis on China's human rights issues and critiques on its policies, especially after the Hillary Clinton speech, whereafter "the Chinese later indirectly and politely told the US to mind its own business".[598] Clinton proceeded in her speech to say "It is our responsibility, those of us who have been able to attend this conference and this NGO forum, to make sure that the voices that go unheard will be heard".[599] This statement in itself would not have been interpreted so negatively, as unwanted involvement into Chinese affairs, had there not been the entire speech directing itself against China, as stated before. Furthermore, and this was less reported by the western media, but rather published in academic circles, in order to make Hillary Clinton's speech happen it was relocated last minute from an outside football field to a comparatively small - although the largest at the forum site - inside hall. "To create a venue for her [Hillary Clinton], a major rally of women activists was cancelled by the NGO Committee. Even while Mrs. Clinton's own speaking opportunity was created by violating the rights of NGOs to organise their events as planned at the NGO forum, the focus of Mrs. Clinton's speech was on the violation of rights of NGOs by the Chinese authorities".[600] Similarly, The US Ambassador to the UN, Madeline Albright published a report on the FWCW stating "no mother should feel compelled to abandon her daughter because of a societal preference for males".[601]

> The fact is that, although many criticisms of the Chinese government as well
> as the organising committee for the FWCW had legitimacy in some ways,
> they dominated media reporting and therefore public opinion in the west
> about FWCW and the NGO forum, respectively the host country China. For

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[596] Victoria Brittain, "Been there, done what?" in the Guardian, op.cit., p. 12.

[597] "Beijing's week" in the Guardian (11/9/95) p. 3.

[598] Internet source (GLSJ, http://www.law.indiana.edu/glsj/vol4/no1/ongpgp.html, Strategic Sisterhood or Sisters in Solidarity? Questions of Communitarianism and Citizenship in Asia) p. 3.

[599] Email: V. Shiva, op.cit. p. 2.

[600] Ibid.

[601] M.K. Albright, op.cit., p. 146.

example at the earth Summit in Rio, the NGO forum and the UN conference were also far apart, but no one made a big deal of it".[602]

In addition to these exaggerations, this seemed like an attempt to deviate from the UN's responsibilities and weaknesses. We have previously discussed the at least shared responsibilities between the COC and the UN organisation for the site change of the NGO forum. Some of the published material seemed to serve more the purpose of western or anti-Chinese propaganda then giving support to participants at the meetings. What better way to point out one's own strengths than to denigrate those of another (a technique also used in China, for example by reporting good national news surrounded by catastrophic international news, or again by the publication of booklets such as 'A Report Which Distorts Facts and Confuses Right and Wrong - on the part about China in the 1994 'Human Rights Report' issued by the US State Department').[603] Groups from the human rights caucus, especially from the USA openly criticised China, even prior to the actual meetings.

> "The US human rights group 'Human Rights Watch' even prepared and distributed a booklet [available also on the net] 'Your Rights in Beijing: A Brief Guide for Delegates to the 1995 NGO Forum on Women'. ... The false idea created among US participants by such propaganda material became evident to me when I was travelling from the airport to the hotel and an American guest said in a puzzled way, 'Where is all the military'? The language of surveillance used by groups such as Human Rights Watch, Hillary Clinton and even the NGO Committee have tried to present the Beijing Conference in a very different light from the reality of the situation. ... Besides presenting a false picture of the Beijing Conference to the world, the US-led speeches, literature and media coverage has constructed a narrow notion of human rights that excludes human rights based on economic, environmental, and social justice, and falsely projects citizens in western society as free. ... Such propaganda fails to make western citizens aware that their governments have much tighter restrictions on freedom of expression and much tighter security. The entire area in downtown Halifax was blocked to the public when the G7 Summit took place in June 1995. When citizen groups protested against G7 policies in Munich at an earlier Economic Summit, they were arrested. At the World Bank Meeting in Berlin in 1988 and Madrid in 1994, large numbers of protesters were beaten and arrested. No 'Human Rights Watch' was around to talk of 'Your Rights in Halifax' or 'Your Rights in Munich' or 'Your Rights in Berlin'".[604]

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[602] Email: V. Shiva, op.cit. p. 2.
[603] Information Office of the State Council, People's Republic of China, A Report Which Distorts Facts and Confuses Right and Wrong - on the part about China in the 1994 'Human Rights Report' issued by the US State Department (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, March 1995).
[604] Email: V. Shiva, op.cit. p. 3.

Even in the documents, claims Shiva, a deformed notion of women's rights which is equated daily to women's reproductive rights was being given ... implicitly criticising the PRC's one-child policy. "The narrow notion of human rights that is distorting the Beijing agenda is also exemplified in the manner in which women's health rights have been reduced to reproductive rights, and reproductive rights have been distorted to imply population control".[605]

Furthermore, a critique of the UN's lack of employing women as well as their plan to close gender gaps on an individual basis, rather than attacking the problem on a transnational basis were themes of western academic discourse:

> "Precisely at a time when national parliaments and elected bodies are being marginalised by decisions made in global bureaucracies like the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, we are being told there should be more women in parliament. The debate is again being deflected from the erosion of national democratic space, into a narrow discussion of 'women in politics'. What power will women exercise through parliaments when parliaments themselves are losing power and are being bypassed? ... The UNDP and the World Bank are already busy constructing measures for assessing 'gender gaps' in different countries. Their focus will be on the gap between men and women within households, within countries - not the gender gap between transnational corporations dominating the global food system and the third world farmers. Through these constructions the real inequalities will be hidden".[606]

Shiva claims that "only 30% of UN staff are women",[607] while the UN quotes a total of 17.2% distributed as follows on the next page:

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[605] Ibid.
[606] Ibid., p. 7.
[607] Ibid., p. 8.

The distribution of women by United Nations entity and level in 1984 and 1988 (percentage)[608]

1984:

	senior management	middle management	middle professional	entry level	total
UN Secretariat	3.3	7.4	25.7	32.9	20.3
UN voluntary fund	4.0	7.3	23.1	37.2	22.9
Specialised agencies	1.2	3.7	16.9	35.2	3.9
Other	0.0	1.3	17.7	44.4	13.1
Total	2.5	5.0	20.5	35.1	17.2

1988:

	senior management	middle management	middle professional	entry level	total
UN Secretariat	4.5	10.3	30.2	37.5	24.5
UN voluntary funds	6.5	12.9	28.6	40.1	28.7
Specialised agencies	2.7	4.8	20.1	36.3	16.3
Other	0.0	2.9	18.9	56.5	15.1
Total	4.0	7.2	24.6	38.1	20.8

Despite the difference in numbers, the UN was regularly criticised, mainly from academic circles, about its insufficient register on equal employment of women within its own ranks: "The UN was also in the firing line for its own poor record on equality for women, particularly in top and middle management, and for a less than wholehearted commitment to the conference. ... inadequate staffing and translations, for example".[609]

The differences on human rights so emphasised during this conference and especially the parallel NGO forum were, according to some academic and human rights activists, also due to different meanings and definitions attached to the term 'human rights' in Asia and the west:

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[608] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General to the CSW on the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, assessing progress at the national, regional and international levels (New York: UN Department of Public Information, E/CN.6/1990/5, 22.11.1989) p. 54.
[609] Victoria Brittain, Guardian, op.cit. p. 12.

"Human Rights Watch says that the 'Asian concept of human rights', stressing economic development over political rights and collective duties over individual freedoms, is largely a self-serving construct of Asian governments that has been widely rejected by Asian human rights activists. ...The political value orientation of the Chinese intellectual class is pro-democracy, and the working class and peasantry are all the more pro-social justice. ... Again, the citizens' rights focus is on state protection of different sectors of society as whole, not individual rights. ... These Asian narratives continually (re)construct and (re)define cultural values as the duty of citizens to discipline themselves and increase labour productivity in order to fulfil social obligations for the good of the society as a whole".[610]

This recasting of Asian values towards development in order to catch up with the west also comes out clearly in the speech of Foreign Vice-Minister Liu Huaqiu at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna: "The rights and obligations of a citizen are indivisible. While enjoying his legitimate rights and freedom, a citizen must fulfil his social responsibilities and obligations. There are no absolute individual rights and freedoms. ... Nobody shall place his own rights and interests above those of the state and society, nor should he be allowed to impair those of others and the general public".[611] The difference with the western concept of individual human rights is visible through comparison of Hillary Clinton's statements at the NGO forum and Mme. Huang Qizao (Vice President of the ACWF): "While Clinton sees women's emancipation within the freedom of women, Huang regards women's emancipation to be located within China's struggle with colonial domination. Clinton emphasises individual rights, whereas Huang accentuates the right to self-determination of the country".[612]

Other western reactions included responses from the pro-life camp in the USA, accusing the conference of anti-family politics on several grounds: the choice of the location being China which implements a strict one-child family policy and where the use of abortion is relatively widespread, the open criticism of 'man the aggressor', rather than seeing men as protectors, the UN's commitment to discuss and possibly include a lesbian agenda, the lack of representatives from pro-life groups and organisations.

"There were two similar but distinct UN events in China: the Conference in Beijing was the official event, while a forum led by irascible ultra feminist Bella Abzug took place in Huairou. ... They promoted eastern religions and goddess

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[610] Internet source (Strategic Sisterhood or Sisters in Solidarity? Questions of Communitarianism and Citizenship in Asia, op.cit.) p. 5.

[611] Ibid.

[612] Interview with Mme. Huang Qizao and Prof. Sha Lianxiang of the Normal University's Women's Studies Centre in Beijing, 5.5.1998.

worship, as well as Pantheism, ... Their endorsement of lesbianism, homosexuality, and 'free sex' ignored the resultant yield of AIDS. ... Secretary-General Mongella categorised all men as 'malicious and insensitive'. ... This deviant view ignored the fact that the majority of men are providers and protectors of their wives and children".[613]

And:

"When the Beijing Conference was convened last year not one pro-life or pro-family group was represented among the 46 US delegates who wrote a platform document that advances a global feminist and lesbian agenda. In the name of empowering women, the platform document reaches into the business community with restrictive requirements for gender equity and gender sensitivity, leaving the term 'gender' to be defined as any sexual orientation. The Beijing Conference also brought the world closer to the UN goal of controlling the population by building upon previous efforts to promote homosexuality through making sexual orientation a human right, by redefining the family, and by taking every opportunity to increase the availability and funding of abortion".[614]

In the same line, the spokeswoman of the Vatican (Mary Ann Glendon, a Harvard University Professor and head of the Vatican delegation) criticised the Beijing summit stating "the draft on abortion neglects marriage, motherhood, family and religion, all of which are central to the lives of most of the world's women".[615]

Another critical stance is found in certain male journalists, who entirely deny the need for a women's conference to discuss and assess women's issues and obviously feel more threatened by it than inspired. Paul Johnson from the Spectator writes "Why is it necessary to hold a Conference on Women? We would not dream of holding a Conference on Men".[616]

d) The Chinese Official Vision

The official view of the host to the summit, the Chinese government, is generally very positive. This is due to the fact that as the host, China felt any negative commenting would reflect deficiencies in their organisation of the event as well as trigger wide criticism about China and its policies, at a moment when the PRC saw its chance to reconstruct its damaged

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[613] Internet source (http://www.fni.com/heritage/nov95/Cathie.Adams.html) Cathy Adams, China Women's Conference No Friend of the Family, p. 1.

[614] Internet source (http://www.fni.com/heritage/nov96/Beijing.html) Penna Dexter, Bringing Beijing and Its Anti-Family Agenda Home, pp. 1-2.

[615] Internet source (http://detnews.com/menu/stories/14757.htm, Vatican scorns 'vision' of China women's summit, 28/8/95, p. 1.

[616] Emily Barr in V. Brittain, Guardian, op.cit., p. 12.

international image. Nevertheless, mainly incidents at the NGO forum have led to increased tensions, specifically in the US-Sino relations.

Yu Xiaodong (Director of the Information Department of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade) remarked that "the UN enjoys a fairly high reputation in China, particularly among modern Chinese youth and intellectuals".[617] This statement not only shows commitment from the Chinese side towards making the FWCW summit a success, but also the popular support for the UN and its projects, and partly explains the initial ardour with which Beijing tackled the preparations to the summit on women's concerns in Beijing. However, opinion's about the UN being a more or less free forum for the exchange of ideas and a neutral meeting place for members to work out their differences is disputed within China. "According to Yu Xiaodong, although the UN is as 'free forum' at which any member state can express and expound its country's views on various international affairs, it does not have binding force on International Relationships and the vestiges of manipulation by major powers is evident; countries that really play a leading role in the UN are only a few western economic powers which make use of the international organisation to push power politics".[618]

> "Many people share Yu's view. But some people think otherwise. Wang Guanhua [Director of the International Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs] said the UN is a mirror reflecting the changes in the international situation. In the UN, change in the structure of forces cannot surpass changes in the international situation. It is identical with changes in the international pattern and changes in the balance of power. After the end of the Cold War, the world pattern has gradually evolved in a multipolar direction. The same holds true in the UN. ... Chinese former Deputy Ambassador to the UN Huang Jiahua said that as a member of the UN, China dares to safeguard the interests of the developing countries".[619]

> "In Bi's [Bi Jilong, former deputy secretary general of the UN] opinion, the biggest problem of the UN today results from the contrast between the power imbalance between strong and weak countries. In the past, the UN could not take any action without the agreement of the United States and the Soviet Union. Although that problem has been somewhat alleviated, others have developed. Thus one of the UN's major tasks is getting nations to develop a consensus. Many industrial countries have come to understand that their long term best interests will be best served via development in the third world. Nonetheless, little consensus exists regarding the best ways to promote such

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[617] Huang Wei, "Chinese View of the United Nations" in Beijing Review (Vol. 38, Nr. 38, 18-24/9/95) p. 14.

[618] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[619] Ibid., p. 15.

developments. ... There is no other such place as the United Nations to coordinate the views of so many countries in the world".[620]

The Chinese government, in its preparation phase and zeal do make the FWCW and the NGO Forum work, emphasised its long-standing interest in women's issues and its constant efforts (since the creation of the People's Republic) and commitment to the advancement of women. Chen Jian (Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman) noted that "the Chinese government has all along put importance to the advancement of the women's status and efforts in ensuring the equality between men and women".[621] Nevertheless, the ideal situation has not yet been reached internationally or nationally: "former Chinese leader Mao Zedong's famous saying 'women hold up half the sky' is far from a reality yet".[622] In her speech, greeting the opening of the FWCW in Beijing, Chen Muhua not only emphasised the important role the UN played in the advancement of women, but also greatly praised how China has and had in the past committed itself to improving women's situation nationally - and now, by hosting this conference, internationally: "China has made brilliant achievements in the emancipation movement of women and has established new traditions in this field. Chinese women have earned a social status noticed and extensively admired by the world. Such a nation is certainly worthy of being the host to the FWCW. We have made the most positive preparations for the holding of the FWCW".[623] Deng Xiaoping's daughter and Chinese Vice-Minister of the State Science and Technology Commission Deng Nan said: "China is among one of the few countries which have done best in the advancement of women but the final emancipation of the Chinese women depends on their own enhanced awareness".[624]

The Chinese women's movement is different from those found in most western countries, as it is state-led (with the double purpose of advancing women in order to gain support for the Party and its policies) and has not grown from the grass-root level. This fact is not hidden by the Chinese official view, nor by its press: "American women attach importance

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[620] Li Ning, "Retired UN Official Discusses the UN" in Beijing Review (Vol. 38, Nr. 39, 25/9-1/10/95) p. 14.
[621] Xinhua, "Remarks on Beijing Declaration" in FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-181, 19/9/95) p. 2.
[622] China Daily, "A Salute to Equality" (Beijing, 5/9/95) p. 4.
[623] Xinhua, Speech by Chen Muhua: Equality, Development and Peace are the Common Pursuit of Women all Over the World - Greeting the Opening of the Fourth World Conference on Women of the United Nations in FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-174, 8/9/95) p. 8.
[624] Xinhua, "Deng's Daughter Quotes Mao", FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-178, 14/9/95) p. 3.

to the development of grass-roots organizations of urban and rural women".[625] On the other hand that does not mean, as often assumed by western scholars and activists, that there is no grass-root level in China interested in the advancement of women. We have seen in the previous subchapter on the ACWF, that it allows not only for new, smaller women's organisations to support their tasks (although this is limited by strict regulations), but also that many local cadres incorporated in the massive, trans-level organisation that is the ACWF are doing project work directly at the local, grassroots level.

China's role as host was reported in a very positive way within the Chinese media as well as UN publications: "He [Ismat Kittani, special representative of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, delivering the Secretary-General's speech at the opening of the FWCW] also said that without the full and active support and participation of China, the UN cannot act as a truly universal forum. China's decision to be the host for this major event in modern life is a symbol for its future place in the world, and that of all the nations of Asia within the international community".[626] A later issue of Beijing Review reports 'China extended herculean efforts to ensure the success of the event'. This led Mongella to comment that China is perhaps the world's only country capable of making such a large contribution to UN conferences like the one just held. ... "Comparisons made during the conference helped us gain a realisation that China's advancement of women has the backing of both, the government and non-governmental organisations", said Li Jingzhi from the China Women's Research Institute".[627]

> "China as the host country, has sincerely and seriously honoured what it has agreed in the exchange of letters with the NGO Facilitating Committee and helped make the forum a complete success, a senior Chinese official said here today. Xu Zhijian, Vice-Chairman of the COC of the UN FWCW said: 'The COC, together with the UN and NGO participants from various countries, has created a wonder - successful staging of the largest forum ever in the UN history'. ... As for the security work he said the local police had done a lot to ensure the safety of participants and their property, at the conference site's order in strict line with the host country's agreement and exchange of letters. 'We ensured participant's full freedom within the forum site, who were able to air their views freely, while we also treasured and safeguarded the state's sovereignty and dignity'. However, Xu admitted that there was still room for improvement. 'But we stand firm against those few people who, with ulterior motives, provoked troubles, distorted facts, spread lies and slandered the organising work. Whether in the Huairou International

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[625] Wang Xiaoming, "Voice from the Tents" in Women of China (1/1996) p. 31.
[626] Yang Zheng, "FWCW Starts With Hope and Zeal", in Beijing Review (Vol. 38, Nr. 38, 18-24/9/95) p. 10.
[627] Wang Xin, "'Beijing Spirit' Triumphs", in Beijing Review (Vol. 38, Nr. 42, 16-22/10/95) pp. 10-13.

Convention Centre, which seats about 1'500 people, and in tents and meeting rooms, participants were free to air their views and ask and answer questions'. ... participants from different countries and regions criticised western media for their biased reports on the forum itself, adding that such negative reports on the forum constituted an insult to the participants".[628]

China clearly saw successfully hosting the Conference as a welcome opportunity to improve their image. Remarks like the following show how the PRC was trying to show the world that things had changed and that there was an air of transparency, freedom and openness in new China: "In hosting the FWCW, China adhered to the slogan – 'let the world and China understand each other'. At any rate, China's allowing western human rights, amnesty, anti-nuclear, and environmental protection organisations conduct activities in its capital and even hold street demonstrations was an indication of China's opening up wider to the outside world".[629] The ACWF chair Chen Muhua:

"Our country's selection as the conference host shows that China is universally acknowledged as being capable of making relevant preparations for the conference, and signifies an interest in China's development among the world's people, and our country's increasingly important role in international affairs. Moreover, the conference's convocation is a full affirmation of the tremendous achievements of China's burgeoning women's liberation movement. Therefore, it is an honour for our country to host this conference, which constitutes our country's contribution to the cause of women of the United Nations and the world".[630]

She [Chen Muhua] also noted that the event was of 'significant importance' in promoting Chinese women's participation in social and economic development. In this context must be seen material like the 'Note of a Chinese Woman'[631] where the ACWF is criticised and defined as a "ministry or branch of Chinese government"[632] and portraying the Chinese government as an oppressive, male dominated control organ, denying Chinese women their rights and even the opportunity to voice their concerns at the FWCW (this text is further discussed in subchapter 6e.

