5 Conclusions and Beginnings: Some Pathways for IR Feminist Futures

As the preceding chapters have shown, feminist perspectives on IR take us on paths that venture far from the conventional discipline. The topics with which IR feminists have been centrally concerned during the last ten years—security, broadly defined; economic globalization; and democratization—do not readily fit into conventional statist boundaries. Many of them have to do with human security, economic inequality, democracy, and human rights. All these issues have been investigated using gender analysis; many analyses show feminists in critical dialogue with liberalism, defined as an ideology with a strong belief in the benefits of a global capitalist economy and minimal state intervention. Asking how feminism and gender analysis can offer new understandings of these issues, IR feminists are generally working within the context of global politics, rather than international relations. Frequently, they have found many more points of engagement with world-order, critical, normative, and postmodern literatures than with conventional IR. Feminists and conventional IR scholars see very different worlds, they ask different questions about these worlds, and use different methods to go about answering them.

Drawing on but going beyond previous chapters, I now summarize these various differences and their implications for feminist research agendas and their methodological choices, as well as for the future of feminist inquiry within IR. I elaborate on my claim that conventional IR and feminist IR come out of very different knowledge traditions and disciplinary perspectives, with feminism being transdisciplinary, rather than situated primarily within

political science. I outline some of the research questions that feminists are posing and offer some examples of methods they are using to answer them. These examples are by no means exhaustive; rather, they are exemplars intended to demonstrate difference from the mainstream. Since critical perspectives also draw on different knowledge traditions, their worldviews, epistemological claims, and methodologies are closer to feminist approaches; however, they do not generally include gender as a category of analysis. Hence, it is a mistake to place feminist approaches with other critical approaches; they need to have a separate voice as well as separate paths.

As I have shown, feminists frequently draw on local knowledge to construct their theories. Emphasizing the need to listen to marginal voices, they often use the term *conversation* to describe the way in which they generate knowledge. Knowledge grows out of experience at the grass roots. With this in mind, I begin this chapter by drawing on some examples of conversational engagements, or nonengagements, between IR scholars and feminists as a way of elaborating on my claim that, in order to answer the very different questions they pose, these two groups go about constructing knowledge in quite different ways.

Why Do Conversations Frequently Fail?

In 1992, in a university setting in the United States, I attended two conferences on environmental issues. The first was organized by a women's-studies program; it focused on environmental problems as they related to local communities in the United States. Panelists spoke of the siting of toxic waste dumps and nuclear and other weapons' facilities in the midst of poor, often minority, communities; sometimes the nature of the work being done in these weapons' facilities was unknown to local populations. The conference was not specifically focused on women's issues, nor were the panelists necessarily feminists; however, most of them were women, as was most of the audience.

The second conference, which was held at the same university, was on global environmental issues. It was conducted on a much grander scale, with a larger audience, including top university administrators. The panelists (mostly men) came from policy and academic elites dealing with the environment; they included the head of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and a number of leading scholars in relevant scientific and

public-policy fields. The two conferences seemed like different worlds; when I suggested to someone involved in the second one that its participants might gain some insights from material presented at the women's-studies conference, I was told that that was unlikely since the work discussed at that conference was not considered "scientific." Ironically, this judgment was corroborated by one of the activists at the women's-studies conference who had undertaken a study of environmental pollution in her small Midwestern community; she and her colleagues had stuck pins into a map to correspond to cases of childhood cancer that turned out to be higher than expected in the path of prevailing winds carrying emissions from a nuclear-weapons factory. When she and other community residents presented their findings to a congressional committee in Washington D.C., they were told that their presentation was not "scientific" and, therefore, could not be considered relevant evidence for shutting down the offending facility.

Seven years later, in 1999, I attended a very different kind of conference on the subject of women's rights—one to which some IR scholars who had not previously incorporated gender into their work were invited to dialogue with some feminist scholars. Most of the feminists were not IR scholars; some of them were activists who had worked on issues of women's rights in countries of the South. Although I had previously attended a number of conferences that included IR scholars and feminists where conversations were difficult, this time the discussions between these very different communities took place in a friendly, constructive atmosphere.