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[628] Xinhua, "Official Says NGO Forum 'Complete Success'", FBIS transcribed text, FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-175, 11/9/95), p. 7.
[629] He Chong, "China Successfully Hosts the World Conference on Women by Eliminating Interference from the West" in Zhongguo Tongxun She (Hong Kong, 16/9/95) p. 3.
[630] Xinhua, Speech by Chen Muhua: ..., op.cit.) p. 4.
[631] Anonymous text distributed in the net by Tracey Moavero of the International Peace Bureau, Geneva (CH), available through different Internet channels, e.g. http://www.antenna.nl/news/women/unwcw/mn00563.html, Note From a Chinese Woman.
[632] Ibid., p. 1.

The China Daily further reports: "... hosting the conference in the Chinese capital 'is a contribution by China to the UN cause and the world women's movement' said Chen Muhua, Chairman of the ACWF". [633]

The highly criticised security measures, where much of the western media and public opinion reproached the Chinese government to be repressive and interfering, was defended as a counter-reaction in the Chinese media; having obviously touched a wound point in a China that was desperate to improve its image and relations to the west.

"Security measures China adopted for the FWCW ensured the smooth progress of the conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian said here today [15/9]. The spokesman made the statement when asked to comment on the view of some participants at the conference and that of some reporters that security measures seemed to be too strict. ... China still lacks experience in holding large-scale international conferences, which of course leaves some room for improvement. However, he said, it is not fair as was the case with some reporters who made much to-do and even went so far as to make exaggerations about trifling matters to look narrowly at only one or two things instead of the overall situation. ... He [UN Under Secretary-General Ji Chaozu] expressed appreciation over the arrangements and services rendered by China. 'It is necessary to tighten security for such a grand meeting', he said, adding that some misunderstandings in services might have been caused by language barriers. 'There are certainly language problems', Ji said. 'In the rapid modernisation process, China should make more efforts in training people to speak foreign languages so as to facilitate the exchange between peoples', he said". [634]

"A Chinese alternate representative today expressed regret for some people's lashing out at the population policies of other countries in an attempt to impose their own will and values upon other countries. Speaking at the Second Committee, Yang Yanyi said 'this is not only an interference in other countries' internal affairs and sovereignty but also a barrier to international friendly cooperation and the smooth implementation of the Plan of Action. Such harmful and irresponsible policies and practices should meet with resistance from the international community, she said. ... 'They [the proposals of the Plan of Action] are to be implemented in keeping with national laws and development priorities, in full respect of different religions, ethics and cultural backgrounds', she stressed...". [635]

Chen Jian (Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman) defended China also by saying that it was still inexperienced in hosting conferences of that magnitude and that China considered dialogue the way forward for international issues.

[633] Wang Rong, "Conference 'will help the cause of women'", in China Daily (Beijing, 8/3/93), p.1.
[634] Xinhua, "Spokesman sees security as key to success" in SWB (FE/2411 S2/9, 18/9/95) pp. 9-10.
[635] Xinhua, "China rejects 'interference' in its population policies" in SWB (FE/2435 G/6, 16/10/1995) p. 6.

> "Asked about what experience China could draw from its hosting of the women's conference, Chen Jian said: China always holds that countries of the world should transcend their differences in ideology and social systems and live together in peace and friendship ... Chen Jian also said that in regard to different views, China holds that countries should respect one another, and seek common ground on major issues while reserving differences on minor points in order to work out something that is acceptable to all. Chen Jian said: As the host, China has made the necessary preparations for the smooth progress of the FWCW. China's efforts have been acknowledged by conference's participants".[636]

The big clash came with Hillary Clinton's speech at the Huairou NGO Forum, not only because of its relocation which allowed only a select few to attend, but also for its massive coverage by the western media and its content criticising the exclusionary policies of the Chinese government for the Beijing summit on women as well as the PRC's one-child policy. In answer to these criticisms, the Chinese media, although reporting a strict minimum on the Clinton speech itself, started a massive defence campaign. Concerning the one-child policy, the Beijing Review reports that many of the women who attended the conference were particularly interested in learning the practical and useful Chinese family planning policy, which had been in use for many years.[637]

The fact that it was indeed the US side that had asked to switch location for the Clinton speech due to the severe weather conditions, did often not become clear in western reportage. China, however, made a big fuss around this, sometimes even timing the events precisely to the minute.

> "As the US side suddenly switched the site for Mrs. Hillary Clinton's speech to the NGO forum in Huairou this morning many participants could not enter the hall and were dissatisfied. At the request of the US side, the NGO Forum arranged Mrs. Hillary Clinton, wife of US president, to make a speech this morning on a playground capable of holding 10'000 people in the forum area. Rain began to fall in Huairou early this morning. At 7:40 am [22:40 GMT on 6th September] the US side informed the Chinese side that Mrs. Clinton would leave her hotel at 8:30 for the playground. But at about 8:00, the Chinese side was suddenly informed that because of the rain, Mrs. Clinton would make her speech inside the Huairou International Convention Centre instead. By then large numbers of participants had already flocked to the Centre. It is learned that the participants saw earlier a poster in English, which was not issued by the Chinese side, saying that in case of rain, Mrs. Clinton will make her speech in the International Convention Centre. But by this time the Chinese side had not received any notice on switching the venue and many people were still making preparations at the playground. A senior Chinese official in Huairou told the reporter that on receiving the notice on switching the venue, the Chinese side,

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[636] Zhongguo Xinwen She, "Differences Narrowing at FWCW" (Beijing, 12/9/95) p. 6.
[637] Wang Xin, "'Beijing Spirit' Triumphs", in Beijing Review (Beijing: Vol. 38, Nr. 42, 16-22/10/95) p. 16.

considering that the Centre could only hold about 1'500 people, repeatedly negotiated with the US personnel who had come to the Centre, and expressed the hope that the speech would be made in the originally planned place. But the US side insisted that the speech would be cancelled if it were still arranged at the playground. Under these circumstances, the Chinese side immediately took emergency measures and made the Centre ready in a very short period of time and designated press seats on the second floor. But owing to limited space in the Centre and a large attendance, large numbers of participants from various countries were blocked outside the door and could not go in. ... Mrs. Clinton arrived at the Centre at about 10:40 am about one and a half hours later than the original schedule".[638]

Concerning the content of Mrs. Clinton's speech very little to nothing was reported in general in the PRC's media, Hong Kong papers reported more widely on the event, mainly with a critical eye on the US: "As soon as she stepped out of the car, US First Lady Hillary Clinton noisily [huale huale] criticised 'certain countries' for their forced abortions and sterilisations, and their human rights violations. Although her remarks produced some 'movie-star effects' because of the praise western reporters lavished on her, her speech, which deviated from the theme, was incongruous with her dignitary standing, and was quite improper [shifen] on an international occasion. The meeting, however, did not change course because of such nonsensical and preposterous arguments [qi tan guai lun]".[639] When asked to comment on this, Chen Jian, the Foreign Ministry's Spokesman, guaranteed China's openness and commitment to the success of the FWCW and the forum, dismissing accusations of repression and violation of human rights.

"The spokesman, Chen Jian, made the remark when he was asked to comment on Hillary Clinton's criticism, though without mentioning the name, of China's denying the access of many delegates to the NGO forum and detaining people who express their views peacefully. China welcomes delegates from all countries to attend the women's conference and has provided necessary facilities, Chen said. However, he said, the UN and the Chinese side did not approve the attendance of some organisations either because their purpose or activities are not related to the theme of this conference, or because some of them would conduct activities that run counter to the goals of the UN charter, relevant resolutions of the UN assembly and the goals of the women's conference or even pose threat to the security of the conference. This is totally for guaranteeing the success of the conference, he said, adding the situation will be the same if the conference was held in another country. As for the assertion that China detained some people who express their views peacefully, Chen said, such an assertion is groundless".[640]

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[638] Xinhua, "Venue Switch for Hillary Clinton's Speech Causes Dissatisfaction", FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-172, 6/9/95) p. 2.
[639] Zhong Min, "The World Conference on Women and China as the Host", Zhongguo Tongxunshe (Hong Kong: 16/9/95) p. 7.
[640] Xinhua, "Chinese FM Spokesman Comments on Hillary Clinton's remarks", FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-175, 8/9/95) p. 1.

Mainland newspapers, as mentioned before, only brought up the Clinton speech very superficially, merely mentioning its taking place - not to speak of the incident caused. Renmin Ribao of that day only mentioned that "Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton also spoke at the plenary session".[641]

Emphasising fragile Sino-US relations while leaving the entire responsibility for the Clinton incident at Huairou with the USA, the Chinese government distanced itself publicly from the made remarks:

> "China hopes that the US side would not create fresh troubles and obstacles in the way of Sino-US relations, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Chen Jian said at a press conference here today. Chen made the remark when asked to comment on the impact of Hillary Clinton's criticism in Beijing over China's human rights situation and organisational work for the on-going UN world conference on women on the current diplomatic contacts between China and the US. ... 'We also take note of the fact that some people from some countries made some indiscreet remarks or criticisms', Chen said, citing this as 'going against' the major theme of the conference. 'We would like to caution these people to pay more attention to the problems prevalent within their own countries', Chen said".[642]

Moreover, China began to react to western reporting which emphasised human rights issues and logistical as well as surveillance and repression problematiques in China. "She [Chen Muhua] said that some western media organisations have wantonly distorted the work of the COC and spread rumours distorting the facts in an attempt to interfere with the smooth progress of the Conference".[643] In western news communications, the FWCW and its parallel forum were quarrelsome and chaotic meetings without any redeeming worth.[644]

In order to reinforce their concern that the Chinese organisers have done a good job for the events around the FWCW and that many of the accusations were false, just remains of US or western power politics, 'Zhongguo Tongxun She' reported:

> "During the middle part of the conference, delegates from women's NGOs of the US, Norway, Spain, and Lebanon had already issued a joint statement condemning western news media for their biased reportage on the NGO forum. ... They were 'shocked and angered' by the distorted reportage on the forum by

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[641] Tang Weihong, Yuan Jianda, "World Conference on Women Begins General Debate; Peng Peiyun Explains Chinese Government's Position on Issue of Women's Advancement", in Renmin Ribao (Beijing: 6/9/95) p. 2.

[642] Xinhua, "US Urged Not to Create Fresh Troubles to Sino-US Relations", FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-173, 7/9/95) p. 1.

[643] Xinhua, "Spokeswoman Views Efforts", FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-173, 7/9/95) p. 5.

[644] Zhong Min, op.cit., p. 7.

some western news media, particularly CNN and the Voice of America of the US. It is with a special background that western news media, mainly those of the US, have made ugly the host country on this world conference on women. ... At that time [post 1989, when China applied for hosting FWCW] a certain western power, after an unsuccessful attempt to prevent China from winning the bid, tried in every possible way to 'embarrass' China. ... Some people with ulterior motives nit-picked the selection of Huairou as the site of the forum, ... some western human rights observation organisations and international amnesty organisations as well as 10 Tibetan women in exile ... propagandised 'Tibetan independence', demonstrated in Huairou streets outside the UN designated demonstration area, shouted anti-China slogans, and intentionally started rows with security personnel in an attempt to create disputes. Western news media added inflammatory details to their reports to smear the Huairou forum, describing the terror of 'people being under wide surveillance by secret service personnel everywhere'".[645]

In the same line reports on anti-imperialist demonstrations outside the forum, which were mainly orientated against the USA, were published.

"Hundreds of participants to the ongoing NGO forum on women staged an anti-imperialism parade within Huairou, north to Beijing earlier today. The parade, extending for about 200 metres, was lead by a streamer, which read: 'Down with US Imperialism. Women of the Toiling Class Unite'. ... Once in a while someone walked aside and gave a speech, mostly denouncing exploitation of the working women of the world, of those in third world countries in particular. ... Padillier Rosario Tronto, an organiser, said: 'US imperialism is at the roots of the world's problems today such as massive poverty, militarism, regional conflict, migration of people politically and economically'. US imperialist not only exploits us in terms of economy and resources, meddles in all kinds of affairs of development, but also uses the media to spread misinformation and mislead people', she said".[646]

In a survey led by the Research Institute on Women under the ACWF, recognition, knowledge and reactions from the Chinese population was evaluated through a mini- poll.[647] A random sampling of 1'100 families in the age groups of 15-65 were questioned. The sampling took place in Beijing's 8 districts and the Huairou suburb, the site of the NGO forum. Of the 1'087 responses, the proportion of men to women was of 51.2% to 48.8%. Results showed that 69.1% of people felt very or rather concerned about the conference, women's result lying 12 percentage points above men's. In Huairou the result about concern was as high as 94%. 70.5% knew the name of the chairperson of the conference and 63.2% were rather clear about the theme of the conference 'equality, development and peace'. Before it

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[645] He Chong, "China Successfully Hosts the World Conference on Women by Eliminating Interference from the West", Zhongguo Tongxunshe (Hong Kong: 16/9/95) p. 3.

[646] Xinhua, "Parade on US Imperialism", FBIS (FBIS-CHI-95-171), p. 14.

[647] The Research Institute on Women under the All-China Women's Federation, "Beijing Citizens Respond to the UN Conference" in Women of China (translated by J. Lim, 3/1996) pp. 4-5.

was held, citizens had not heard much about the NGO forum on women - another indicator about the PRC government's fear around this NGO meeting. Nevertheless 80.5% said they had learned about it through the conference, while only 13% claimed it had left a deep impression on them. Educational and professional levels are - according to the survey - in direct proportion of in-depth knowledge and awareness about the conference's areas of concern and documents. However, the article on the survey expresses regret that women gave fewer correct answers than men, although this may be directly linked to women's lower education and lower access to professional careers, especially to higher positions. The article also states that 'hindered by limited facilities and media at the conference, a relatively large number of youngsters, highly educated people and people with certain professional skills did not completely agree that the conference helped 'China to know the world'.[648]

e) Chinese Unofficial Responses

At the NGO Forum, a Chinese woman distributed a note, criticising the repression and lack of freedom in China (as we have mentioned earlier in subchapter 6d). She denied the NGO status of the ACWF, saying that in China there were no real NGOs, but some government branches were defined as such in order to keep up appearances of openness and civic freedoms. In fact this question has not been hotly debated in either the western or Chinese media or even within academic circles.

> "To say that the All-China Women's Federation of China is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) is a joke. Everybody knows that the ACWF is a ministry or branch of the Chinese government. It is funded and controlled by the main body of the Chinese government. Similarly, many other Chinese 'NGOs' don't fit the criteria of non-governmental organisations. ... By making some government branches into non-governmental organisations is a way to exclude the non-governmental groups. Denying the accessibility of non-governmental groups helps to cover the issues and problems of Chinese women. ... Does the male dominated Chinese government actually care about women's issues? This reality truly reflects Chinese women's situation. They are tightly controlled and oppressed by the male dominated government".[649]

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[648] Ibid., p. 5.

[649] Internet source: unknown author, Note from a Chinese Woman, found at http://www.antenna.nl/news/women/inwcw/mn00563.html or http://www.fnsa.org/v1n4/enero.html or from the IGC news desk at newsdesk@igc.apc.org.

In the same line of thought, Fanny Ying states, "the ruling class in China has largely remained the same".[650] Chinese journalist Yu Tu describes some of Beijing's less noticed preparations for the FWCW and the accompanying NGO forum:

"In January 1991, when the leaders of the Chinese government applied to host the FWCW, they probably never anticipated that four years later they would be scared out of their wits by the accompanying NGO forum. At the time their only thought was to take advantage of any opportunity for international prestige. It should be noted however, that the Chinese government started out sincerely trying to be perfect hosts. The authorities mounted an aggressive propaganda campaign and set up over 5'000 training courses attended by over a million people, while women's non-governmental organisations in China were given unprecedented room to operate. ... But witnessing the ability of NGOs to 'stir up trouble' and exert pressure at the 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development and the spring 1995 Social Development Summit made the government worried about what could happen. ... As a result the government saw moving the meeting as one way of pre-empting trouble. Add to this the prohibition on taxis going to the meeting site, the decreased number of reporters allowed to attend and the narrowed scope of what they can report on, as well as the decrease in the scale of propaganda on the conference, and the domestic influence of the NGO forum is now in the hands of the Chinese government".[651]

The chronological account of the preparations for the Beijing summits on women shows the transformation that took place within the Chinese authorities' minds concerning the events. They started from euphoria, hoping to win over the world in seeing the achievements of China and improving their international image which had been badly damaged with the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. Euphoria then changed into an acknowledgment that the Women's summit would not be an apolitical, all-female meeting and shopping trip to Beijing. The latter stages were marked by over-cautiousness and fear of having to deal with open political criticism and worse in its own capital, and the understanding that China's image may be further damaged by these events and the authorities might lose control over activists and participants that would influence and inspire Chinese people to stand up against governmental authority.

"In early July, the CCP Central Propaganda Department circulated its 'spirit' on reporting on the World Conference: it said the tone of propaganda on the conference could be lowered further, with the scale not to exceed reporting on the 1990 Asian Games; reports published on a newspaper's third or fourth page would be adequate. Reporters with official approval to attend the conference would not be allowed to do interviews or gather materials as they pleased, and

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[650] Internet source: Fanny Ying, A Letter from Beijing (Excerpted) (CCF 9627, http:www.china-net.org/ccf9627/ccf9627-1.html, 5/6/96) p. 1.
[651] Internet source: Yu Tu, Letter from Beijing - Celebration of Nightmare, CRF Fall 1995 (http://www.igc.org/hric/crf/english/95 fall/e5.html) p. 1.

journalists from other areas of the country were prohibited from coming to report on the conference. As for the NGO Forum, not much was said other than that taxis would not be allowed to go to the Huairou site and that attendees would be allowed to come and go to the meeting only on official buses. Early on in 1995 as the weather grew warmer, the government's initial enthusiasm for hosting the World Conference on Women began cooling off considerably. Following the Propaganda Department's change of tone, the overall scale of reporting on the conference in the major newspapers abruptly began to diminish. This was followed by the government's decision to move the NGO Forum from the city to a suburb outside of Beijing. But even after publicly stating that the reason for moving the location was that inspection of the Worker's Stadium had revealed safety problems, a major commercial soccer tournament was held there. It seems that 'safety' would only be a problem if the NGO Forum were to be held there. Whose 'safety' was at issue? That of the women attending the Forum or the peace of mind of a few nervous Beijing bureaucrats"?[652]

"The paranoia expressed by the government at the time of the conference puzzled many people. Why did the Chinese government bid for hosting the FWCW in the first place? The top Chinese leaders made the decision in early 1991 when they were desperately looking for some means to change the international image created by the Tiananmen incident of 1989. Their assumption that hosting a women's conference would help change their image, interestingly reflects the power of the Maoist gender discourse, particularly in its invocation of the Marxist assertion that 'the degree of women's emancipation is the national measure of the general emancipation'. The leaders also believe that the degree of liberation among women in China is higher than that of women in the west. Therefore displaying the achievements of women's liberation in socialist China would demonstrate to the world the high degree of general liberation in China. Seen in this light, the FWCW was an ideal showcase. ... With much propaganda, they sent a message that the central government was making a special effort to improve women's status as a present to the forthcoming FWCW. Officials at different administrative levels understood that they had to do something special to 'welcome the FWCW'. As a result the national Women's Federation was moved to a huge office building in downtown Beijing; publishers began to look for monographs on women's issues; editors of different journals and newspapers organised special issues either to display women's achievements or discuss issues related to women; special TV programmes were produced to spread information about the FWCW and the NGO forum; and the number of women studies centres at universities jumped from four in mid-1993 to over twenty in 1995. The official line of welcoming the FWCW in the period preceding the conference greatly heightened public interest in women, a sharp contrast to the state's withdrawal from women's causes in previous years. ... Many women scholars and activists found that the state's interest in presenting a glorified image of Chinese women interfered with their effort to identify and study women's problems in contemporary society. Some women's studies associations affiliated with local Women's Federations shifted their focus from research on women's problems to displaying women's achievements. The problem was not simply that energy and resources were diverted from solving women's problems to praising women's achievements. More seriously, exposing women's problems politically subverted the move to display an advanced state of Chinese women's liberation. Some women researchers began to worry about a possible negative consequence of the FWCW: drawing state attention to the movement of research on women that had been largely overlooked previously. If women's issues, or representation of women's issues, became connected with the political interest of the government, then research on women could be defined as political and therefore subject to government regulation of surveillance. Politicising research on women, therefore, could lead to the end of women's activism that had been relatively

[652] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

ignored in the reform era. This chilling prospect, ... almost became a reality in 1995. Many women activists were still hopeful that the FWCW, and especially the NGO forum, would provide an impetus to the growth of non-government-controlled women's activism in China. The preparation for the conference, which involved the efforts of many Chinese women inside and outside of the government, served as a process of consciousness-raising. For many Chinese, men and women, this was the first time they had ever heard of 'NGO'. ... Many women quickly began to popularise the idea of NGO, the concepts of women empowering women, sustainable human-centred development, and other major issues raised by women all over the world. By presenting global feminist activities to a Chinese audience, many women scholars and Women Federation's cadres changed their formerly reserved view of Feminism. The new slogan became to 'connect the rails' [jiegui] (merge) with international women's movements. The word 'Feminism' not only appeared frequently in official women's journals and newspapers but also became a positive word. ... Originally the Chinese government had decided to organise thirty panels by government branches and the Women's Federation. With the increasing knowledge of what the NGO forum was about, women in the Chinese preparatory committee manoeuvred to expand the number of panels and to include the participation of NGOs. In the end there were 47 panels presented by Chinese women. Moreover, in order to 'connect the rails' with the global women's movement, the organisers of Chinese panels also included topics that had not been previously discussed in public. Women and human rights, women and the environment, and violence against women were among the topics inspired by global Feminism. As a result, the final list of topics presented by the Chinese panels closely resembled the major issues raised in the Platform for Action. ... Unfortunately, government openness ended abruptly in early 1995. Chinese government leaders, encountering challenges and protests by human rights organisations at international meetings, began to see the risks lying ahead. What if those organisations held a demonstration right in the middle of Tiananmen Square? The site of the NGO forum, the Chinese government decided, had to be moved far away from Beijing. Chinese women activists at home and abroad where stunned when they heard this decision. The implication was clear: an international honour to China had now become an international threat to China's political stability or, rather, to state control of power, in the eyes of the nation's top leaders. The decision to isolate the NGO forum expressed not only the leaders' determination not to let this event disturb China's political status quo but also the state's suspicion and hostility towards women's spontaneous activities. The ramifications of this decision quickly and adversely affected Chinese women activists. ... The 47 panels presented by Chinese women were closely screened through 'rehearsals'. Talks were geared more to displaying Chinese women's achievements rather than discussing problems. All the delegates to the NGO forum had to go through official training sessions that warned them against international hostility toward China. Nationalism was fanned up so that each delegate would consciously defend China's honour in front of foreigners even without the presence of security personnel. Disparaging rumours were spread out through official channels to taint the image of the NGO forum, to create a psychological gap between Chinese and foreign women, and to justify the tight security measures. Local newspapers were not allowed to send their journalists to report on the conference. Western scholars who wanted to do research on Chinese women were not welcomed. ... Women who had attended conferences abroad were visited and questioned by public security personnel. In short, the situation in China was ironic: the country was about to host the largest international conference in world history, while the state, was taking the most severe security measures in the reform era to keep Chinese people isolated from the outside world. ... To many Chinese women scholars and activists, the drastically changed political situation threatened to close up the social space for women's spontaneous activism that they had created in the past decade. To serve the best interest of their cause, they had to keep a low profile, so as not to attract unwanted attention from the security system. Their

strategy was to further 'depoliticise' research on women. This included consciously keeping research on women away from politically sensitive issues such as human rights and engaging in some seemingly 'non-political' projects for the time being. The strategy had its costs as it meant that women researchers could not expect to have an open exchange with foreign women at the NGO forum on all these issues. ... They had to treat this forum like a showcase, as the government stipulated. ... Moving from the initial stage of empowerment in 1993-1994 to this later stage of repression, many women activists were filled with frustration, disappointment, anger, and sadness. It was heartbreaking for them to see that state power was able to straitjacket an international event that was meant to empower women. ... At the NGO forum everyone said, 'just keep a low profile and wait for the paranoia to pass'. They sounded like seasoned farmers who knew all to well how to contend with bad weather: in this kind of unfavourable political climate, one should just do some fixing and repair work, preparing for a warmer, more productive season. ... The political weather has always changed suddenly in China. Even before the adjournment of the official conference, Chinese government leaders' paranoia had already faded. First of all, the NGO forum ended without incident. There were no demonstrations against the Chinese government; instead, there were some demonstrations against American imperialists! The Chinese government realised that most women from abroad were not coming to discuss China's problems at all. Among Chinese participants, no one acted as troublemaker. ... With their skilful performance, Chinese participants showed the state that women were not an oppositional force against the government. The end of the NGO forum brought tremendous relief to the government leaders. They were further thrilled by the gratitude and praise of foreign government officials at the UN conference. It seemed to government leaders that hosting the conference had gained them honour after all. Their nervousness was thus suddenly replaced by a smugness when the FWCW adjourned. ... The Chinese preparatory committee also had a grand celebration - celebrations were quickly staged by officials at different government branches - issuing award certificates to each participant in the NGO forum (there were 5'000 of them nationwide) to acknowledge their great contribution to the nation. This national farce amused many women participants. They understood that the celebrations signified a switch of official views of the conference".[653]

Considering the fuss the western media and academic circles as well as human rights organisations had made about the change of the NGO forum venue from central Beijing to Huairou, a suburb 65 km to the north of Beijing, the Chinese national information was in sharp contrast:

"The majority of Chinese citizens had no idea about the powerful international outcry over the change of venue. The message most ordinary Chinese were receiving was that all the prostitutes of the world would be flying to Beijing for a meeting, while homosexuals, practicing immoral lifestyles and carrying the AIDS virus, would be coming into China to attend a huge gathering. ... If possible however, the organisers hoped to promote Chinese products to the FWCW attendees as if all these women from all over the world were coming to Beijing to go shopping, rather than discuss women's equal development and participation in government. This reveals the Chinese government's view of women, they

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[653] Wang Zheng, student at Beijing's School of Management, in a meeting/interview in Beijing 6.5.98.

hope that the women will just have fun spending money and going sightseeing".[654]

The China Women's News Series, started on 19/6/95, tells singular stories of female perception and opinions on the women's conference and forum that was to come up:

> "Hou Xiaobo [a female electrical engineering student at Qinghua] ... feels that the conference does not have a lot to do with her. 'Everyone feels that the woman question is a big one, but it isn't something that a lot of women from all over the world getting together in one place making statements and producing a document is going to solve. ... It will be just like the UN conferences on the environment and on social development. It's not that they did not 'achieve great success', but that they still do not have any binding power and each country still continues to act in its own best interests'".[655]

The major complaint with some Chinese intellectuals and academics as well as with western participants and observers was the repression and lack of freedom, with the Chinese opinion opening a further aspect, namely that the conference did not implicate Chinese women's concerns:

> "If an officer from the ACWF does not have the freedom to discuss women's issues, how can a regular woman feel free to report a rape or complain about sexual harassment from her male boss (this society still has a system to make women feel ashamed for the crime of men). The control and oppression are true sexual discriminations and true inequality that the male dominated Chinese government subjects Chinese women to ... This conference calls for women's action for equality, development and empowerment. How can Chinese women take action if their issues were not even raised? How can Chinese women take action under such tight control? What can this male dominated government do for Chinese women? ... How can I keep silent for such blunt discrimination and oppression of women in our women's conference"?[656]

Another criticism also taken up by western feminist activists was that China lacks the women's revolution that has swept the west, as discussed formerly that Chinese needed a grass-roots movement and a bottom-up development of women's movements (see 6d).

In her discussion of the ACWF, Zhang notes "Women left behind [due to their husband-farm labourers trying to find jobs outside agriculture due to the country's needs of its economic development and higher annual incomes. It has been estimated that by 1988

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[654] Internet source (Yu Tu, <u>Letter from Beijing - Celebration of Nightmare, op.cit.</u>) p. 2.

[655] As quoted in Internet source: Yu Tu, "Letter from Beijing - Celebration of Nightmare, op.cit., pp. 3-4.

[656] Internet source: unknown author, <u>Note from a Chinese Woman. op.cit.</u>, pp. 2-3 or http://www.fnsa.org/v1n4/enero.html or from the IGC news desk at newsdesk@igc.apc.org.

47,1% of all male farm labourers in China had been employed in non-farm sectors] obviously became the major labour force in agriculture. Many of them are above middle age and have very low levels of education. In these circumstances, women's informal groups and associations, as a new product of the Chinese economic reform since the early 1980s, have been a growing phenomenon (see table)":[657]

Women's Informal Organisations in China:

Province	40
District	308
County	1'132
Township[1]	1'780
Total	3'264

[1] Includes urban neighbourhood-level organisations

> "Women's informal organisations have been a steadily growing phenomenon in rural areas of China. Compared with the formal efforts that have been made in women's development, women's informal efforts show more promise in some respects, for example in tackling immediate problems and needs, so as to become an intermediate instrument between the masses of women and the formal organisation. This is due to their high motivation, initiative and sincere commitment to addressing the specific problems or difficulties women are facing. ... The existence of informal organisations and their activities being carried out at present are helpful to the ACWF in better understanding the concept of the development constraints and in identifying the problems faced by women ... This may indicate the long-term development potential for women's organisations in rural China and for fulfilling the targets set by the federation. However, in return, informal organisations need government support and co-operation - for example the provision of funding ... Development among the formal and informal organisations, with the possible involvement of international organisations, may alter the relative distribution of influence within China. ... The ACWF has a very extensive network for mass work among the Chinese official organisations. This network reaches every region and province and covers most of the villages in China. ... However, since it is closely linked to the government and is under state control, its potential has remained largely undeveloped. Its work still depends on what the state plan wants women to do, rather than dealing with their specific problems. When the policies change, the activities designed for women have to change as well, and the work may be discontinued".[658]

A relative independence of the ACWF, and therefore a basis on which to judge independently - to a certain degree - of government policies and control is contained in its push for the Chinese government to keep to its pledge. After government officials all over the

[657] Zhang Junzuo, "Development in a Chinese Reality: Rural Women's Organisations in China", in Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, op.cit. (London: Frank Cass, Vol. 10, Nr. 4, Dec. 1994) p. 83.
[658] Ibid., pp. 88-9.

world solemnly signed the Platform for Action, the national Women's Federation was quick to use the promise of the Chinese government. It started a nationwide campaign to implement the Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration, the two documents that 'voice the aspirations of women all over the world' as the Chinese media widely proclaimed. This campaign, though only considered by the Women's Federation system, is building legitimacy in order to expand Chinese women's activism under the guidance of the two official documents. In other words, the two documents serve as the yardstick to measure Chinese women's achievements from now on. This change to global Feminism in the discourse of Chinese women's liberation is sanctioned by the government with its official boast of China's great contribution to the birth of the two great documents and its pledge to support them.[659]

On an academic level, Wang also attributes importance to the FWCW to be held in China. She states that 'new western concepts and global Feminism first trickled and then streamed into China with the UN FWCW and the NGO forum in 1995'. ... She sees the FWCW as the most significant event in the progress and elaboration of the research movement on women in the 1990s. China being the host country, the FWCW began to influence research on women in China long before it was in session. ... She sees a pattern in this century that Chinese intellectuals turn to the west to look for intellectual inspiration in order to form their own opposition to the dominant discourse in China. This has proven to be an effective strategy. So, they will continue to do so regardless of the qualms of western theorists of post-colonialism and post-structuralism. In post-FWCW China, learning about western Feminism and merging with global women's movements are becoming clear goals for many involved in the movement of research on women. Their connection with feminists from outside of China has taught them that Chinese women will not lose their cultural identity by learning from others, but, rather, they empower themselves politically and intellectually in their objective of achieving gender justice. This new level of openness, facilitated with a state-sanctioned campaign to merge with global Feminism, promises continued growth for a women's movement with a feminist gender consciousness and a feminist agenda in the PRC at the end of the twentieth century.[660]

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[659] Wang Zheng, student at Beijing's School of Management, in a meeting/interview in Beijing 6.5.98.

[660] Ibid.

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7. The Chinese View Expanded:

This chapter will examine the political as well as philosophical/normative and cultural foundations of the official Chinese view and modern China. It does this by examining cultural elements of past and present that had and still have an influence on Chinese mentality. Since most of the early Chinese philosophies, Mohism, and Legalism as well as Confucianism, are mainly theories of government, they outline the conduct of individuals within society, but more frequently apply to the ruler. A first subchapter will tackle the political foundations of the Chinese current worldview. This is linked up with philosophical, economic, social, as well as cultural habits and practices. The second subchapter deals with the philosophical/normative foundations as well as cultural aspects previously mentioned, to complete the picture. The complexity of development and sheer scope of Chinese history and of philosophical, cultural and political notions and foundations make an in-depth account in its entirety impossible. This is not thought to be a historical recount of chronological events, but rather more a selective and analytical approach of political, philosophical and other culturally linked foundations to modern Chinese thought and their political articulations, which are important to understand within the framework of this thesis.

In terms of Sylvester's empathetic cooperation and homesteading this chapter shows us the multiple circumstantial, cultural and historical elements the make research and exchanges more difficult for the western researcher in China. It shows how many of these elements are so deeply rooted that they have become common value, often unconsciously applied and stuck to. The same is obviously true for the author who is not free from subconscious inflexibilities and many times conscious preference of known yardsticks and situations.

a) Political/Normative Foundations

For a long time in its past - from the founding of its first united empire by the Han dynasty in the second century BC, China has been, despite dynastic changes, a very steady society. With almost no influence from outside and a well-working agricultural autarch economy accompanied by rural handicrafts and dominated by Confucianism, the hierarchical society was affirmed and change was seen as a sign for decay and decadence. – When the

Manchu dynasty took over power in the 17th century, and, two centuries later, failed to ward off western invasion; this equilibrium of economic, political and ideological self-sufficiency came to an end. China seemed weak and defenceless in the face of the west's military coercion and economic pressure - be it in the Opium Wars of 1840, the defeat to the Japanese in 1895, or the 1900 suppression of the Boxer rebellion. These events caused a triple split in China's opinions between those who saw salvation in western culture, to those who only wanted to import western technology, but leave cultural and institutional aspects untouched, to people completely opposing any kind of western influence. The first group of modernisers succeeded with the proclamation of the First Republic in 1912 while western powers continued to profit from lucrative trading concessions on China's East Coast. A period of warlordism followed from 1915-1925, as there was no Emperor or single personality to unify the country. In different regions various warlords exploited the peasantry and therefore destroyed the countryside's economic equilibrium, simultaneously obliterating imperial bureaucracy. This time of chaos and imbalance was the formative period of Mao Zedong.[661]

Major influences on Mao's political opinions were not only his upbringing in a peasant environment (which later made him focus on the peasantry and not the industrial, mostly urban-based workers as proletariat),[662] but also substantial schooling and service in the Republican Army, and a wider cultural influence from religion/philosophies (Buddhism and Taoism both containing dialectical elements, thinking in terms of opposites - everything being imbued by Yin and Yang), from the more empirical and pragmatic approach of Chinese thought in relation to western thought, and from literature such as for example 'The Water Margin' ('shuihuzhuang') hailing peasant revolts and military exploits. This work by Lo Kuanchung (14th C.) is a semi historical collection of stories about a band of enlightened outlaws - social and political dissenters against the Qing - whose exploits were recorded in official dynastic history.[663] It is one of the few classic novels admitted under China's Communist government, since Mao saw a symbolic meaning in the spirit of rebellion against the exploiter represented in the main character's (Lin Chung) opposition, a meaning that would take shape during the establishment of the PRC.[664] In Beijing, where Mao got employed as an assistant librarian in 1918, he started studying Marxism. Up to that point the

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[661] D. McLellan, Marxism After Marx (London: Macmillan Press, 1998, Third Edition) p. 219.
[662] Ibid., pp. 221-2.
[663] Internet source: http://kirjasto.sci.fi/pearlbuc.htm, Pearl S. Buck.
[664] Internet source: http://www.schoolpapers.com/html/stack60_27.html.

ideas of Marx and Lenin were very little known in China, most of their works not having been translated into Chinese, but the 1917 Bolshevik's success in overthrowing the Russian autocracy gave Marxism a sudden boost in China. This was especially true with the May Fourth Movement of 1921, after the government had agreed to hand over Shantung to the Japanese, despite the promise of the western powers that it should revert to China. The reaction of the Chinese intelligentsia was a large-scale disillusionment with western ideals and many turned to Marxism. The CCP (Chinese Communist Party) was founded in Shanghai in 1921, a child of this disillusionment.[665]

The KMT (Guomindang), the First Republic's Party under Sun Yatsen, later under the leadership of general Chiang Kaishek considered a bourgeois party by Trotsky, but as a coalition of different classes by Stalin was fundamentally distrusted by the small-sized, new CCP. Nevertheless, in 1923, under Russian pressure, the CCP formed a United Front with the KMT.[666]

'Chinese Marxism' is the term often used to denote Maoism, referring to Mao's own evolving mixture of ideas from sources as diverse as Confucianism, German Marxism, Soviet Leninism and China's own guerrilla experience.[667]

> "The guerrillas should control bases to which they could positionally retire. These should be areas that are geographically difficult to access (...). In these areas the troops themselves should work land and be active in production. They should help raise the productivity of the local inhabitants, and, if possible, organise elementary social services. This would both avoid their being a burden to locals and counter the boredom of periodic inactivity that sapped the morale of all traditional armies".[668]

Chinese Marxism, or Maoism, are based on Mao's ideas and, although not a philosopher, "his ideas have determined the directions in which philosophy has been developing in New China since its establishment in 1949".[669] Maoism emphasised practice and defined it in the following context:

[665] Ibid., p. 220.
[666] Ibid., pp. 220-1.
[667] D. Munro, "Chinese Marxism" in E. Craig (ed.) Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Internet Source: http:www/.routledge.com/routledge/rep/g005sam.html) p. 1.
[668] D. McLellan (1998), op.cit., p. 229.
[669] Wing-Tsit Chan, Chinese Philosophy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963) p. 773.