The meeting, held in the eastern United States, began with one of the IR scholars outlining a realist world; he claimed that, since durable, impersonal structures determine states' actions, the presence of more women in international politics would not make much difference to the behavior of states. Another IR scholar outlined some of the hypotheses generated by the literature on democratic peace (discussed in chapter 4), correctly asserting that it would be hard to test whether, at this point in time, significant numbers of women in power would make much difference to the behavior of states. A third speaker distinguished between the anarchy and violence often generated by contemporary ethnic nationalisms and a more civic and legitimating form of Western nationalism; further confirming the notion of a North/South divide, he also suggested that the South is more patriarchal than the North.

The feminists at this conference were concerned less with the behavior of states in an anarchical international system and more with social justice.

Coming from grassroots perspectives, they talked of inequality as one of the greatest problems in the world. Outlining how policies at the global level can detrimentally affect local communities, and deeply concerned with international politics (although not in the IR disciplinary sense), they talked in terms of human security rather than national security, and they offered different definitions of democracy. Given the elitist nature of international politics and the low number of women in foreign-policy positions in most states, they rejected the implicit assumption made by scholars of the democratic peace that U.S. foreign-policymaking is democratic.

One grassroots activist suggested that people in the countries of the South were hesitant to come to the United States because they perceived it as being a very violent, and hence dangerous, society; many, who had worked in rural communities in the South, were unwilling to concede to the idea of implicit but overgeneralized North/South boundaries between order and anarchy, and to that of less-patriarchal versus more-patriarchal societies. Participants were reluctant to type unproblematically all countries in the South as more dangerous and oppressive. This tendency, to objectify certain societies, all too easily is translated into seeing the women of these societies as undifferentiated victims, rather than as agents variously located in terms of place, class, and race. Also, when feminists use terms like *South* and *Third World*, they are often referring not only to a differentiated geographical region but to the South within the North.

The question as to whether more women in power would have an impact on global politics is one that is frequently raised during these types of conversational encounters, and it was central to the IR participants at this conference. This issue was so far from the lived reality of many of the women with whom these feminists worked that it was not at the center of their agenda. Many of them were quite mystified by their first encounter with IR and the issues that IR scholars raised.

In spite of these differences, this particular meeting was cordial and genuine learning took place on both sides. Since the intellectual distance was so great, why was this the case? I believe that, since each of these groups came from such different starting points, in terms of their views of the world and their academic backgrounds, there was no sense of paradigm threat that frequently occurs when feminists claim to be "doing IR." The power differential between mainstream IR and IR feminists, so apparent within the discipline, was also less noticeable; since these feminists were not in IR, they asked questions that are difficult to answer within an IR research

framework. Although the subject matter focused on women, there was not much discussion of gender, a concept that frequently leads to misunderstanding; the feminists took gender as given in their presentations, and the IR scholars avoided it, beyond some assertions that they did not believe in bad men/good women oppositions, a claim on which all could agree.

So what can be learned from each of these conversational encounters? All of them exhibited a degree of mystification or disconnection—a phenomenon to which I have referred throughout this book. After attending the two environmental conferences in 1992, the slogan "think globally, act locally," first coined by the environmental movement, kept going through my mind. Although this was not the intent of those who first formulated this slogan, I began to see it, and have continued to see it, as an idea that is profoundly gendered. As I have demonstrated throughout this book, men predominate in elite positions of power in the realm of international politics, both at the intergovernmental and state levels; not only do they make the important decisions, they also set the policy agendas, particularly in matters of international politics and security. Global citizenship is more likely to be a concept associated with global corporate elites, most of whom are men, than with cosmopolitan notions of obligation beyond state boundaries.[1] While it is less true today, men in the academy have historically set academic agendas, defining the disciplines in ways that draw boundaries around knowledge—a practice that has the effect of allowing some questions to be asked but not others, and the relative merits of research to be judged in terms of its claims to be "scientific."