"To discover truth through practice, and through practice to verify truth. To start from perceptual knowledge, and then, starting from rational knowledge, actively direct revolutionary practice so as to remould the subjective and the objective world ... Such is the whole of the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing".[670]

Opting for Chinese Marxism, a double goal was pursued, namely "the salvation of China from its foreign enemies and the strengthening of the country through modernisation".[671]

At the basis of Maoism were several concepts attributed to Marx directly, such as his "materialist conception of history, and the concepts of class struggle and control of the forces of production".[672] Marx argued in his 'Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy'[673] that societies evolve through progressive historical steps with the relations of production (or class struggle) as the agents for change. The development starts when the existing class structure preclude further development of the forces of production - thus the combination of class and production tools is the foundation of classical Marxist thought. This basis is completed with the superstructure made of beliefs/consciousness in matters of the political, legal, spiritual and aesthetic etc. areas and the institutions that embody these domains. In Marx's terms, "the materialist conception of history suggests that the base determines the superstructure".[674] The leading class becomes the one with the most progressive ideas. This was set in an inevitable sequence in the historical progression from economic development (meaning budding capitalism), the rise of consciousness among the emerging social class (proletariat) that capitalism restrains further development and finally the struggle of the progressive proletarian class to move society forward.[675] This sequence is an element that Chinese Communists have eliminated. This was due to the insight that the development of capitalism as a necessary prior stage to Marxism would take a very long time to achieve in China, whose industry was barely developed. Instead of this, they turned to voluntarism taking the position that the minds of the right-thinking, strong willed people can determine the future, without the need to recur to the stage of capitalist blossoming. This selective borrowing shows that non-Marxist intellectual schools influenced Li Dazhao and other Chinese Marxists, including anarchism as well as Confucianism.[676] At the same time it meant

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[670] Mao Tsetung, "On Practice" in Selected Works (New York: International Publishing Co., 1954, Vol. 1) p. 297.
[671] D. McLellan (1998), op.cit., p. 229.
[672] Ibid.
[673] K. Marx, Collected Works (1843-83) (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975), p. 89.
[674] D. Munro, op.cit., p. 3.
[675] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[676] Ibid., p. 4.

inverting the Marxian terms of basis and superstructure, as the ideas in the minds of a few elites to teach the masses became the agent of change, replacing the relation between class and production tools. Maoist rehabilitation of the superstructure is to be found in variants of 20th century neo-Marxism.[677] This inversion was correct in the context of a new doctrine associated with Trotsky, namely the theory of 'permanent revolution'. Permanent or uninterrupted revolution meant that with their right-minded progressive ideas, elites teaching the people "can telescope the course of history, shortening the normal duration of a historical stage".[678] There was no unity in China, however, on whether the ideas were only in the minds of a few elites (as Mao would claim they were within the Communist Party) or whether some positive ideas were already in the minds of almost all Chinese people (Li Dazhao).[679] Furthermore Mao departed from classical Marxism with his subjective, although not admitted, view of classes. "The kind of lumpenpeasantry that then composed the majority of his soldiers had to undergo intensive political training before the Red Army proper emerged. This gave some basis to the view that 'class' was a subjective notion in Mao's thought in that it referred more to a person's attitude than to his or her social origin".[680] Furthermore, although criticising Confucianism violently (especially during the Cultural Revolution) Mao never entirely detached from certain Confucian ethics and values, such as work discipline, putting the group before the individual, moral criteria etc.

> "The definition which Mao put forward in the 1950s for the so-called 'five bad elements', is still used today. Landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and rightists. Two of these categories are sociological, two political, and one moral. Mao did not appear to see any contradiction or problem in lumping them all together. Did he not perhaps see the revolution as the work of proletarians, peasants and good men? Does not all the available evidence suggest that Mao in fact shared with Liu Shaoqi the very Chinese and in fact Confucian notion that it is impossible to separate the inner moral world of the individual from his outward behaviour and from the political realm as a whole".[681]

In fact all along Mao's government China had a "philosophy for the practical use of the masses".[682] Parallel to the erasing the distinction between theory and practice, the distinction between layman and philosopher had to disappear as well, in order to guarantee that the masses can identify with the philosophy.[683] Emphasising the importance of having the

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[677] D. McLellan (1998), op.cit., p. 255.

[678] D. Munro, op.cit., p. 6.

[679] Ibid.

[680] D. McLellan (1998), op.cit., p. 255.

[681] Quoted in S.R. Schram, Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China (Cambridge: CUP, 1973) p. 57.

[682] Wing-Tsit Chan, op.cit., (1963) p. 774.

[683] Ibid., p. 775.

population's backing, Mao himself said "the contest of strength is not only the contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale".[684]

The 'right minds', in accordance with Confucian tradition, was said to occur with the people being taught by officials. Confucianism saw the primary duty of a government to lie in education, therefore all officials were to teach and thereby transform the character of the people. "The education in which the state involved itself, through control of the curriculum and national examinations for the civil service, was a moral education. The ultimate aim of state-controlled Confucian education was a one-minded, hierarchical society, meaning that people of all different strata would think the same on important matters. Maoists also thought to create a one-minded people through officially controlled teaching".[685]

As for the epistemological background of Chinese Marxism it was mainly founded on Mao's premise that the origin of knowledge lies in practice. We can see a link to China's guerrilla experience of the 1930s and 1940s, when the communists were dependent on local support for logistics and intelligence, therefore practicing good relations with them. This may be the root of the communists' custom of living and consulting with the people about matters in the non-military as well as within the military domains.[686] This consultation process, gathering information 'from the masses' defined Mao's terms of 'democracy'. However, the premise to this democracy was that it stayed uncritically within the framework of Chinese Marxism, and the consultations disappeared after the communist victory of 1949, due to the size of the country and the lack of a history of representative government.[687]

Another point where Chinese Marxism deviated from original Marxist thought was Mao's idealisation of the egalitarianism of social status. According to Marx "the right of the producers is proportional to the labour they supply".[688] In fact the main attribute of communism is not distribution, but the elimination of the division of labour. Self-motivation, rather than material gratification are assumed to act in the pursuit of communist goals. Egalitarianism was questioned for its impact on the economy. President Liu Shaoqi for

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[684] Mao Tse-tung, "On Protracted War", in Selected Works. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980, Vol. 2) p. 143.
[685] D. Munro, op.cit., p. 2.
[686] Ibid., pp. 7-8.
[687] Ibid., p. 9.
[688] K. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme" in D. McLellan (ed.) K. Marx, Selected Writings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 232.

example criticised the 'iron rice bowl' (guaranteed minimum wage) as not motivating people to work and innovate. A free supply system also made plenty of wealth a necessity, something that could only come later in China's process of development. Deng Xiaoping was another opponent of egalitarianism. After his assumption of power in 1978, "economic reformers argued that socialist goals could best be attained by rejecting central government planning in favour of market factors such as price and profit".[689]

Humanism (which was the communist doctrine of those taking over power from Mao after his death in 1978) stood for opposition to Maoism in the 1950s and 1960s. Under its definition, a variety of perspectives united. It denied the Maoist position that class struggle was the principal agent of historical change. This was due to two of Mao's main premises in this line: "that there is no pan-human or universal human nature common to all people" and that "love or sympathy that transcends classes is impossible".[690] These positions are foreign to the Confucian legacy concerning the human nature and its ensuing ethical position. Mencius, on the other hand, in his writing around the fourth century BC formulated the concept of a universal human nature, universal in having a mind that evaluates right and wrong, and in feeling compassion.[691]

Three disciplines in China were concerned with human nature: philosophy, literature and psychology. Each of these domains was under the influence of the opposition between Maoist class struggle and humanist ideas.

> "In literature, Ba Ren (a pseudonym of Wang Renshu, a literary editor, critic
> and diplomat) got into trouble in the 1960s for insisting on the right of authors
> to deal with things that all people universally share, namely the love of the
> fragrance of flowers and the song of birds, and the desire to eat and to be
> warm. The popular philosopher Feng Ding of Beijing University was attacked
> for claiming that there is a survival instinct common to all persons. Beginning
> in 1958, younger Chinese psychologists shifted away from an interest in
> neurologically-based character types to focus on the subjective class
> standpoint or thought that separates people into social groups".[692]

With Mao's death in 1976, the new government aimed for more humanistic goals, but at the same time they changed the content of humanism moving it from its Confucian focus to

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[689] D. Munro, op.cit., p. 11.
[690] Ibid., p. 12.
[691] Internet source, Classical Chinese Philosophy (http://www.miami.edu/phi/classphi.htm) p. 2.
[692] D. Munro, op.cit., p. 13.

an individual-based development. This change was significant, not only because it completely split from Confucian traditions that were more concerned with the good of society than the individual, it also closed Mao's chapter, the leader who had manifested no interest whatsoever in individuals.[693] The emergence of individualism comes with China's opening up to the west and an increased and faster mixing of different cultures, it is however a concept that - after some research in China - cannot yet be seen as generalised phenomenon.

During the Deng Xiaoping era, another break with Maoism was the 'subjectivity' movement. This movement did not see human consciousness as formed by their socio-economic environment, but saw people to have each a unique identity. This radical departure from historical materialism later split into two factions, one treating it as a new philosophical epistemology (under Li Zehou), the other (concentrated in literary and psychological circles) meaning the capacity and merit of an autonomously acting individual.[694] In fact this movement was relatively comparable to western enlightenment movements.

Three historical events shall illustrate Mao's respectively the Communist leadership's decisions and underlying considerations; these are the 'One Hundred Flowers Campaign' of May 1956; 'The Great Leap Forward' of 1958; and the 'Cultural Revolution' from 1966 until Mao's death in 1976.

1. 'May a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend'

This was the slogan of the limited liberalisation movement (the 'One Hundred Flowers Campaign') in China in 1956, initiated under Mao's leadership. At that time "there was a growing need to gain the active cooperation of intellectuals for future development".[695] This opening, however, to different opinions produced a surge of criticisms from intellectuals, universities and minority parties. The criticism indicated direct opposition to the party and its policies. Therefore the movement was changed into an anti-rightist campaign with the following criteria spelt out to separate 'poisonous weeds' from 'fragrant flowers':

- words and deeds should help unite, and not divide

- they should be useful, not harmful to socialist transformation and construction

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[693] Ibid., p. 14.
[694] Ibid., p. 16.
[695] D. McLellan (1998), op.cit., p. 249.

- they should help to consolidate, not weaken the people's democratic dictatorship

- they should strengthen the CCP leadership

- they should support international socialist unity and the concord of the peace-loving people of the world.[696]

2. The Great Leap Forward

"I have witnessed the tremendous energy of the masses. On this foundation it is possible to accomplish any task whatsoever. We must first complete the tasks on the iron and steel front. In these sectors, the masses have already been mobilised. Nevertheless, in the country as a whole, there are a few places, a few enterprises, where the work of mobilising the masses has still not been properly carried out ... There are still a few comrades who are unwilling to undertake a large scale mass movement in the industrial sphere. They call the mass movement on the industrial front 'irregular' and disparage it as a 'rural style of work' and 'a guerrilla habit'. This is obviously incorrect".[697]

The Great Leap Forward is a typical example on how the Chinese government tried to implement its policies through the use of its large populace. Its goal was for China to catch up with the west and "be the industrial equal of the west in 15 years".[698] This imminent goal therefore was one of dramatically improving the national economy and through this prove to the rest of the world the efficiency and capability of the Communist government and achieve a high standing within the international community. Another goal pursued by Mao was China's disengagement from the USSR, hoping to 'bypass the Soviet Union' by creating a truly communal society.[699] The PRC's second five year plan (1958-62) was thus interrupted by the Great Leap Forward program, because the government thought that the economy had not improved quickly and efficiently enough through the policies of the first five year plan.[700]

In the agricultural sector the concept of the great Leap Forward centred on the creation of organised and communal agriculture by consolidating many farms into one large structure; which also entailed large-scale elimination of private property. Chinese leaders "felt that the pooling of land an labour would unify fields, allowing the cultivation of more land, and promote a more even allocation of resources to the fields ... ideology also convinced them that the larger the unit, the better. The larger the unit, the more socialist principles could be

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[696] Ibid., pp. 249-250.

[697] S.R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung (New York: F. Praeger, 1969) pp. 253-4.

[698] A.D. Zysk, The Great Leap Forward (Internet Source, http://www.gettysburg.edu/~s345972/glf.html) p. 1.

[699] Ibid., p. 2.

[700] Ibid., p. 1.

used in management and distribution".[701] As for the industrial sector, the production of steel was a major goal. The lack of technology in China was to be compensated for by major efforts and the massive labour force at hand. This had the positive side effect that previously high unemployment rates fell drastically. Also, through the unification of farms and the great common effort to advance the country, the Great Leap Forward pushed patriotic/nationalist ideas and was to have a unifying effect on the population of China.

The failure of the Great Leap Forward was due to several reasons: the government pressure on agriculture and industry advances were so high, that "many villages inflated their grain and steel figures to appease the government. The government, therefore, raised the industrial and agricultural quotas. The peasants were left with little grain to live on, and industrial workers were pushed towards unrealistic goals".[702] In addition to this, adverse weather conditions resulted in disastrous crop shortfalls and was followed by a famine that is believed to have caused up to 30 million deaths.[703]

The downfall was though mainly due to the government's loss of touch with reality, pressurising for the attainment of unachievable goals.

> "Much of the product turned out by the tens of millions of workers involved proved to be of little or no economic value. The most notorious example was that of the backyard blast furnaces, which produced iron of substandard and often entirely unusable quality. Many hastily dug canals and reservoirs destroyed natural irrigation and ruined land by raising the underground water level. Disruption of raw material supplies impeded operation of the modern sector. And, entirely unforeseen, the excessive withdrawal of farm labour created a serious shortage of help and contributed to the decline of farm output".[704]

"The Leap was built on denial of economic laws, and when they could no longer elude this fact, the policy failed".[705]

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[701] D. Bachmann, Bureaucracy, Economy and Leadership in China: The Institutional Origins of the Great Leap Forward (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) p. 18.

[702] A.D. Zysk, op.cit., p. 4.

[703] Ibid.

[704] N.G. Chen and W. Galenson, The Chinese Economy under Communism (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969) p. 47.

[705] A.D. Zysk, op.cit., p. 4.

3. The Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution formally began in Summer 1965 with a controversy around the play 'Hai Jui Dismissed From Office', which saw a 16th century civil servant criticise the Emperor. The Maoists drew a parallel and saw this as a reference to Peng Tehuai, mayor of Beijing, and his criticism of the Great Leap Forward. The proper beginnings of the Cultural revolution, however, only started one year later, "in August 1966 in the universities with a mass campaign to eliminate what were seen as 'rightists', to re-emphasise the importance of Mao' s thought, to lessen specialisation, and substantially to restrict the role of examinations".[706] Mao and Lin Biao advocated a return to the policies of 1958/59 in the face of opposition from Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi. At the Plenum of the Central Committee in August 1966 the "decision was taken to promote mass mobilisation outside the ordinary Party channels. The aim was to attack those within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road. The vehicle was to be the movement known as the Red Guards".[707] The Red Guards primarily were "students whose lack of experience of pre-Communist misery made them readier to criticise present policies and whose absence from the universities would not be immediately damaging to the country ... wherever they went they emphasised the importance of the masses who had to make themselves felt, freedom to criticise, opposition to all conservatives, and the right to rebel. The one guideline to all this ferment was loyalty to the Party and to Mao Tse-tung".[708] Within all of this Deng and especially Liu Shaoqi were seen as the embodiment of everything the Cultural Revolution was opposed to.

With the creation of so-called Revolutionary Committees composed of right-thinking cadres, the masses led by PLA members were decisive in the Maoist struggle against the Party apparatus.

> "The basic experience of the Revolutionary Committee is this - they are threefold: they have representatives of revolutionary cadres, representatives of the armed forces, and representatives of the revolutionary masses. This forms a revolutionary 'three-in-one' combination. The Revolutionary Committee should exercise unified leadership, eliminate redundant or overlapping administrative structures, follow the policy of better troops and simpler administration and organise a revolutionised leading group which keeps in contact with the masses".[709]

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[706] D. McLellan (1998), op.cit., p. 250.
[707] Ibid., p. 251.
[708] Ibid.
[709] Quoted in L. Maitan, Party, Army, and Masses in China: A Marxist Interpretation of the Cultural Revolution and its Aftermath (London: Praeger, 1976) p. 249.

The PLA under Lin Biao's leadership, trusted by Mao as far as even being held up as a model of ideology and purity, filled in the power vacuum left by the turning upside down of the old bureaucracy.[710]

The disgrace of Lin Biao in 1971 and Mao's death in 1976 with the campaign against the Gang of Four, previously dishonoured and criticised figures such as Deng Xiaoping re-emerged. "The career of Deng and the dispute with the Gang of Four demonstrated how the resolution of inner Party disputes is confined to the very top of the Party apparatus and the masses only subsequently are made aware of the issues in terms of the crudest sort of misrepresentation and vilification".[711]

b) Philosophical/Normative Foundations

This chapter shall shed light on philosophical and normative foundations of the Chinese view. Apart from the Chinese political orientation, we analyse its underlying philosophical notions found in Confucianism and Taoism, as well as more religious bases from Buddhism. The arts are another chapter where we will study visual arts, literature and Chinese Opera, another domain is concerned with education under Maoism. Further references to political articulations are found in strategic thought such as Sun Tzu's 'Art of War' and the concept of the 'homo economicus' through different schools of thought in China. Language and modern articulation of it through slogans at house entrances or for political and cultural expression figure among the examples.[712]

So numerous were the philosophers and their schools during the period from the sixth to the third centuries BC, that the Chinese called them the 'Hundred Schools'. Sima Tan (d. 110 BC) produced one of the most influential classifications of those schools of thought, dividing them up into 6 groups. This division was further refined and added to by Liu Xin (46 BC - AD 23):

- The **Yin Yang philosophers** studying the nature of cosmos attempting to account for all changes with two fundamental principles; the Yin and Yang, seemingly contrasting notions

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[710] D. McLellan (1998), op.cit., p. 253.
[711] Ibid., p. 254.
[712] I am grateful to my colleague and friend Zhang Junzuo (Ph.D. SOAS) for her support and further discussion of these items.

that formed unity and harmony in their togetherness.

- The **School of Ru**, deriving their inspiration from Confucian teachings, concerned with education and ritual.

- The **Mohists**, emphasising frugality, utility and economy in all things. They were exceptionally conservative in following traditional religious notions and were thought to have originated in offices concerned with temples and sacrifices.

- The **Logicians**, dealing with the relation of names to realities, thought to have emerged from officers concerned with rank and position in court and the related appropriate ceremonies.

- The **Legalists**, emphasising the importance of legislation over tradition and custom as embodied in ritual and social practice.

- The **Taoist School**, attempting to understand the ultimate principles of reality, offering a sensibly different concept of organisation.

Added by Liu Xin are:

- The **Agronomists**, underlining the importance of farming and offering a thorough critique of the 4th and 3rd century contemporary society.

- The **Theorists of Diplomatic Strategies** with their development of rhetoric and formal debates (the persuasions).[713]

Let us first start with **Confucian philosophy** that is, first of all, a moral philosophy, in this case mainly focusing on moral character, but also the rightness of acts is ultimately important in his philosophical construct. As in other Chinese philosophies the way that leads to the prescribed moral character is most important. This is symbolised in the statement "He has not lived in vain who dies the day he is told about the Way".[714] The Way (dào) comprehends all truth about man, the state and the universe and someone either possesses it or not. The Way, in Confucian terms, is passed on by teaching from teacher to disciple and is therefore possible to put into words.[715] (We will see that this is in sharp contrast to Taoism). The pursuit of morality or ethics in Confucian philosophy serves the goal to become as good a man as can be. This search comes near to Christian religious quests for goodness,

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[713] Internet source, Classical Philosophy (http://www.miami.edu/phi/classphi.htm), pp. 1-2.
[714] Confucius, Analects ('Lun Yü', London: Penguin Books, 1979, translated by D.C. Lau) book IV, § 8, p. 73.
[715] Ibid., p. 11.

however, Confucius promises no gratification - either in this or the next world. "This [the pursuit of goodness] is something that has to be pursued for its own sake and with complete indifference to success or failure. Unlike religious teachers, Confucius could hold out no hope of rewards either in this world or in the next".[716] Confucian ethics foresee not one, but various, ranked in decreasing order, ideal characters. The highest stage being the one of a sage ('shengrén').