Women, as I have also shown, have predominantly "acted locally," overrepresented at the grassroots level in peace, environmental, women's, and other social and economic movements. Even though they have had a great deal to say about international politics, they have not been counted among the worlds' great scholars or knowers; frequently, they have been called idealists who lack the toughness and practicality needed to operate in the "real world" of international politics. By making this claim, I am in no way implying that women are "not thinking"; but the type of practical knowledge that comes out of working at the local level, which was so evident in the women's presentations at both conferences and that is very typical of feminists' beliefs that theory and practice cannot be separated, is often discounted in the name of scientific objectivity.[2] In IR, the ethnographic methods that IR feminists are beginning to employ in their research have similarly been

discounted as not having much bearing on understanding the behavior of states and the international system.[3]

While there was more willingness to listen to different voices and respect different types of knowledge at the third conference, these difficulties persisted; the two groups were still talking about different realities—the feminists focusing on the grassroots and local levels and the IR scholars on states, their decision makers, and international structures. I found myself wondering how the kind of questions that the feminists were asking or the kind of knowledge about ordinary people's lives that they had gained in the field could be incorporated into the discipline of international relations. Would their questions be seen as legitimate? Would their knowledge be judged "scientific"? In other words, the language each group used, the way each saw the world—local versus global, human versus state security, and gendered versus nongendered—meant that the questions that each group considered important and the ways they went about answering them were quite different. Since the feminist approaches described in chapter 1 come out of quite different knowledge traditions, these are issues that IR feminists face more generally.

Different Knowledge Traditions

Whose Disciplinary Boundaries?

A discipline can be defined as a group of scholars and the body of knowledge they share, discuss, add to, revise, and transmit to their successors. Its boundaries, specialized vocabularies, and research practices are generally agreed upon by scholars within it. While disciplines may contain competing research programs, as is evident in IR today, they share a common language and understanding of the meanings of the discipline's central concepts. This language is understood by those on the inside, but it can seem quite mystifying, and sometimes even alienating, to those on the outside, thus making transdisciplinary communication quite difficult. IR scholars sometimes suggest that feminists use unfamiliar language, terms, and methods that are hard to understand; however, the same could be said about the scientific discourse of conventional IR by those not so trained. Not only are our disciplinary languages often inaccessible to those on the outside; for those on the inside,

they help define the questions or research puzzles that can be investigated and the methods that can be used to answer them. Some of these difficulties are evident in my descriptions of conversational encounters.

As discussed in chapter 1, conventional IR has generally, in the United States especially, been situated within the discipline of political science and has been concerned with political rather than social life. This accounts for its focus on the state and the politics of interstate relations. Neorealism and neoliberalism have taken the state as given, claiming that international structures are more important than domestic behavior for understanding international politics. For realists, sharp boundaries exist between a domestic space of political governance and an international anarchy where no enforceable rules exist and state interests and security are the prime motivators for state behavior. IR has been quite "top-down" in its analysis, assuming that a great deal of states' international behavior can be explained in terms of structural constraints; individual human beings, except for policy leaders and decision makers in the subfield of foreign-policy analysis, have not been central to its investigations.

In IR discussion, the term *scientific* has generally been assumed to mean that political science can develop and utilize methods based on the natural sciences to understand international politics. Where IR has gone outside political science, those seeing themselves as scientifically motivated have tended to use frameworks associated with liberal economics, which is considered to be the most "scientific" of the social sciences. Mainstream IR and liberal economics share assumptions about individualist, self-interested behavior and the utility of rational-choice theories for understanding the behavior of individuals and states. Radical or critical Marxist traditions of inquiry have been seen as less "scientific" or more "narrative."