"Tzu-kung said, 'If there were a man who gave extensively to the common people and brought help to the multitude, what would you think of him? Could he be called benevolent?' The Master said, 'It is no longer a matter of benevolence with such a man. If you must describe him 'sage' is, perhaps, the right word. ...'".[717] Lower in ranking we find the 'good man' ('shanren'); ideally applied to men in charge of government: "The Master said, 'How true is the saying that after a state has been ruled for a hundred years by good men it is possible to get the better of cruelty and to do away with killing'"[718] or "The Master said, 'After a good man has trained the common people for seven years, they should be ready to take up arms'".[719] The next level is the 'complete man' ('chengrén'), "'If a man remembers what is right at the sight of profit, is ready to lay down his life in the face of danger, and does not forget sentiments he has repeated all his life even when he has been in straitened circumstances for a long time, he may be said to be a complete man'".[720]

In many of his chapters Confucius puts forward the ides of the 'gentleman' ('qün tzu') who has a 'cultivated moral character' and has to have a considerable number of virtues, acquired through a great deal of 'cultivation'.[721] The required characteristics of a gentleman are benevolence (rèn), generosity to the common people (huì), observing the correct rites (li) having wisdom and intelligence (qí) as well as courage (yúng), be true to one's word (xìn) and reverence (qíng) which refers to a more religious character of trying to fulfil one's responsibility honourably. In stark opposition is the 'small man' ('xiao rén'). While the gentleman is part of the ruling class, the little man is among those who are ruled. "Those who are born with knowledge are the highest. Next come those who attain knowledge through

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[716] Ibid., p. 12.
[717] Ibid., book VI, § 30, p. 85.
[718] Ibid., book XIII, § 11, p. 120.
[719] Ibid., book XIII, § 29, p. 123.
[720] Ibid., book XIV, § 12, pp. 125-126.
[721] Ibid., p. 14.

study. Next again come those who turn to study after having been vexed by difficulties. The common people, in so far as they make no effort to study even after they have been vexed by difficulties, are the lowest".[722] This clearly shows the strict hierarchical structure introduced by Confucian philosophy. Even though the claim for fixed positions is problematic, since one could theoretically raise one's status through the hierarchical structure; but Confucian roles appear fixed and even though lowest in ranking, the common people ('min') are the necessary basis for Confucian hierarchy. It also shows the higher moral qualities attributed to those governing the people insofar as to give the gentleman's virtues their fullest realisation, he must take part in government: "The Master said, 'the gentleman devotes his mind to attaining the Way and not to securing food. Go and till the land and you will end up being hungry, as a matter of course. The gentleman worries about the Way, not about poverty'";[723] and: "'When a man in office finds that he can more than cope with his duties, then he studies; when a student finds that he can more than cope with his studies, then he takes office'".[724]

The prescribed goal of governments is to guide and attend to the welfare of the common people ('min'). Confucius did not think highly of the common people, treating them as dependent and of low intellect. "'The common people can be made to follow a path but not to understand it'".[725] Nevertheless it is an important factor for the ruling class to take care of the common people.

In matters of method, Confucius saw a basic opposition between learning (xüé) and thinking (sù). 'Xüé' is most important in Confucianism, not only because it permits to acquire new or better skills, but most importantly because it enables a man to become better morally.

> "To love benevolence without loving learning is liable to lead to foolishness. To love cleverness without loving learning is liable to lead to deviation from the right path. To love trustworthiness without loving learning is liable to lead to harmful behaviour. To love forthrightness without loving learning is liable to lead to intolerance. To love courage without loving learning is liable to lead to insubordination. To love unbending strength without loving learning is liable to lead to indiscipline".[726]

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[722] Ibid., book XVI, § 9, p. 140.

[723] Ibid., book XV, § 32, p. 136.

[724] Ibid., book XIX, § 13, p. 155.

[725] Ibid., book VII, § 9, p. 93.

[726] Ibid., book XVII, § 8, pp. 144-5.

Less static since entirely based on the cyclicity of things **Taoism** is, after Confucianism, one of the major philosophical traditions in China. Its main documents are the Tao-te-ching and the Chuang-tzu. We will introduce Taoism through the study of the Lieh-tzu, a more accessible, less mystical work of Chinese Taoism to non-Chinese. The central feature of Taoism is the Way (Tao or Dao), a concept shared by most of China's philosophies.[727] This Taoist way is cyclical and mystical so that "heaven, earth and the 'myriad things' between them all follow a regular course, an unvarying sequence of day and night, spring, summer, autumn and winter, growth and decay, birth and death".[728] This cyclicity has no beginning or end:

> "The ending and starting of things
> Have no limit from which they began.
> The start of one is the end of another,
> The end of one is the start of another.
> Who knows which came first"?

While Confucianism is mastered through study and discipline and primarily represents a system of moral behaviour and government rule putting man at the centre of its universe, in Taoism men occupy very modest positions:

> "Heaven and earth are ruthless;
> For them the myriad of things are straw dogs.
> The sage is ruthless;
> For him the people are straw dogs".[729]

Spontaneity is a main feature of Taoism, the cyclical processes and the actions of heaven and earth are spontaneous, uncontrolled by any ordering set of rules. In contrast to Confucianism, Taoism sees the Way to lie beneath acquired qualities. It signifies a return to man's natural state, discarding knowledge, ceasing judgments, recovering the spontaneity of a new-born, all actions being 'so of themselves'. "I enter the vortex with the inflow and leave it with the outflow, follow the Way of the water instead of imposing a course of my own. ... I do it without knowing how I do it".[730] This not only expresses fatalism (which we will discuss briefly at a later point) but also thoughtlessness, which is not meant in the way of 'inattention', but rather as undiscriminating.

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[727] Lieh-tzu (London: Mandala, 1991, translated by A.C. Graham) p. 1.
[728] Ibid., p. 2.
[729] Ibid., p. 94.
[730] Ibid., p. 44.

Instead of giving a fixed and static set of rules of behaviour, as Confucius in his teachings, Taoism allows for change, in fact it sees change as the Way itself. "In thought we distinguish alternatives, joy and sorrow, life and death, liking and dislike, and we mistake the principles which guide us to the preferred alternative for the Way itself. But the alternation of joy and sorrow, life and death, is itself the Way, and we run counter to it when we strive to perpetuate joy and life. If, on the other hand, we cease to make distinctions, we experience, beneath joy and sorrow, the underlying joy of according with the Way".[731] The Taoist, to find the Way therefore must 'not do' and 'not know'. This is a state that does not seem communicable by words, an enlightenment that cannot be reduced to communicable information (in contrast to Confucianism, which is taught). Non-action ('wu-wei') implies a way of governing the state following the line of least resistance (yielding). The concept of yielding and finding strength in weakness is one perpetuated in many of the martial arts in China and Japan. Action, in Taoism, is not dependent on subjective standards acquired through thought, but on the objective situation to which man should adjust.

> "The strong conquer those weaker than themselves, and when they meet an
> equal have no advantage.
> The weak conquer those stronger than themselves, their force is
> immeasurable.
> Lao-tzu said:
> 'If a weapon is strong it will perish,
> If a tree is strong it will snap.
> Softness and weakness belong to life,
> Hardness and strength belong to death'".[732]

- The concept of yielding is something close to Leninist theories, as in other words it means exploiting the other's weaknesses through those that appear one's own, and finally gaining the upper hand. The enemy's own strengths could therefore be turned against him. In Leninist/Communist terms that would be that the development of capitalist society ultimately comes to the point where it cannot further develop and has to be transformed by Communist revolution. This concept is further propagated in Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War':[733] "when the enemy is at ease be able to tire him, when well fed to starve him, when at rest to make him

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[731] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[732] Ibid., p. 53.
[733] (General Tao Hanzhang) Sun Tzu, The Art of War (Ware, Herts.: Wordsworth Reference, 1993, translated by Yan Shibing and with a foreword by Prof. N. Stone).

move".[734] This quote also points towards the use of opposites (as found in Yin and Yang philosophies and Taoism) to think in simple dialectical terms of thesis and anti-thesis - another element of Chinese philosophy and strategy which were fundamental for the development of Marxist thought. This dialectical thought is expressed in remarks according to the law of the unity of opposites: "extraordinary and normal, void and actuality, circuitous and straight, strong and weak, victorious and defeated, favourable and unfavourable, enemy and oneself, numerous and scanty, fatigued and at ease, well-fed and hungry, turbulence and peace, noisy and quiet, advance and retreat, far and near, gain and loss, and brave and cowardly. While expounding void and actuality, he held that there must be void in actuality and vice versa".[735]

The discovery of the Way, then, in Taoism, can be achieved by a spiritual training of contemplation, which are not further described in the classics. The quest here, unless the one the west recovered from Enlightenment is not one for truth, but rather asks 'where is the Way?' - The ideal in the Lieh-tzu is a state of heightened perception that is the Way and does not tend towards a final illumination, unique and different from all other experiences.[736]

"Taoism represents everything that is spontaneous, imaginative, private, unconventional, in Chinese society, Confucianism everything which is controlled, prosaic, public, respectable; the division runs through the whole of Chinese civilisation".[737] Almost all the early Chinese philosophies, Mohism, and Legalism as well as Confucianism, are in the first place theories of government. They prescribe individuals conduct within society, but essentially they apply to the ruler. Classical Taoism is no exception to this; sometimes described as 'anarchism' its political doctrine is that events are in accordance with the Way only if the ruler does not interfere with their natural tendency. The way of government was described more like a laisser-faire government: "The sage says: I take no action and the people of themselves will be transformed. I love tranquillity and the people of themselves become correct. I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous. I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple".[738] Tao "is the One, which is

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[734] Ibid., p. 111.
[735] Ibid., p. 84.
[736] Lieh-tzu, op.cit., pp. 5-8.
[737] Ibid., p. 9.
[738] Wing-Tsit Chan, "The Way of Lao Tzu" in H.G. Creel, Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tsetung. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953) p. 111.

natural, eternal, spontaneous, nameless and indescribable. It is at once the beginning of all things and the Way in which all things pursue their course. When this Tao is possessed by individual things, it becomes its character of virtue ('te')".[739]   Sageliness in a sense of extensive learning (as in Confucian terms) is condemned, in Taoism it merely refers to those who follow the natural tendency and therefore the ideal human being or the ideal ruler.[740] 'Wu-wei' or non-action therefore is a means of ruling, not an abdication of power. This comes from an ancient Chinese belief that the true Emperor does not need to recur to ruling, because through the influence of his contemplation social harmony is maintained. This is based on the assumption that power emanating from a true sage (such as the Emperors of the time were defined) could maintain harmony without the need of rule. Taoism, however, also appealed to rebel individuals who opposed the convention that the only suitable occupation for a gentleman in Chinese society at the time was civil service. They went a step further in anarchy denying the use of political institutions for the Empire entirely. Taoism, although mystical and therefore more often attributed to religion than Confucianism, adheres to a scientific worldview, seeing man as a tiny grain of sand in a giant universe, and Tao, the Way, independent from all human influence, which all things between heaven and earth follow. Life appears meaningless, but there is a sense of order and an acceptance man's position in that order:

> "Your own body is not your possession. ... It is the shape lent to you by heaven and earth. Your life is not your possession; it is harmony between your forces, granted for a time by heaven and earth. Your nature and destiny are not your possessions; they are the course laid down for you by heaven and earth. Your children and grandchildren are not your possessions; heaven and earth lend them to you to cast off from your body as an insect sheds its skin. Therefore you travel without knowing where you go, stay without knowing what you cling to, are fed without knowing how. You are the breath of heaven and earth which goes to and fro; how can you ever possess it"?[741]

Lieh-tzu's chapter on fatalism (Endeavour and Destiny) reflects this notion of a guided, foreordained life and comes close to religious predestination. There is, however, a hedonistic chapter (Yang Chu), which is rather more close to, calls of western Enlightenment to make the most out of one's life (carpe diem):

> "Without office and marriage
> Men's satisfactions would be halved.

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[739] Wing-Tsit Chan, op.cit., (1963) p. 136.
[740] Wing-Tsit Chan, op.cit., (1953), p. 102.
[741] Lieh-tzu, op.cit., pp. 29-30.

If they did not eat and wear clothes
The Way of ruler and subject would cease".[742]

The discussion on whether Confucianism, Taoism etc. are to be considered as religions or philosophies is an ongoing one.[743] They are certainly rules of conduct, and some of their features (like the fatalistic chapter in the Lieh-tzu) might have a tendency pointing towards a religious belief system. On the other hand they are mostly rules of conduct for life on earth, not promising or expecting anything to follow after death. **Buddhism**, on the other hand, which has been imported into China from India along the Silk Route from the 1st century, comes rather closer to religion. Although Confucianism with its strict rules of practice and communitarian approach to the 'masses' as well as Chinese feelings of superiority compared to its 'barbarian' neighbours, Buddhism took root and flowered in China, not least thanks to its interweaving with Taoism, with which it had much in common (individualism, spirituality, teaching through humour etc.).[744] Although Buddhism took on many forms in China, the school of Ch'an (later Chinese Zen) was influential.[745] With the radical rejection of book learning, already exemplified in Taoism's the establishment of Zen under its 6th Patriarch Hui-neng began. The understanding and living of Zen is mainly based on the study of Koan, a short paradox that is to transcend conceptual or logical thought, designed to short-circuit the entire intellectual process and to experience reality directly.[746] But as Koan study became ritualised, Buddhism in China lost much of its power around the 10th century, becoming more a formalised and regularised religious set of rituals and ceremonies, than a basis of thought.[747]

"Meditation has been an integral part of Buddhism from the beginning. Nevertheless, a school of meditation grew up in India and was taken to China by Bodhidharma about AD 520. When the meditation school arrived in China, it had a strong foundation on which to build: Taoism, the ancient Chinese religion. This religion is based on the idea that there is one underlying reality called the Tao. Taoists, like the followers of the meditation school, exalted intuition over reason. The Chinese meditation school, the Ch'an, easily absorbed this Taoist tradition. Within two centuries the meditation school had divided into two factions: Northern Ch'an and Southern Ch'an. The northern school, a short-lived affair, insisted on a doctrine of gradual enlightenment. The southern school, which became dominant, held to a doctrine of instantaneous enlightenment. The southern school evolved under the powerful influence of Hui-neng (638-713),

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[742] Ibid., p. 155.

[743] See for example: Internet Source, http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/INTLVIEW/intlvi02.htm

[744] J. Hope, B. Van Loon, Buddhism (Cambridge: Icon Books, 1994) p. 81.

[745] Ibid., p. 84.

[746] Ibid., pp. 94-5.

[747] Ibid., p. 96.

who is recognized as the sixth great patriarch of Zen and the founder of its modern interpretation. In a sermon recorded as the 'Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch', he taught that all people possess the Buddha nature and that one's nature (before and after being born) is originally pure. Instead of undertaking a variety of religious obligations to seek salvation, one should discover one's own nature. The traditional way to do this, sitting in meditation, is useless. If one perceives one's own nature, enlightenment will follow suddenly. The goal of adherents of the southern Ch'an is to gain transcendental, or highest, wisdom from the depths of one's unconscious, where it lies dormant. Ch'an tries to attain enlightenment without the aid of common religious observances: study, scriptures, ceremonies, or good deeds. Reaching the highest wisdom comes as a breakthrough in everyday logical thought. Followers are urged to find within themselves the answer to any question raised within because the answer is believed to be found where the question originates. Training in the methods of meditation leading to such an enlightenment is best transmitted from master to disciple. Ch'an flourished in China during the T'ang and Sung dynasties (960-1279), and its influences were strongly felt in literature and painting. Ch'an declined during the Ming era (1141-1215), when Ch'an masters took up the practice of trying to harmonise meditation with the study of traditional scriptures".[748]

In China religious syncretism is not seen as a paradox, but exists at several levels. Coexisting different 'religions' or belief systems can be complementary as well as conflicting. In China the mix of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism is an ordinary one - nevertheless it is unsure whether this mix deserves the label syncretism, since H. Küng claims that all three of them are religions. Syncretism then, goes even further: "'multiple religious participation' must not be confused with syncretism. 'Syncretism' may be defined as 'the borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices of one religious tradition into another by a process of selection and reconciliation.' There certainly has been syncretism in China as has been in any major tradition".[749] This includes the more or less religious following of Maoism and Marxist doctrines all along the Communist revolution of the PRC and therefore the rather paradoxical religious syncretism under Mao.

With the Communists eradicating religion in China, the void left was filled by Mao, as the figure to revere under **Maoism**. Mao therefore was at the same time the replacement figure for Gods or religions and the abdicated Emperor. This personification of power, linked to his charisma as a public speaker and person, gave Communism great support and facilitated its quick development in China. With the so-called 'Four Cleanups' Mao effectively

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[748] Internet source: http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/chinrelg.html.
[749] Internet source: http://pears2.lib.ohio-state.edu/FULLTEXT/INTLVIEW/intlvi02.htm.

purged China of all traces of religion. The programme was designed to wipe out feudalistic views and superstitions as well as it coerced peasants to believe in Mao instead of their Gods, which was relatively easy, seen the desperate circumstances most of them lived in during that time: "There was nothing to eat. Life was hard. Did Gods ever protect us? No! But since the Party came, after Chairman Mao came, we have things to eat, we have clothing, life is better. So we shouldn't believe in the Gods. We should believe in Chairman Mao"![750] Maoists not only attacked the superstition and passivity in the religions of Buddhism, Christianity and Taoism, but also attacked Confucianism as being representative of the declining slave-owning aristocracy and simply did not pertain to modern China anymore.[751] The change of thinking is expressed by bright red strips full of quotes from Mao replacing the red banners printed with good-luck sayings outside the house doors. Pictures of Mao replaced the little idols traditionally displayed in houses. Through religion, Mao also successfully increased his influence over the Chinese society.[752] Mao himself was syncretic in the way that he mixed his beliefs with Marxist theories.

With Mao's death and his socialist society slowing down, religions and superstitions have re-emerged. A return to nationalism and traditional Chinese values was seen by the new governments as solutions to keep China together. "When leaders speak in communist terminology, nobody - including most of the government - listens anymore, so they are using nationalism and Confucianism as substitutes for a discredited ideology".[753]

More influential are linguistic particularities and expressions as well as artistic articulations and propaganda. Not properly foundational of ideological development of modern Chinese, these are, however, important articulating factors the have helped the establishment, maintenance and propagation of Chinese Communism and post-Communism.

We have earlier mentioned the difficulties of translation between Chinese and, for example, English. The difficulties are to be found on several linguistic and cultural levels. First of all is the linguistic level, which makes translations always a difficult matter. This is closely

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[750] Suppression and Revival of Religion in China (Internet Source: http://www.gettysburg.edu/~s342858/con2.html) p. 1.
[751] Ibid., p. 1.
[752] Ibid.
[753] Ibid., p. 2.

linked to cultural factors such as connotation (due to either etymological or culturally based interpretational differences), but also to current circumstances such as economic situation, political ideology and stability etc. China is mainly a culture of writing, which seems to take a far higher place than past artistic expression through painting and sculpture. (This can be seen by the many pieces of ceramics, sculpture, divination or simply scripture etc. from the past in Chinese museums - mostly bearing texts of the way of life, belief systems and culture, historical exploits etc.). Why this is so, is disputed between the specialists. China, however, even though the multiple character writing was not prone for great public diffusion of written material, saw the first copy of the Diamond Sutra printed as early as in the 5th century.[754] In fact, the importance of Chinese writing as a tool of power and ruling becomes clear when one discovers the complexity and sheer number of different characters. This language, although relatively simple in basic grammar, is incomparably precise through richness of vocabulary, word plays on the multiple homophones and sentence structure/word-order. This complexity and the need of long-term study of the language in order to master its writing made it a tool of expression and repression for the leading classes, who had enough time and means to get the necessary education. The 'masses' could therefore be held in complete ignorance, and relatively easily influenced through simple slogans accessible to most. In modern China, writing still plays an important role. This was so under the Communist build-up where all literary art had to serve the needs of propaganda (we will discuss this further on). From old times, in China, scripture has been revered as an art form, finding its culmination in calligraphy: expression of education, ritual and beauty. The writing along houses to chase evil spirits and attract luck, are still found in the more rural or traditional areas of China. They traditionally consist of 12 characters: 4 on top of the entrance gate and 4 on either side of it. In modern China, these enigmatic inscriptions have often taken on the form of hidden criticism for the current situation such as the following:[755]

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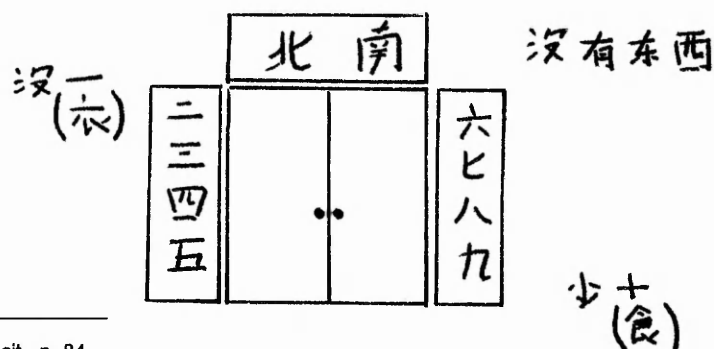
[754] J. Hope, B. Van Loon, op.cit., p. 84.
[755] Many thanks to Zhang Junzuo for this enlightenment.