Disciplinary conformity is always under challenge, however. As I have demonstrated in each chapter, this was particularly true of IR in the 1980s and 1990s, when scholars from a variety of theoretical approaches on the critical side of the third debate mounted a major challenge to conventional assumptions, worldviews, and explanations, as well as "scientific" methodologies. Many of the scholars who are challenging conventional IR, some of whose work I have discussed in earlier chapters, are located outside the United States and have been suspicious of the quest for "scientific" explanation that has characterized U.S. IR since the 1950s.[4] These scholars are more transdisciplinary, drawing from fields such as sociology, history, and political philosophy in their investigations; they are generally skeptical of

positivist methodologies and prefer critical, normative, constructivist, and poststructural approaches. Given the growing strength of these critical approaches, it is probable that IR will be characterized by a variety of competing approaches well into the future.

Like these critical traditions, feminist IR is also interdisciplinary. As described in chapter 1, feminist IR draws on sociology, psychology, history, and anthropology as well as more broadly within political science from normative political theory and comparative politics. Recently, philosophy and the humanities have had a greater influence on feminist theory. Rejecting rationalist explanations, IR feminist analysis is often sociological: it understands individuals' behavior as embedded within a network of structures that are socially constructed. Feminists investigate how the intersection of race, class, gender, and other hierarchical social structures at the global level affect, and are affected by, social life within and between individuals and states. These structures, rather than states, are the key unit of analysis; as discussed in chapter 4, states must be problematized and examined for their gender biases. Frequently, boundaries are conceived in terms of social groups rather than states—one reason why communications at the women's-rights conference described earlier were problematic.

For these reasons, IR feminists, like those feminists at the women's-rights conference, are uncomfortable with statist boundaries and North/South divides; most feminist work is either implicitly or explicitly questioning the very constitution of a field constructed around rigid boundaries such as domestic/international, public/private, and state/society. Drawing geographical boundaries between degrees of patriarchy in terms of an unproblematic North/South axis serves to reinforce ideas, prevalent in the West, that women's subordination tends to "take place over there but not here."

Even feminist analyses can create these hierarchical distinctions; as Jindy Pettman has suggested, these boundaries are at work in feminist IPE, where North/South divides are reproduced in knowledge making by the separation of IPE studies of women in the First World from the women in development (WID) literature that focuses on the South. "Development" then becomes a study of Third World "difference," which disguises the extent to which all people's lives are contained within similar global processes and structures.[5]

Given their discomfort with levels of analysis, feminists describe security in multidimensional terms and interpenetrating levels, beginning with the security of individuals situated within broader social and global structures. As outlined in chapter 2, security is as much about the standard of living—

that is necessary for a good life—and freedom from various types of subordination as it is about military security. Since they are particularly concerned with how people's lives and actions are embedded in material structures as well as in structures of meaning, feminists prefer to work from the bottom up, rather than from the top down.[6] With less of a focus on structures, states, and traditional security issues, the above reasons are also why so many IR feminists have engaged with issues having to do with economic globalization and democratization rather than with more conventional IR agendas.

Nevertheless, as I have also pointed out, if feminist approaches can be described as transdisciplinary, they have had an uneasy relationship with all the academic disciplines. It is not only in IR that feminists have revealed and critiqued gendered disciplines whose knowledge has been constructed by men and based on the lives of men. Similar critiques have been mounted in all the social as well as the natural sciences.[7] Feminists claim that the lack of attention to women and gender seriously undermines claims to objectivity and universality in all disciplines; however, just adding women to existing forms of knowledge is not sufficient to counter these gender biases. Knowledge constructed in terms of binary distinctions such as rational/emotional, objective/subjective, global/local, and public/private, where the first term is often privileged and associated with masculinity, the second with femininity, automatically devalues certain types of knowledge. Therefore, doing feminist research is not about adding more details to existing disciplines but about constructing knowledge that fundamentally challenges or alters existing androcentric theories.