The meaning here, although heavily played on homophones, is: méi yī 沒衣 (no '1' or rather 'no clothes' 沒衣); shǎo shí 少十 (lack of '10' or rather 'lack of food' 少食); méi yǒu dōngxi 沒有东西 (no east, west or rather 'have nothing'). The interesting feature is also that not the actual written text contains the traditional 12 characters, but its interpretation. Another cryptic, but less traditional street banner said: shàngzhēng 上正 (order at the top); zhōngwài 中外 (inappropriate in the middle); xiàluàn 下乱 (chaos at the bottom) as a criticism of current political corruption and the failure of reforms to bring the necessary developments and changes for the vast part of the population.

The Communists reformed ancient Chinese scripture in two main phases, in order to facilitate the fight against high illiteracy among the population (illiteracy would mean the people's inaccessibility to Mao's writings and other propaganda material). This led to confusions and regional differences, which are, however, quite minimal, considering the endeavour to simplify Chinese characters nation-wide in a very short lapse of time. The result was a certain confusion, but definitely a 'simplification' (diminution of the number of strokes) of many characters, this unfortunately is also linked to a certain etymological loss, making the attribution of character-origin merely impossible and a distinct loss of secondary or hidden meanings. However, to increase literacy among its large population was a major endeavour of the Communist government, and although the reasons for it may not all be among the most noble, the effort is nevertheless laudable, yet did not attain its high goals. This was less due to the movement of simplification than to political instability, economic disarray and the change in education programmes together with the closure of major educational institutions for several years during the Cultural Revolution. The reform of education in modern China was parallel to political and economic movements. Under Communism, the goal of the new system of education was to integrate it with social and economic reconstruction by incorporating labour and production in the students' education.[756] The objectives of Chinese Communist education can be summarised through some of its common slogans: "The door of schools should serve the needs of production"[757] and "Education should serve the political

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[756] The Effect of Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Regime on Education in China (Internet Source, http://www.gettysburg.edu/~s353270/education.html) p. 1.

[757] Singtai Wang, Changes in Chinese Communist Education (Taiwan: World Anti-Communist League and China Chapter People's Anti-Communist League, 1972) p. 2.

purpose of the proletariat and should be closely integrated with labour production".[758]

According to this internet article, there were five stages of reform of the Chinese education system under Communist regime: stage one was a 'Three Year Rehabilitation Period' (1950-52) where the Communists tried taking control of schools and education as well as of the entire country. In stage two, 'The Advanced Soviet Experience', schools to follow the Russian example were established and academic freedom was destroyed; the main focus stressed industry and technology in accordance with China's first five-year plan. Stage three took place in 1958-59 with the 'Three Red Flags Policy'. This so-called 'Great Leap Forward in Education' had the new task of integrating labour and education (and sensibly differed from the Russian model). Stage four 'Amalgamation and Adjustment Period' (1960-65) saw its last three years cut short by China's great famine. With Liu Shaoqi being very critical of past achievements (especially stage three) of the new Chinese education reform, and the decline of quality of education, he reactivated full-time schools, but this led to a dual education system, with, on the one hand part-study, part-work schools following Maoist ideas, and former full-time study schools. This also expressed the split in political lines between Mao and Liu Shaoqi. The last stage was the 'Period of the Great Cultural Revolution' (1966-76). Mao's May 7th directive planned for students to study as many different things as possible. In line with Maoist thought (but also in Taoism and Ch'an Buddhism), practice was more important than theory - and with the Cultural Revolution, schools and universities were closed for many years. The result of these significant changes in education caused students to receive many different types of education, which lead to people having different values and beliefs.[759]

The Arts

Not only education changed, which obviously is very important being at the root of development of all intellectual and artistic development. The arts, and specifically those dealing with written texts, like literature, staged action and/or spoken word, were highly affected by their corresponding political environment. We have mentioned Opera in a prior chapter (5), which through the reforms that took place during the 1960s and 1970s was reformed to become 'revolutionary'. Mao claimed in his 1942 'Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art' that art should spread the revolution in some way. Traditionally, opera

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[758] Ibid., p. 3.
[759] Internet source: <u>The Effect of Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Regime on Education in China, op.cit.,</u> p. 2.

portrayed and proposed the elite classes of Chinese feudal society. The bourgeoisie, landlords and emperors were often portrayed stupendously, while the peasants, workers, and soldiers were depicted as humble and uneducated people. The new form of opera under Mao and especially his wife (Jiang Qing, an ex-actress from Shanghai), however, pursued a socialist goal and feudalism as well as religious traditions were no longer exhibited. Now the heroes and heroines of the dramas were working class.[760] Mao said to this: "History is made by the people. Yet the old opera stage presents the people as though they were dirt. The stage is dominated by lords and ladies and their pampered sons and daughters. Now you righted this reversal of history and restored historical truth, thus opening a new life for the old opera".[761]

The goal was to have the working class identify with the characters in the dramas and make the latter stand as role models to follow for the population. It was also to teach individuals moral values. Thus the goal was no longer for art to imitate life, but for life to imitate art.[762] The purpose of art was not to make money (prices of performances were kept low, in order to ensure mass-attendance), but to 'educate the masses'. We have previously mentioned the titles and content of some of the eight model theatre pieces (yanban xi). In order for the actors to capture the true character of workers, peasants, and soldiers on stage, they were encouraged to spend time with them and participate in their work. Art thus, was no longer a question of inspiration and aesthetic expression, but served a precise function: to teach the masses within the given Maoist framework.[763]

Literature and even 'technologised opera' or the movie industry were to follow under the same set of rules. Intellectuals at the time were defined as 'mental workers' and it was their job, to promote Socialist theories. Mao himself wrote poetry and texts to promote his views and he gave many guidelines on how he felt literature should be written. His goal was to unify and control literature under the CCP, the Party and its goals and achievements were to be glorified and nationalist feelings elevated. The main goal thus was again to educate the

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[760] Chinese Opera as Propaganda (Internet Source: http://www.gettysburg.edu/~s353297/opera.html) p. 1.
[761] R. Witke, Comrade Chiang Ch'ing (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1977) p. 379.
[762] Ibid., p. 381.
[763] Chinese Opera as Propaganda, op.cit., pp. 2-3.

people within the given framework, and to encourage all to trust in and work for the Communist Party.[764]

In modern visual arts, the artist, as in all other domains of artistic expression, always had set boundaries by the government to which he/she had to conform. This is not specific to China and its Communist regime, but to all countries, regions and governments of the world at all times. Cinematography became a very strong tool of Chinese Communist propaganda from 1949, due to its relative influence and power to reach an enormous amount of people simultaneously. Therefore the movies made after 1949 in the PRC were extensions of Communist thought and ideals. In the movie 'Family' by Chen Xiho, there are significant differences to the underlying novel by Pa Qin. The book describes three children, the oldest being the most traditional, the youngest the most rebellious and the middle child balanced in between his two brothers. Emphasising the middle child's behaviour, the book exemplifies thoughtful and slow but ongoing change; while the movie version glorified the youngest, revolutionary brother.

Chen Kaige's 'Yellow Earth' set in a Northern Chinese province at the end of the 1930s, depicts the drama about the relationship of a Communist soldier and a 14 year old peasant girl who is about to be forced into marriage, but is liberated by joining the army (1984) and showed the hope given to an impoverished peasant family by a traveller who offers them a better life through communist values. The problem with 'Yellow Earth' was its depiction of Chinese peasants as unhappy, desperate and uneducated, and only made it to the market through its strong pro-Communist representation all along the story-line. The Yenan Conference of 1942 informed the artists of China that without propaganda their art was useless, and visual art easily accessible to the masses, such as the movies, certainly did their share to support the CCP and influencing people to do so, with the promise of a rosier future with a better economy under Communist leadership.[765]

Concerning China's economic changes, it is interesting to study the changing notion of the 'homo economicus' as has done Prof. Binswanger in a lecture given at the Economic

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[764] Literature as Propaganda During the Communist Regime (Internet Source: http://www.gettysburg.edu/~s335738/propaganda.html) p. 1, p. 3.

[765] J. Louchheim, Visual Art of the Communist Revolution (Internet Source: http://www.gettysburg.edu/~s354330/china.html), pp. 1-3.

University of St. Gallen (CH) in 1997. He starts from the premise, that even though we rarely attribute historical economic theorising to China, all along there had been considerable reflection on economic factors in Chinese schools of thought.[766] Confucian economic order, he claims, consists in the orientation of the economy according to ethical principles. This does not mean that accumulating wealth is seen as a bad thing, it is, however, subordinate to keeping the order and pursuing the goals of society. Man is therefore first and foremost a 'homo ethicus', but as 'homo economicus' can still pursue his own goals. The Legalist movement, on the other hand, overthrew ethical principles in favour of strict adherence to laws and rules. Here 'homo economicus' is subordinate to the idea of a 'homo politicus'. Both movements though do not preclude economic development, only subordinate it to, what they see as more important concepts. Followers of the school of Guan Tse (3rd century BC), however put the 'homo economicus' in first place, emphasising that it is in the Emperor's interest to further the people's interests, because only if man follows his own interests will he be motivated and the population will accumulate wealth through its own motivation, therefore needs no regulatory principles from above. With the Socialist ideology taking over, 'homo economicus' was replaced by 'homo socialis' who thinks in terms of community (which goes back to Confucian ideals). Its most important feature is that of common possession, but it also opposes the division of labour. Taoism, mostly opposed this division of labour and tended to support an autarch society. Riches are here acquired through happiness and inner peacefulness. Most important is the originality of all things, 'homo economicus' in this case is rather 'homo oecologicus'.[767] According to Prof. Binswanger each person has all of these identities and Chinese economic thought helps, in his opinion, to get a holistic image of man in economy and in general.

Thinking back to the applicability and usefulness of empathetic cooperation and the possibilities to homestead previously unknown subject statuses as explained by Sylvester, Confucianism does not seem to leave much space for such applications. Much like in today's western world it relies on learning and knowledge (leading to more or less fixed positions). Furthermore it insists on a hierarchic social order where women can be found at the very bottom of society, to serve ruling man.

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[766] H.C. Binswanger, "Ordnungspolitische Ideen in der Chinesischen Tradition - Ein relativiertes Bild des 'homo economicus'", in Neue Zürcher Zeitung (Nr. 200, Sat./Sun. 31/31.8.1997) p. 95.
[767] Ibid.

Much different and softer is the Taoist approach that, with its 'everything goes' approach and call for complete openness would allow if not support empathetic cooperation. Nevertheless, as many of the oriental or occidental philosophies it also bases itself on conflict (in this case conflict resolution is aspired to through softness and yielding, using the adversary's strength to beat him).

Buddhism with again its yielding approach but also, in the case of traditional Ch'an Buddhism with its endeavour to find the solution by transcending logical thought and questioning all established theory seems to allow for empathy and cooperation. At issue here is whether ordinary people and in this case especially women can practice the Koans (paradoxes) and dedicate their lives to introspection or not. Another problem with all of the above, whether religion or philosophy is ritualisation due to extended practice and also the inter-mixing of e.g. Confucianism with Taoism and Buddhism. Moreover, by avoiding gender discussions they all render women invisible, seemingly 'gender neutral' women's specific roles, duties and rights are mainly mentioned within reproduction and family life thus referring them to the private/home place.

As a controlling top-down doctrine Maoism is obviously unable to integrate elements of uncertainty and flexibility but attempts to normatise wherever possible. It seems ironic that Maois did actually have huge impact on women's lives in China. It certainly can be compared to a first stage of women's liberation, similar to first essentialist endeavours in the west. In spite of being a top-down movement Chinese women suddenly gained access to work, struggled for communist liberation wore short hair and the same, unisex Chinese 'uniform' men did. This development unexpectedly projected them into public life. These changes and limited advances become clear when we look at the arts section (film, theatre) when women could even become role-models, heroines of the revolution, as discussed above.

Clearly, there are many factors contributing to people's multi-layered personalities, not least many values and experiences that seem to be influential for a lifetime. These relatively fixed subject positions are not only difficult to overcome when one consciously tries to do so; they are very often completely unconscious and have different impacts with every single person. With China's long history, high culture and civilisation and relatively many

diverse but often highly sophisticated and regulated systems of thought these difficulties become particularly evident. The last chapter features research interviews and thus give a glimpse into real stories of real individuals. From an academic point of view they question the usefulness of Sylvester's concept of 'women', they also question issues of homesteading and empathetic cooperation. But most importantly they try to overcome everyday issues of life, women's questions to move within an opening public and private space.

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Discussions with Ms. Zhang Junzuo, currently completing her thesis at SOAS, Geography department

8. Individual Stories and Opinions About FWCW and the Advancement of Women:

As spelled out in the methodology the importance of individual stories is emphasised in this thesis. This is first of all a methodological decision that prefers single accounts and personal insights to what mostly are generalising and distorting figures of large-scale quantitative inquiries. On the one hand its lack of precision and possibility to be quantified can be criticised, on the other side one has to deplore the loss of humanity within quantitative methods and furthermore emphasise the importance of reading between the lines, which in country like China seems most important. As we have stated before what you see on the surface is often not all what you get. It may well be that interviewees will follow the official line of policy when interviewed (whether this is in public or this is their usual reaction) - but often in between the lines there is more to their statements. Furthermore a more person-related method of inquiry also seems to correspond to feminist tendencies to individualise rather than generalise, moving away from grand, normative theories.

The end of this chapter features a list of interviewed people by their occupation/situation, since many have asked their names not to be mentioned there is no list of names attached, but it shall be temporarily available to the examiners if requested.

The chapter is structured into two parts, the first analysing statements that follow or reflect official policy and featuring interviews with government officials or representatives, members of organisations and 'so-called' NGOs, academics and common people. The second lists and discusses opinions that in some ways diverge from the official line of policy and there again features interviews with people from all the above-mentioned categories, while there is to note that their configuration is different from the one in the first half.

The interviews have been led on a one to one basis with very few exceptions and are often the result of several discussions and longer-term friendships. This is important since, for

the western inquirer there are additional obstacles of mistrust and lack of knowledge about common cultural references to surmount.

a) Official Views

First of all we have to (re-)establish what the official views are. Then we can proceed to the analysis of the different statements made and how they reflect the official line and why this is so.

As we have stated in chapter 6, the Chinese official view of the FWCW is generally positive, at least in concern with China's performance as a hosting country and the importance and achievements of the conference itself. It also underlines China's respect for the work of the UN and highlights its constant efforts since the new Republic 50 years ago to improve the situation of women inside its national boundaries and internationally. Even though the Chinese women's movement is/was mainly state-led there is also a grass-roots movement interested in the advancement of women. There are more and more smaller, local groups interested in solving the issues posed within their boundaries of competence and geography and many local cadres take it upon themselves to improve the situation of women in their community.

The Chinese media's reaction to both China's role as a host as well as the conference itself, its process and achievements were extremely positive. Its security measures so severely criticised by western reports were defended to have ensured the smooth process and good results within the responsibility of China as a host country.[768] It admitted mistakes to a limited extent by pointing at anti-Chinese agitation especially from the US side and their relative inexperience in hosting large-scale conferences such as this one.

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[768] Xinhua, "China rejects 'interference' in its popular policies" in SWB (FE/2435 G/6, 16/10/1995) p. 6.

A survey conducted by the 'Research Institute on Women under the ACWF'[769] showed an apparently high interest in the conference but only very limited knowledge about its issues, especially among the female population.

A professor of Beijing People's University Women's Studies Dept. and two of her graduate students, which had formerly corresponded and met for an interview at their university on May 8th, 1998 could not stop emphasising the importance and major success of FWCW. It was clear that they felt very proud and confident about China's performance as a host. Even though certain admissions were made as to organisational problems they were - according to the official line - said to be "due to China's inexperience in hosting an international conference of this dimension".[770] They claimed that FWCW had had a major effect, worldwide and within China. On the worldwide scale they mentioned awareness for women's issues as well as having an international forum for the exchange of ideas and an excellent opportunity for China to promote itself and be more understood in the world. Internally it was again raised awareness of issues concerning women and through this also more governmental and local support for work on/with women and a boost for academic women's studies. Nevertheless they insisted that it was not possible to generalise even the term 'Chinese women' and that if one did so, their needs and issues were distinct from women's issues elsewhere.

> "Although FWCW has to be seen as a full success I do not subscribe to a normative and general category of 'Chinese women'. 'Women' alone is already problematic to define with precision as a term. When talking about 'Chinese women' we must not forget that this is never a monolithic group, but that there are many differences among 'Chinese women'. How could we say that the needs and duties of for example a minority country woman, let's say from the Miao, is the same as a Beijing woman. It is true that for theoretical analysis we need to define and categorise, nevertheless in the backs of our minds we should always know that women's needs and duties are as different as women themselves. Theory can detect certain trends, it does not, however, offer individually tailored solutions".[771]

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[769] The Research Institute on Women under the All China Women's Federation, "Beijing Citizens Respond to the UN Conference", in <u>Women of China</u> (translated by J. Lim, 3/1996) pp. 4-5.

[770] Discussion at Beijing's Renmin Daxue with c) 2, 7, and 8, (interview conducted in Chinese) 8.5.98.

[771] See c) 2, 8.5.98 at Renmin Daxue, Beijing.

Members of the ACWF Secretariat were difficult to get hold of and it is only after long-standing efforts that an interview with two members of its Secretariat could be arranged on Nov. 24th 1997. This was done at their Beijing downtown premises, specifically built but at not completed at the time of the Conference or even in 1997, for the FWCW. Their answers corresponded to what had been said from the members of Renmin Daxue (People's University), with the important difference that although the need for local action was clearly a priority, the definition 'Chinese women' was seen as:

> "Useful category of analysis. ... How can we establish what the general situation looks like and how can we adapt national, even international policies if not by basing our studies on certain categories? The UN has played a very important role in the advancement of women - it is proven - nevertheless the UN does not distinguish between nations or even individuals. This proves that we can achieve something in international dialogue on a bigger, worldwide scale. ... Naturally local efforts assist to fulfil these tasks and help us to become aware of eventual gaps. But local efforts have to have a blueprint to follow, one of national and international efforts as have been made all along by the Chinese government and within the Women's Forum of the UN".[772]

They thus argue in favour of grand theory and general categories, not surprising seen their work within a large-scale institution, therefore depending upon institutionalised categories. Furthermore, after attempts to evade questions about whether a contradiction did not exist when women's issues had to be subordinate to general governmental policy the answer was: "no, since the government has always supported women and has made this one of its main pillars for policy construction".[773] It remains a question of evaluation whether one wants to adhere to this statement.