Feminists have also questioned the possibility of doing research that postulates an external reality, the regularities of which can be explained by a detached neutral observer. Claiming that all knowledge is situated, and therefore political, feminists believe that such epistemological orientations, as well as the omission of certain types of knowledge about women and disempowered people more generally, have important and often negative consequences. However, given the power differential between IR and feminist scholars, feminist epistemologies face the problem of being judged as less than adequate by the advocates of dominant approaches or epistemologies. But feminism is not just another approach; rather, it seeks to uncover the limitations of approaches that do not consider gender when making claims to objectivity. These epistemological differences have caused serious miscommunication with conventional IR scholars. So, too, have different understandings of the meaning of gender.

Putting Gender In When It Is Already There

For those unfamiliar with feminist perspectives, the term *gender* is often synonymous with women. Adding a gendered perspective generally means talking about women—often the "famous few" who are visible as decision makers—or including some women's issues in one's investigations. Used in this sense, gender is a descriptive category rather than an analytical tool; it is about individuals rather than international politics. Since the subject matter of IR is concerned with states and markets rather than individuals, it is often difficult for IR scholars to see how gender or women could be included in the field at all, except to talk about the effects of women decision makers or women's votes on foreign-policymaking. And, since gender constitutes the identities of all individuals, talking about it can be very personal and threatening, often leading to assertions that feminists are implying that men are bad/aggressive and women are good/peaceful. This is a tendency that, as mentioned above, tends to surface when conversations between IR scholars and feminists do occur.[8]

As outlined in chapter 1, feminist definitions of gender include, but go well beyond, issues of personal identity. Importantly for feminists, gender is an analytical tool rather than merely a descriptive category. As issues discussed in this book have demonstrated, gendering is a mechanism for distributing social benefits and costs;[9] therefore, it is crucial for analyzing global politics and economics, particularly with respect to inequality, insecurity, human rights, democracy, and social justice—issues with which feminists at the 1999 women-rights conference described above were centrally concerned. To talk about putting gender into IR is an impossibility because it is already there; it is evident in the hierarchical social structures that feminists seek to both expose and understand how they came into being and are sustained. But gender as a category of analysis cannot be abstracted from a particular context while other factors are held stable; it must be understood as a component of complex interrelationships having to do with class, race, and culture.[10]

As I have also noted, feminists claim that gender is as much about men and masculinity as it is about women; since, at the elite level, international politics is a masculine world, it is particularly important that attention be paid to the various forms of masculinity that have so often legitimated states' foreign and military policies. Although all of us are accustomed to thinking of women and minorities as groups that we study and hold conferences

about, we are not used to thinking about privileged men in these same group terms; yet, as I have shown, it is their identity that has served as the foundation of claims about the meaning of security, human rights, and democracy. Studies about men have been used to advance general theories of human behavior, whereas studies about women have been used only to support limited knowledge about women.[11] Inviting IR scholars to conferences about women will not change this until the IR discipline has a deeper understanding of the meaning of gender relations. In other words, we need to make gender visible in order to move beyond its oppressive hierarchies.

Sandra Harding has suggested that members of marginalized groups must struggle to explain their own experiences for themselves in order to claim the subjectivity that is given to members of dominant groups who have been granted legitimacy as speakers and historical agents for us all.[12] Until this happens, women will always be characterized as problems or victims. It is for these reasons that subjectivity is an important issue for feminist theory: when women have been included in knowledge construction, it has generally been as objects or victims, rather than subjects.

Subjectivity

It is ironic that just as IR is beginning to discover women, feminist theorists are increasingly reluctant to talk about women as a single, generalized category, a reluctance that is quite justifiable for reasons outlined in chapter 1, but one that can leave IR scholars mystified. Given their assertion that universal knowledge claims have too often been based on the lives of elite men, feminists are unwilling to substitute another universalist model based on the lives of elite women. As already discussed, postcolonial and postmodern feminists have drawn our attention to how often knowledge about women is based on lives of white, Western women, who are seen as having agency, while others do not. Forms of subordination may depend on race, class, and culture, but they do not fit neatly into geographical boundaries such as those between North and South (conventionally defined). As Christine Chin discusses in her work on domestic servants in Malaysia, it is sometimes women who oppress other women, thus complicating essentialized notions of patriarchy.[13] Too often Third World women have been portrayed as poor, powerless, and vulnerable, and in need of enlightenment from "liberated" Western feminists.

A key issue for feminists, therefore, has been how to construct knowledge that acknowledges difference but allows claims that can be generalized to be made. These issues are deeply troubling to those concerned with positivist, empiricist research that strives for universality and objectivity. These questions have also been important methodological issues in sociology and anthropology, whose ethnographic methods IR feminists are beginning to employ. Acknowledging the postcolonial aversion to Western women speaking for others, feminist anthropologist Margery Wolf avers that, as much as Western feminists must acknowledge accusations of colonialism and racism, these accusations should not stand in the way of Western women working to create a more equitable world; this can be done by constructing forms of knowledge that are sensitive to the researcher's perceived status.[14] Allowing subjects to speak for themselves can partially be achieved by the ethnographic method of recording women's testimonies; Marianne Marchand explores the possibility that Latin American women can gain subject status through their testimonies that produce knowledge about gender and development that delegitimizes dominant discourses.[15]

If feminism becomes paralyzed by women not being able to speak for others, then it will only reinforce the legitimacy of men's knowledge as universal knowledge, a position that, as we have seen, has been prevalent in IR. Mridula Udayagiri has claimed that it is not possible to reject the category *women* in a world that continues to treat women on this basis.[16] Hilary Charlesworth has suggested that feminists should focus on common problems that women face, whatever their cultural background—although the process of identifying and defining what are common problems is not an easy one.[17] These attempts to construct knowledge that is sensitive to difference but that recognizes that there are structures and processes that contribute to various forms of subordination is particularly important, given that feminism is an emancipatory political project as well as a form of knowledge construction.

What Is Knowledge For?

Marysia Zalewski has identified three types of theory; theory as a tool for understanding the world; theory as critique, or understanding how the world got to be as it is so that it can be changed; and theory as practice, in which people engage as they go about their everyday life.[18] Conventional IR usually employs theory as a tool. IR feminists, along with other critical theorists,

have generally used theory in Zalewski's second and third sense, as critique for emancipatory purposes or to investigate the practices of everyday life in order to understand how individuals affect and are affected by global politics.

One of the main goals of knowledge in conventional IR has been to develop explanations for the political and economic behavior of states in the international system. Defining theory as a tool, Robert Keohane has claimed that theory is a guide for cause-and-effect relationships; it provides valuable propositions that can prove useful in specific situations. Theories are important to cope with the complexities of world politics, where reality needs to be ordered into categories and relations must be drawn between events.[19] For those who define theory in this sense, its separation from political practice and, as far as possible, from the values of the researcher are thought to be important goals.

For many feminist theorists, however, knowledge construction is explicitly linked to emancipatory political practice. Sandra Whitworth has claimed that contemporary feminism has its roots in social movements; feminism is a politics of protest directed at transforming the unequal power relationships between women and men.[20] Therefore, a key goal for IR feminist theory used in this sense is to understand how the existing social order—one many feminists believe is marked by discrimination and oppression—came into being and how this knowledge can be used to work toward its transformation. For many IR feminists, knowledge is explicitly normative; it involves postulating a better world without oppressive social hierarchies and investigating how to move toward such a world. Christine Chin has claimed that these emancipatory concerns suggest the need for restructuring the ways in which we conceive and execute research problems. She suggests that we need to move toward undoing received disciplinary and epistemological boundaries that segregate the pursuit of knowledge. Disciplinary boundaries, as well as the way in which we pursue knowledge, have had the effect of marginalizing voices within the academy that strive to present a more "human" and, therefore, more complex picture of social change.[21]