The experience of conducting interviews or have discussions with people on women's and therefore also political issues was not an easy one. The mere fact of the questions being asked by a westerner built up a wall of distrust, very often on both sides. To tear down these walls was difficult, and sometimes impossible. In addition to this, political issues are not easily discussed in public in China, and many times different cultural

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[772] Interview with 2 members of the ACWF Secretariat, 24.11.97, Women's Federation Building, Beijing (interview conducted in Chinese), c) 3, 15.
[773] Ibid., c) 15, 24.11.97.

references made mutual understanding troublesome. Furthermore, many discussions as well as many written documents in China lack depth and are of extraordinary simplicity and often full of references to old, revolutionary slogans. This may be due to the continuous oppression of and decision-making on behalf of the population. This is not to say that there is no brilliant work being done in the PRC, but specifically the Social Sciences often seem deprived of profoundness.[774] The fact that people often quoted revolutionary and sometimes also anti-government or Confucian slogans show a cultural preference, in China, to express oneself in such catchwords which shows not only literacy and therefore a certain degree of education, but, on the other hand, have been indoctrinated for a very long time and allow for no mistakes. Many people, particularly within the academia following the official policy line as well as with cadres, quoted Mao's best-known statement on women that 'women hold up half the sky'.

The ACWF cadres also emphasised how the PRC, as a supporter of women from its very beginnings, was "an ally to the UN in the advancement of women".[775] Over and over they emphasised recent and past legislation and rules in China to facilitate that advancement. Furthermore they pointed to the fact that, while "the PRC had women's issues explicitly inserted in its Constitution from the start, the so-called liberal USA were still failing to do so".[776] The note that perhaps Mao's devotion to women was partly due to his need fort their support to carry the revolution was then again put aside by highlighting that "in China the goals of (Maoist) revolution do not contradict those of women's issues".[777]

Among the journalists interviewed there were different opinions. Two of them came from outside the capital and held editorial posts at women's journals.[778] They had very closely

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[774] See for example the Professor of Physics Wu Jie's attempts in Social Sciences, Systems Dialectics (1996) and On Deng Xiaoping Thought (1996), (both Beijing Foreign Language Press, Beijing) which read like collections of revolutionary slogans.
[775] Quoted above, c) 15, 24.11.97.
[776] Ibid.
[777] Ibid.
[778] Zhu Ni Xinqxu (Wishing You Happiness) from Jinan, Shandong and Shenzhen Nubao (Shenzhen Women's Paper), Shenzhen, Guangdong, c) 14, 18 (interview conducted in Chinese) at Delices de France Cafe, Beijing, 19.11.97.

followed what had been previously published in official papers about the FWCW. This becomes specifically clear when we note that 'Shenzhen Nubao' is administered by the local women's federation, which is a local branch of ACWF. Although they had both attended FWCW, their knowledge about its role and the UN's role at it was very limited. The output of the interview was, as in so many cases, almost zero. They were unwilling to answer any of the more uncomfortable questions where the answer simply was: "I don't know" and even the given replies are of limited use since they only reiterate what can be found in any Chinese article covering the subject of FWCW and of women's issues in general. More complex was the response by the member of the Capital Women Association in Beijing.[779] Even though not majorly deviating from official policy she deplored the fact that only Beijing-based journalists were allowed to attend and to report on FWCW in China. On the other hand she was quick to reiterate Chinese criticism of the western, especially the American press that "were trying to purposely denigrate China in the eyes of the Chinese population and of the world while reasserting their own leadership".[780]

Many of the interviewed women were ordinary mothers, grandmothers, housewives or lower status workers. Several interviews were conducted while travelling,[781] bridging the often over 30 hours long trips. The disadvantages of this procedure became clear immediately: time was too short to build a relationship of trust, interviewees had sometimes such strong local accents that not much if anything they said could be understood. Many of them also enjoyed talking, but would rather ask hundreds of curious questions about the west than like to talk about their own situation. From time to time a give and take situation could work, but very rarely. Most of them were interested in the economic differences between the west and China. Their questions also related to issues of family - 'can a man have more than

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[779] Member of Capital Women Journalists Association in Beijing, c) 33 (interview conducted in Chinese) at the Metro Cafe, Beijing, 28.10.97.

[780] Ibid.

[781] These included c) 19, 20 (women from Henan, resp. Shanxi provinces, 12.9.97); 25, 26, 27 (women market traders from the provinces of Liaoning, Sichuan and Hebei, 29.9.97); 35, 36, 37 (Beijing taxi drivers, 4.11.97 and 30.4.98); 39, 40 (a couple from Shandong province, English teacher and her cadre husband, 14.9.97); 42 (a male science student from Nanjing, 9.9.97); 44 (a male composer from Beijing, 5.12.97); 55 (a Nanjing textile company's sales manager, 1.9.97) and 59 (a Beijing woman that had attended the 1995 FWCW, 30.9.97) (all interviews conducted in Chinese).

one wife?' was a common question of male interviewees, as well as 'how many children do people in the west have on average?' These questions rather point to a hierarchical view of society and an underlying unhappiness about government involvement into the Chinese private sphere. Many of them, male and female, deplored the lack of morality in western society. 'In the west people have sex before they get married and the rate of divorce is very high'. This may suggest influence from official publications that often point to low moral standards in the western world. It may also be caused by growing prostitution in the main cities creating a market for many foreign tourists and short-term expatriates. The aged women (19, 20) said that 'their lives had been very hard. They still lived in poverty and their opportunities away from China's favoured main cities were very limited'. They nevertheless regretted that their daughters and grand daughters had left the local area to find work in the main cities. Some had even divorced or did not want to get married. 'What is China going to become?'

Living at Beijing's Yiheyuan (Summer Palace), about 20 km to the north-west of the city, not far from Qinghua University, the opportunity to interview employees as well as some of the old ladies practicing Qigong in the early mornings along Kunming Lake seemed ideal.[782] There again success was very limited; mainly official discourse was reflected, the older women had actually never even heard about FWCW, even though they claimed to have been Beijing residents for decades.

Beijing's 1997 Italian Trade Fair Held at Beijing's Exhibition Centre, gave further opportunities to ask a few questions here and there. The visitors were all from local and regional official forums (mainly agriculture) looking for co-operation and more often than not the possibility of technical and know-how transfer.[783] 56) had attended FWCW and was happy with the way it had been held and the outcomes, she noted "it showed China's commitment and interest in the worldwide advancement of women".

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[782] Yiheyuan (Summer Palace), Beijing interviews, 20. and 24.9.97, c) 45, 46, 47.
[783] Cadre from the Association of Science and Technology, c) 28, 20.10.97, Representative of the Food Marketing Development Committee of the Ministry of Domestic Trade, c) 56, 20.10.97 (interviews conducted in Chinese).

The Beijing Hotline's interviewee was more talkative and much more complex in her statements.[784] She generally agreed with the official line but openly criticised "China's insufficient support in terms of legal groundwork, real action and financial support".[785] She underlined the importance of the Hotline, which received more than 10 calls of women in serious distress every day. She specifically emphasised the need for stricter legislation and control for the implementation of such laws as well as the increasing need of funding, specifically concerning the Women's Hotline. She also deemed necessary that local action, away from the big branches of ACWF had to be taken. Nevertheless, she said: "an independent local organisation working at grass-roots level can do nothing, it will be in clinch with official organisations and soon lack means to do what it has been created for".[786]

A cadre from the 'Women's Workers Committee of the ACWF of Trade Unions'[787] further indicated the need for the government to avoid employment injustice. She claimed that: "women in China still do not get equal pay for equal work, this is especially true in the more rural areas. Women often have more problems finding employment, especially if they have not yet been married or born a child. Employers need to lower their costs and the first to suffer from this economic need are again women".[788]

A couple that worked at London's Chinese Embassy for 2 years and has returned to Beijing in Autumn of 1997 have less clearly oriented opinions.[789] While he follows a traditional view of women's issues mainly seeing his position as the provider and protector, and hers to fulfil the role of mother and wife, his wife had more differentiated ideas. Even though she agreed that the PRC had done all it possibly could in the past in order to advance women's

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[784] Managing couple, Kempinsky private property, c) 29 in an interview (French and German) 3.12.97.
[785] Ibid.
[786] Ibid.
[787] Member of Women Worker's Committee of the ACWF of Trade Unions, c) 34 (interview conducted in Chinese) 29.10.97.
[788] Ibid.
[789] Chinese couple, having spent 2 years at London's Chinese embassy, c) 5,6 in several discussions all along the research for this thesis in London and Beijing.

issues, she also clearly stated that things were far from perfection. For her it is not enough that the state makes policies and laws to ease the burden of women, she also wants to see these implemented. And this is where she observed the shortcomings in China. "Mentality has to change too, and this has not happened yet. People acting against the newly established women's and family laws must be punished".[790]

b) Views Diverting from Official Policy

As views not corresponding to official policy can be defined any views deviating from what has been said under a).

People included in this subchapter mainly fit into the following three categories: educational/cultural elite,[791] foreigners or Chinese having spent considerable time in the west,[792] those unhappy with the current situation for individual, personal reasons.[793]

Several of these have been mentioned in Chapter 6, as Zhang (1), quoted on several instances and the employees at the Beijing branch of the Ford Foundation. The first category of 'educational elite' share more or less the diverse opinions found in the west. The Beijing police woman (17) was unhappy since she could only find employment in the police which also made her retrain, after she had finished studying electronics at Qinghua. She says that her case is not unique in China and that "it is the fate of a great number of young Chinese women being forced to accept jobs far below their educational level. This has to do with the state's incapacity as well as unwillingness to implement laws and regulations. Even here in the police a woman's chances to be promoted are minimal, whatever her qualifications and abilities".[794] A woman activist and cadre in a local women's federation deplores the lack of means for grass-root research. She claims:

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[790] Ibid.
[791] c) 1, 10, 11, 17, 21, 29, 30, 31, 32, 38, 41, 53, 57 (see bibliography for different interviews).
[792] c) 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 31, 38, 41, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57 (see bibliography for different interviews).
[793] Police woman in Beijing, c) 16, 1.5.98; minority women, c) 22, 23, 9.12.97; spice shop owner, c) 58, 6.5.98 (interviews 22, 23, 58 all conducted in Chinese).
[794] Beijing police woman, c) 17, 1.5.98 in a brief interview on the road (conducted in Chinese).

"Everything is centred around Beijing and very few other successful cities. Outside there is nothing. If one is far from these centres means are scarce. In China up to now there has been no real grass-roots movement of women. It has all been conducted by the government. People feel insecure and dependent. But the state allows no space for the development of movements operating at grass-roots level. The government has made women's liberation happen in China. It was not a movement that came from the people themselves, like in the west. The government claims they have made a gift to women in China; but it was one that worked on the government's terms only. Thus, as long as women's advancement helped its political goals or at least was not counterproductive to official policies it was supported. If this was not the case, women's rights simply became subordinate to the political line of the central government".[795]

The cadres (men and women) having worked/working for governmental organisations mainly criticise China's tendency of isolation.

"Whatever is Chinese is good. Whatever comes from outside is bad. Look at our newspaper and television reports - China and everything is glorified amidst emphasis of the severe problems elsewhere in the world. ... Sometimes, and this was for example the case with Hong Kong papers trying to report on FWCW, their editions distributed in the mainland simply had some pages missing. ...".[796]

A Hong Kong student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong argues that:

"the PRC still wants to control everybody and everything. The patriarchal system is helpful to this control. It is therefore not in the interest of the PRC's government to really work towards the advancement of women. The central government should get rid of its totalitarian attitude of control and slowly allow grass-roots movements to emerge. This is already happening just as long as it does not infringe upon the Chinese government's standing or becomes political".[797]

A male Professor of English from Shanghai University who had spent more than 10 years in the United States declared: "China needs more time. Up to now its history has repeated itself. Women, and men, are still governed by the state, even in their private lives. I think the state has tried to advance women, but only if this was positive for the achievement of its main policies. It is time to change this behaviour".[798]

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[795] Woman activist and cadre of theYunnan Women's Federation, c) 21 (conducted in Chinese) 26.8.97.
[796] Volunteer of the Assoc. for Cultural Exchange with Foreign Countries, A.R. Tibet, c) 31 (conducted in Chinese) 10.12.97.
[797] Student of Social Sciences at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, c) 38, 20.8.97.
[798] See c) 41, 16.9.97.

The second group, those having spent a long time abroad or foreigners have, for the most already been mentioned in the above paragraph. A former language teacher from SOAS had hoped to remain in Britain, since she was unhappy with her marriage in China from which she escaped 9 years prior. Due to issues of residency she was forced to return but explained that even though there were new laws permitting divorce, she would have no chance since her husband was well placed and her entire family therefore may have to suffer if she ever decided to file for divorce.

> "I have been living and working in London for nine years but the last time I asked my employer for a reference and letter of employment in order to renew my permit they refused saying that they could only do that if I first presented them my permit of residency. The administration where I applied for renewal of my residency, on the other hand wanted to see the employment letter and my employer's reference before revalidating my residency. The situation had no solution, my residence permit ran out and I could not stay in my current job nor find another one. What was I to do? I did not want to go back to China and find myself in the same claustrophobic situation with my husband. My life now was in London, my work and my friends too. I even tried to arrange to get married to and Englishman or someone from another EU member country - but such an arranged marriage is risky and costs are high. ... My parents live in T. I had no choice but to go back. I live in Beijing now - opening a shop that I bought from my earnings in England. I am divorcing since there is nothing left between my husband and myself, but he is unwilling and I am scared about the after-effects. He is a relatively well-positioned cadre and I don't know what consequences my divorce will have for me or my family".[799]

The third group must be differentiated. We have mentioned the Beijing policewoman who complained about many women being forced to accept jobs that were far below their qualifications. Two interviewees were market traders from Inner Mongolia respectively the Uygur Autonomous Region. Their unhappiness stems from the fact that, as they put it:

> "Not only are we disadvantaged as women in general, but more specifically as women from Chinese minorities. In our regions women have to work very hard and remain very poor. We have to travel far in order to secure an income for our families. Many of our husbands have left us to get permanent work in the big cities - but they do not want to come back and we therefore cannot count on their help. We are left alone to look after the family and tend to the land. Han women can at least get support from provincial or even local women's groups - for us there is almost nothing: we try to organise ourselves but financial means are extremely scarce. ... The central government is not interested in developing

[799] Former Chinese language teacher in London, c) 11, in several discussions in Spring 1997 in London and 27.4.98 in Beijing.

our areas - we are considered 3rd class ... because of our gender AND because of our ethnicity".[800]

Finally a woman that had recently divorced from her husband had taken out loans from friends and family and opened a small instrument shop in the West of Beijing, hidden in a small Hutong. "If it weren't for my friends and family to support me, I could not have survived. Our government always tells us how much it has done to improve women's situation in China. But I can see nothing. The laws are there, but nobody cares. Many of the new laws still give preference to men. After my divorce I had nothing. While we were married my husband did not want me to work. Now, I cannot work. Women in China are still largely in the hands of men and government officials who do not know what ordinary women have to face day by day".[801]

Concluding one can see several trends: Most men take an official stand and do not think that there is still inequality between the sexes in China. Most officials, cadres as well as country people or those who have never been elsewhere agree. More educated and well-travelled people, especially those who have spent considerable time abroad seem to take on a line which follows government policy rather less than more.

In terms of re-examining Sylvester's proposals for empathetic cooperation with the ability to homestead previously unknown positions as well as her distinctive notions of women and 'women' in an attempt to move away from the socially defined subjects that are women we can draw several conclusions:

- Her addition of 'women' to women is as previously discussed, criticised in several western feminist environments for making 'real women' invisible once again. In China this concept did not encounter applause either. Many women felt that there was no such thing as a conceptual and ontological subject 'women'; the fact that this 'women' actually did not

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[800] Minority market traders from Urumqi, respectively Huhot, c) 22, 23, 9.12.97 at Beijing's Xiu Shui Market (Silk Street, conducted in Chinese).
[801] Woman having attended part of FWCW, c) 58 (conducted in Chinese) 30.9.97.

correspond to real human beings but was rather a theoretical means of thought and definition was generally unwelcome, since much of women's work in China focuses on grassroots and everyday situations. In contrast to much of the discipline in the west, in China reality is no lagging behind a plethora of theories, they rather opt for a hands-on approach trying to solve specific problems in particular areas at different times.

- It has become clear all along this thesis that there is no ease in achieving empathetic cooperation whatever the scale of the project. As previously mentioned there are misunderstandings due to difference in language, history, culture, and perceptions: what we could briefly identify as values. It is Sylvester's point that we should give up security in our values in order to be insecure but able to take in new information and be transformed by it. The difficulty is that this homesteading and empathy can only work on a mutual basis. As a researcher in China the author experienced many instances when things remained unsaid or there simply seemed to be a block on information and closeness. We have discussed several reasons for this previously, like political environment, fear of the unknown/foreigner, general misunderstandings etc. As some academic mentioned, it is easier perhaps to work within a given framework for now and keep a low profile while achieving minimal advances than spoiling all the achievements in favour of women's development with a high profile swiftly running into institutional and governmental opposition.

Nevertheless we can see a steady development and many of China's women's organisations work within relative freedom. There can also be empathetic cooperation within those groups or again within some villages to a certain extent: the idea seems not so incorrect, but once again we cannot take empathetic cooperation in absolute terms. It appears difficult to throw over board all securities/fixed values and float in state of uncertainty for a prolonged period. In effect, as soon as homesteading starts some of the new/or the old values become fixed again: nevertheless the entire experience may have changed us and our outlook.

c) List of Interviewees with Dates of Interviews

1. Ph. D. student at SOAS, Dept. of Geography, London (extended contact)

2. Professor at Beijing's People's University, Head of the Dept. for Women's Studies (8.5.98)

3. Member of the ACWF Secretariat, Beijing (24.11.97)

4. Former Beida academic, long-standing work on women's issues, Beijing (2.10.97)

5. MA International Relations, Beijing University, on a 2 year exchange programme with the Chinese Embassy in London, now back in Beijing (extended contact)

6. His wife, graduated in electronics from Beijing University (extended contact)

7. Ph.D. student at Beijing People's University's Women Studies Dept. (8.5.98)

8. Ph.D. student at Beijing People's University's Women Studies Dept. (8.5.98)

9. Director of Ford Foundation in Beijing (28.4.98)

10. Her Chinese assistant (28.4.98)

11. Ex-Chinese language teacher in London, now back in Beijing (27.4.98)

12. Chinese woman in London escaping marriage in China (27.3.97)

13. Managing couple of the Kempinsky private property, Beijing (25.4.-11.5.98)

14. Editor, Wishing You Happiness Magazine 'Zhu Ni Xingzhu', Jinan, Shandong (19.1197)

15. Member of the ACWF Secretariat, Beijing (24.11.97)

16. Police woman, Beijing (1.5.98)

17. Police woman, Beijing (1.5.98)

18. Deputy Editor, Shenzhen Women's Paper 'Shenzhen Nu Bao", Shenzhen, Guangdong (19.11.97)

19. Aged woman from Chenzhou, Henan (12.9.97)

20. Aged woman from Taiyuan, Shanxi (12.9.97)

21. Woman activist and cadre at the Yunnan Women's Federation, Kunming, Yunnan (26.8.97)

22. Minority woman at Xiu Shui market, selling goods from Huhehote, Inner Mongolia (9.12.97)

23. Minority woman at Xiu Shui market, selling goods from Urumqi, Uygur Autonomous Region (9.12.97)

24. Bus conductor and model worker, Beijing (22.9.97)

25. Woman market trader from Dalian, Liaoning (29.9.97)

26. Woman market trader from Chengdu, Sichuan (29.9.97)

27. Woman market trader from Shijiazhuang, Hebei(29.9.97)

28. Cadre at the Association for Science and Technology, Beijing (20.10.97)

29. Administrative Secretary at the Beijing Hotline (3.12.97)

30. Former military pilot and ex-employee of the Ministry of Defence (26.4.98)

31. Cadre at the Association for Cultural Exchange with Foreign Countries, Autonomous Region of Tibet (10.12.97)

32. Cadre employed at the Ministry of the Interior (26.4.98)

33. Member of the Capital Women Journalists' Association (28.10.97)

34. Member of the Women's Worker's Committee of the ACWF of Trade Unions (29.10.97)

35. Male miandi (taxi) driver, Beijing (4.11.97)

36. Male miandi (taxi) driver, Beijing (4.11.97)

37. Female taxi driver, Beijing (30.4.98)

38. Student of Social Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (20.8.97)

39. English language teacher at Jinan University, Shandong (14.9.97)

40. Her husband, cadre working for the 'Developing Forum' Magazine Office of Shandong Provincial Party Committee, CPC (14.9.97)

41. English language Professor at Shanghai University, retired (16.9.97)

42. Student at Nanjing University of Aeronautics student, Jiangsu (9.9.97)

43. Chairman and Dean of the Beijing Zhong Heng Research Institute of Business Administration, editor and writer (Nov./Dec. 97)

44. Musician and Composer (5.12.97)

45. Employee (cleaning) at Yiheyuan (Summer Palace), Jieshoutang residence (20.9.97)

46. Aged woman practicing Taijiquan at Yiheyuan (24.9.97)

47. Aged woman practicing Qi Gong at Yiheyuan (24.9.97)

48. Member of military police guarding the Embassy District of Sanlitun (23.4.97)

49. Sweet potato seller near Dazhalan Market (14.10.97)

50. Antiques dealer at Beijing Curio City (15.10.97)

51. Young Russian woman studying Chinese, escaping Russia through Beijing (Sep.-Dec. 97)

52. Young Russian woman studying Chinese, escaping Russia through Beijing (Sep.-Dec. 97)

53. Manager of the Beijing Perseverance Consulting Company, Ltd. (7.11.97)

54. Representative of the UNESCO Office in Beijing (30.4.98)

55. Sales Manager at Penn Fabrics China, Nanjing, Jiangsu (1.9.97)

56. Representative of the Food Marketing Development Committee of the Ministry of Domestic Trade Beijing Jinweitong Food Machinery (20.10.97)

57. Painter, politician's daughter (22.11.97)

58. Woman having opened her own instruments shop in Beijing (6.5.98)

59. Woman having attended the FWCW (30.9.97)

60. Director of International Relations, Beijing University

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Délices de France Café, Jianguomenwai, Beijing, interviews conducted in Chinese, November 19th 1999, with two provincial editors of women's journals "Zhu Ni Xingzhu" (Jinan, Shandong) and "Shenzhen Nubao" (Shenzhen, Guangdong) (c) 14, 18)

Metro Café, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, October 28th 1997, with a member of the Capital Women Journalists Association in Beijing (c) 33)

Train trip from Shanghai to Tai'An, interviews conducted in Chinese, September 12th 1997, with two elderly women, from Henan, respectively Shanxi provinces (c) 19, 20)

Xiu Shui Market (Silk Street) Beijing, interviews conducted in Chinese, September 29th 1997, with women market traders (originally from the provinces of Liaoning, Sichuan and Hebei) (c) 25, 26, 27)

Beijing, in taxis (miandi and new ¥ 1.20 taxis), interviews conducted in Chinese, November 4th 1997, November 26th 1997, April 30th 1998 (c) 35, 36, 37)

Tai'An, on the walk to Tai Shan's top, discussion conducted in English and Chinese, September 14th 1997, with a couple (an English teacher and her cadre husband from Jinan, Shandong) (c) 39, 40)

Nanjing outskirts, interview conducted in English and Chinese, September 9th 1997, with a science student from Nanjing (c) 42)

Public Space Café, Sanlitun, Beijing, interview conducted in English and Chinese, December 5th 1997, with a composer/musician (c) 44)

Train trip from Shanghai to Nanjing, September 1st 1997, with the sales manager of a Nanjing textiles company, (c) 55)

Café Bella, Sanlitun, interview conducted in Chinese, September 30th, 1997 with a Beijing woman that had attended some of the NGO workshops (c) 59) later also email contact

Yiheyuan, Jieshoutang, Beijing, interviews conducted in Chinese, 20th and 24th September 1997, with an employee of Jieshoutang residence and tow women daily practicing Tai Qi at Yiheyuan (Summer Palace) (c) 45, 46, 47)

Italian Trade Fair at the Beijing Exhibition Centre, interviews/discussions conducted in Chinese, October 20th 1997, with a cadre from the Association of Science and Technology and a representative of the Food Marketing Committee of the Ministry of Domestic Trade (c) 28, 56)

Kempinsky Hotel Lobby, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, December 3rd 1997, with the administrative secretary at Beijing Hotline (c) 29)

ACWF Building, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, October 29th 1997, with a member of the Women Worker's Committee of the ACWF of Trade Unions (c) 34)

Several discussions in London and Beijing both in Chinese and English with a young Beijing couple having spent 2 years in London's Chinese Embassy on an academic exchange programme (c) 5,6)

Ford Foundation Office, Beijing International Club, interviews conducted in Chinese and English, April 28th 1997, with the director respectively her Chinese assistant (c) 9, 10)

Home of the interviewee, Dongchenqu, Beijing, April 27th 1998, with ex-Chinese language teacher in London (c) 11)

Chang'An Dajie, Beijing, interviews conducted in Chinese, May 1st 1998, with two women from the police force (c) 16, 17)

Kunming (Yunnan), Da San Yuan Restaurant, interview conducted in Chinese, August 26th 1997, with a woman activist and cadre at the Yunnan Women's Federation (c) 21)

Home of parents of c) 5, Enjili Xiaoqu, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, April 26th 1998, with a former military pilot and ex-employee at the Ministry of Defence and a cadre employed at the Ministry of Interior, (c) 30, 32)

ACWF Building, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, December 10th 1997, with a volunteer of the Association for Cultural Exchange with Foreign Countries, Autonomous Region of Tibet (c) 31)

London, several meetings/interviews as well as text exchanges with a Chinese Ph.D. student from SOAS' Geography Dept. (c) 1)

Chinese University of Hong Kong, on campus, August 20th 1997, Hong Kong, interview with a Hong Kong student of Social Studies (c) 38)

Train Station, Tai'An, waiting hall, September 16th 1997, discussion with a retired Shanghai English language professor (c) 41)

Beijing Perseverance Consulting Co., Ltd., Dongchengqu, Beijing, interview conducted in French, November 7th 1997, with the company's manager (c) 53)

Café Bella, Sanlitun, Beijing, interview conducted in English and Chinese, November 22nd 1997, woman-painter and politician's daughter (c) 57)

SOAS Café, London, March 27th 1997, interview with a young Chinese woman escaping her marriage in Beijing (c) 12)

Kempinsky Hotel, Beijing, discussions in French/German, April 25th to May 11th 1998, managing couple of the Kempinsky apartments/property (c) 13)

Xiu Shui Market (Silk Street), Beijing, interviews conducted in Chinese, December 9th 1997, two minority women from Inner Mongolia, respectively the Uygur Autonomous Region (c) 22, 23)

Afanti Restaurant & Pub, Dongchenqu, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, May 6th 1998, woman with her own spice shop in Beijing (c) 58)

UNESCO, Jianguomenwai, Beijing, April 30th 1998, UNESCO office representative (c) 54)

Zhong-Heng Research Institute of Business Administration, Beijing, several meetings in Nov./Dec. 1997, interviews conducted in Chinese, chairman & dean as well as book editor and writer (c) 43)

Dazhalan Market, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, October 14th 1997, with sweet potato street seller (c) 49)

Curio City, Liangmaqiao, Beijing, interview conducted in Chinese, October 15th 1997, with antiques dealer (c) 50)

Yuyan Xueyuan, Beijing, floor share between end of September to mid-December 1997, two young Russian women trying to escape life in Russia (near the Chinese border) through China (c) 51, 52)

Beida on campus, Beijing, with former academic having worked on women's issues for several western academics, October 2nd 1997 (c) 4)

Public Bus 111 from Beijing zoo to Yiheyuan (Summer Palace), interview conducted in Chinese, September 22nd 1997, with female bus conductor and 'model worker' (c) 24)

Conclusion:

The two parts of this thesis have pursued a manifold goal, namely to situate feminist theorising within International Relations and more distinctly Sylvester's concepts of 'homesteading' which "refers to the processes that reconfigure 'known' subject statuses ... in ways that open up rather than fence in terrains of meaning, identity, and place"[802] as well as its method of 'empathetic cooperation' which "entails recognising that certain spaces have been marked out as homes for certain bodies, activities, and talents and not for others, and it entails taking seriously the possibilities to homestead those turf-bound homes with the knowledges gleaned from infidels at the fences".[803] We have discussed the problems of these concepts, both their theoretical inadequacies as well as the difficulty to put them into action. Mainly, we have established that Sylvester's theory fails to account for real women by the creation of 'women' and renders them invisible. In contact with Chinese women, activists and academics we have found a refusal to deal with a theoretical subject of 'women', rather than with real women. We have also found evidence that the mobility and variability of her proposal tends towards nihilism if taken in absolute terms and therefore it seems to preclude possibilities of theorisation. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the partial, practical applicability as well as the intellectual importance of her claims that allow us to become doubtful vis-à-vis grand normative theory. In fact her quoted examples of Greenham Common or women co-operators in Harare, as well as the research are proof. The author has clearly gained new insights, not only from Sylvester, but also from the encounters made all along this research. These are elements that by now have probably become somewhat fixed values and impressions and will need constant renewal. The problematique is the multi-layered personalities of every individual and the multiplicity of encounters and exchanges daily. If we were to practice empathetic cooperation and homestead new subject statuses at all times, we could not possibly work through all of it. Empathetic cooperation is a good idea with limited success, as any theory or application. It is not another instant solution, rather a process

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[802] C. Sylvester, <u>Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era</u> (Cambridge: CUP, 1994) p. 2.
[803] <u>Ibid</u>.

which should be applied whenever possible. It main flaw is the need for reciprocity or mutual empathy. In power relations it could often be helpful when the more powerful side could try to empathise in order to encourage the other party. Imbalance of power still seems influential in such situations, not only because of the danger of abuse of power by the stronger, but also of problematic attitude from the weaker side. In China this became often clear when the western researchers (often declared as the rich 'exploiter' from the west) and Chinese people (considering themselves financially weaker and therefore starting the exchange with prejudice) seemed to talk about two different topics for hours: the research topic versus income, Chinese high culture and patriotism.

The second or research part on China has first tried to situate women in China within the larger context of third world women, it has then discussed the preparation of the 1995 United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women and its parallel NGO Forum at Huairou. The political difficulties of the Beijing Conference have been looked at from the angles of several observers and participants: the UN, NGOs including the hosting organisation, the All China Women's Federation which by many has been accused over time to have rather served to spread central government policies than working towards the empowerment of women in China, western responses, official Chinese discourse and unofficial voices from the PRC. We have subsequently looked at underlying cultural (Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism) and politico-philosophical concepts (Maoism, Deng Xiaoping thought) that may have influenced the role and image of women in China.

Clearly FWCW could have been a more successful event. And whilst even in the preparation there were few signs of co-operation, let alone empathy, there were useful exchanges, which left marks on all sides. Just think about the Tibetan protests and subsequent acknowledgements (perhaps not by China, but many of the other participating nations and certainly by even more individuals. Or what about the open criticisms and protests against the US and in particular Hillary Clinton? And how about the first ever participation of the lesbian caucus. All of these are signs of steady changes, in China these

events, as we have seen, have certainly left their mark; albeit with a very limited part of its huge population. Many in the west have learned that China may be trusted, that there is a will to co-operate and negotiate. As for individual impressions, undoubtedly new contacts and new friendships (the contrary may be true too) have been established; we have seen the disgust of certain westerners at the treatment of China by our media, we have read the 'letter of a Chinese woman' accusing the own government of institutionalised anti-Feminism and oppression: we have seen hidden spaces and stories suddenly appear and open up – even if just for a moment.

We have come to the conclusion that there is still a long way to go in the empowerment of women and that equality between women and men has not been achieved in east or west.

"The irony of Beijing's recent hosting of the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women was apparent to many observers, but not to the Chinese government and perhaps a few ideological holdovers in former socialist countries. Revolutionary regimes inspired by Marxist theory during the first half of the twentieth century recognized the liberation of women as a key component of transition to socialism. Upon the Communist political victory, women were granted full legal rights and mobilized to participate in production. Meanwhile, the authoritarian nature of the socialist state demonstrated command capacity to transform the structure of economic and social relations. Yet after several decades of Communist governance, gender gaps in political and socio-economic indicators remain salient. ... To the extent that the household or family represents the most fundamental sphere of interaction between women and men, and hence, the most fundamental unit of society, it is relevant to bridge the gap between state policies and the household. ... In order to explicate the endurance of gender inequalities, it is necessary to go beyond fundamentally state-centred perspectives. State and economic policies alone cannot account for gender differentiation. An additional structural variable, as socialist feminists point out, is the institutionalisation of patriarchal norms. ... The persistence of gender inequalities in socialist countries may thus be seen as deriving from the relationship between the primary instruments of patriarchy: the state and the household. ... Traditional Confucian beliefs about gender roles retained a stronghold, particularly in rural China. ... The socialist state has clearly played a significant role in defining gender roles in the economy and society in general. ... However, if the results of the first two decades of socialist rule are any indication, gender equality cannot simply be legislated from above. In the broadest terms, the impediments to gender equality in China may be attributed to political and economic inconsistencies and feudalistic tradition. But that diagnosis does not identify its etiology. The relationship is not conceptualised fully. It is not clear whether Chinese tradition fuels counterintuitive policies or the other way around, and indeed, whether one exists without the other. ... Both, the state and the household embody a male-dominated hierarchy that exercises its authority over women through maintaining the sexual division of labour in productive and reproductive relations. In China, patriarchy has demonstrated

resilience to changes in economic structure because the processes of gender norm construction and actualisation at the state and the household levels are ultimately mutually reinforcing. The patriarchal family defines and values the productive roles within the household in gender-differentiated terms and reproduces members (assuming non-compliance with the one-child policy) in its likeness. The patriarchal state provides incentives for specific relations of production, including the terms of reproduction, and produces a web of party officials and cadres that reproduce the demands of dominant ideology. As in the process of human reproduction, gender is defined, produced and reproduced by both men and women. ... Conceptually, reform marked the state's shift from a Marxist feminist to a liberal feminist approach towards women. While the preferred economic systems differ, both frameworks rest on the premise that sexual division of labour will dissipate with the integration of women into the waged labour force and supporting legislation. Under both socialism and market-oriented reform, however, the participation of women in economic production has not eradicated gender inequalities in rural China. ... China's experience suggests the presence of a deeper source of gender biases than state policies or mode of production; namely, institutionalised patriarchy. ... Patriarchy predated socialism, endured under socialism, and reconfigured itself under reform. The socialist state's failure to liberate women reflects the inadequacy of Marx-Engels ideology as a model for Feminism".[804]

Even though this shows that the communist paradigm as such has failed in the empowerment of women that would bring them on an equal level of rights and duties with men, the situation of women in China has considerably improved all along the 20th century. The same appears to be true for women in western societies, who, although there is a widespread claim of the democratic system being more just, in spite of a relatively long history of women's organising have not yet achieved equality in all realms. In both areas it is insisted that the ruling system will eventually solve the problems of inequality that women face. In a recent speech, marking International Women's Day and the 50th anniversary of the All-China Women's Federation's founding Vice-President Hu Jintao reviewed the development of the Chinese women's movement, highly praised its great achievements, and alluded to related historical experiences. "The women's movement must take Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory as guidelines, adhere to CPC leadership, travel the socialist road, safeguard women's interests, and enhance co-operation with women's organisations in other countries"[805] Hu said.

[804] Internet source: http://www.wom.cn/tsai1/rurwocn/doc.html by K. Tsai, Women and the State in Post-1949 Rural China.
[805] Internet source China Daily (http://www.chinadaily.net), Xinhua News Agency, March 8th 1999.

The issue of 'which' political system also come to light when talking about globalisation. In a speech at Harvard University UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan introduced globalisation in the following manner:

"To many, it is the phenomenon of globalisation that distinguishes our era from any other. Globalisation, we are told, is redefining not only the way we engage the world, but how we communicate with each other. ... Globalisation is commonly understood to describe those advances in technology and communications that have made possible an unprecedented degree of financial and economic interdependence and growth. As markets are integrated, investments flow more easily, competition is enhanced, prices are lowered and living standards everywhere are improved. ... For a very long time, this logic was borne out by reality. Indeed, it worked so well that in many cases underlying political schisms were ignored in the belief that the rising tide of material growth would eliminate the importance of political differences. They will have shown beyond a doubt that the belief in the ability of markets to resolve all divisions neglected the reality of differences of interest and outlook; differences that can be resolved peacefully, but must be resolved politically".[806]

In the context of globalisation, nevertheless, Annan emphasises the importance of democracy as fundamental system to ensure peace and justice in the world.

"In a sense, it may be said that politics and political development as a whole suffered a form of benign neglect during globalisation's glory years. Extraordinary growth rates seemed to justify political actions which otherwise might have invited dissent. Autocratic rule that denied basic civil and political rights was legitimised by its success in helping people escape centuries of poverty. What was lost in the exuberance of material wealth was the value of politics. And not just any politics: the politics of good governance, liberty, equity and social justice. The development of a society based on the rule of law; the establishment of legitimate, responsive, incorrupt government; respect for human rights and the rights of minorities; freedom of expression; the right to a fair trial -- these essential, universal pillars of democratic pluralism were in too many cases ignored. And the day the funds stopped flowing and the banks started crashing, the cost of political neglect came home. ... If globalisation is to succeed, it must succeed for poor and rich alike. It must deliver rights no less than riches. It must provide social justice and equity no less than economic prosperity and enhanced communication. It must be harnessed to the cause not of capital alone, but of development and prosperity for the poorest of the world. It must address the reactions of nationalism, illiberalism and populism with political answers expressed in political terms".[807]

Apart from globalism in the practical meaning of worldwide interconnectedness and exchanges, mainly on a politico-economic basis, we wanted here to look at globalism within the narrowed down borderlands of Feminisms and International Relations. As we have

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[806] Internet source: http://hdc-www.harvard.edu/cfia/annan.htm, Kofi Annan in a speech at Harvard University.
[807] Ibid.

established in this thesis the need for normative theories exists if we are to take a holistic approach to women's empowerment. This, however does not exclude the making of local and almost individual studies, which allow to effectively change a distinct situation. Sylvester makes this point very clear. However, growing interconnectedness also means a mix of culture and traditions to a degree never encountered before, This 'globalisation' calls for new, holistic ways to looks at both International Relations (which are still largely western dominated), as we have established from our study of women in China where the inequalities are manifold: a disadvantage on the national level as women, rather than men, a disadvantage on the international level as women rather than men but also as non-western socialist (Chinese) rather than western capitalist. This shows the many identities that have to be considered and globalisation has made Feminisms more aware of these diverse subjectivities, they have therefore become more inclusive. As a next step, a closing of the gaps, a bridging of borders such as encountered between Feminisms and International Relations has to take place.

A more global approach is needed - hand in hand with the ongoing fragmentation of the disciplines. The fragmentation serves specific situations and may give specific solutions. On the other hand we cannot theorise from the specific to the more general. We have to, simultaneously develop systems to get a more complete and inclusive view of any situation, considering all its angles and connections on a worldwide scale. There needs to be a continuous exchange between the specific and the general and vice-versa - one for practical applications, the other as guideline to avoid narrowing down a problem and trying to see its wider branching.

The final chapter of the thesis, presenting individual research interviews does exactly this ... it goes back to single stories after having examined the wider context. The permanent cycle of interchange between specific and wider levels is essential.
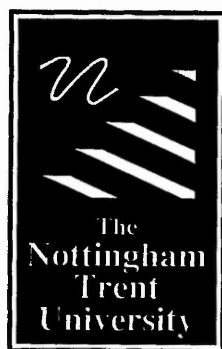
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