Claiming that knowledge emerges from political practice, many feminists do not believe in, nor see the need for, the separation between theory and practice. Theory as practice, Zalewski's third definition of theory, means that we need to take into account many more human activities than would be thought necessary by those who use theory as a tool. Zalewski claims that scholars who use theory in this sense think of it as a verb, rather than a noun; as was the case with the women at the first of the two environmental meet-

ings discussed earlier, theorizing is something people do as they go about solving practical problems of everyday life.[22] Cynthia Enloe has suggested that to understand the world better, we must take seriously the experiences of ordinary women and men, following the trail from national and international elite decisions back to the lives of ordinary people.[23]

The goal of this type of practical knowledge, examples of which I have given in each of my preceding chapters, is not the improvement of theory but of practice; explicitly rejecting the separation between observers and observed, it is intended to yield greater understanding of people's everyday lives in order to improve them.[24] Enloe uses theory in this sense to understand the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, which occurred in the context of the ratification of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement. Noting that the Zapatistas understood the link between international trade and their own security, she outlines how peasant farmers of Chiapas were doing what so many international commentators were not; tracing causal connections between local political economies, state-system contradictions, and emergent interstate relationships—connections that had detrimental effects on their economic security. Enloe claims that the reason the uprising caught almost everyone by surprise was that these people had had difficulty making their voices heard.[25]

Building theory from the everyday practices of ordinary people focuses on marginalized people and sites not normally considered relevant for IR research. The study of women is not new, but studying them from the perspective of their own experiences so that they can understand themselves and the world is not typical for the way that knowledge has been constructed.[26] This type of practical knowledge also helps us to understand that what appears on the surface as normal or natural must be questioned. As Enloe tells us, it takes power to keep people on what she calls "bottom rungs" where they cannot be heard.[27] Given these different definitions of theory with which many IR feminists are working, as well as the different goals of their research, feminists are going to be asking questions that are quite different from those of conventional IR scholars.

Different Questions

When presenting their work to IR audiences, IR feminists are frequently asked how their research could help to understand "real-world" issues such

as nuclear proliferation or war in or between particular states. While denying neither that these are important questions nor that feminists may have some useful answers to them, we must note that these questions are framed in such a way that our understanding of the meaning of "real-world" issues (in this case, the security of states) is taken as given. Deciding which questions are important and which are not is significant because it defines what count as issues worth researching and theorizing about.

The kinds of questions that IR feminists are asking are often considered irrelevant for explaining "real-world" issues or, at best, are judged as questions outside IR disciplinary boundaries, a judgment that can have the effect of delegitimizing the subject matter of the questions. As was evident at the women's-rights conference, feminists frequently ask questions aimed at investigating conditions necessary for achieving a more just world rather than those having to do with conditions important for the preservation of stability. Questions are often framed in terms that require investigations that begin at the local level, or level one, which, as I have suggested, is frequently judged by IR scholars as less likely to yield useful explanations.

A question with which feminists often begin their research is: Where are the women?[28] To ask this question is to reflect on whether we have taken as given which activities in the international realm are deemed important for understanding international relations. Acknowledging that we need to look in unconventional places not normally considered within the boundaries of IR, Enloe has asked whether women's roles—as secretaries, clerical workers, domestic servants, and diplomats' wives—are relevant to the business of international politics.[29] But, as Enloe notes, it is difficult to imagine just what these questions would sound like in the arena of international politics and whether they would be taken seriously.[30]

Locating women must include placing them within gendered structures. Typically, feminist research questions have to do with investigating how the international system and the global economy contribute to the subordination of women and other subjugated groups. As previous chapters have shown, this may involve rethinking traditional concepts such as security and the meaning of human rights. And, as my analysis of democratization has demonstrated, it is often the case that women's life opportunities tend to be constrained at times that traditional history has marked as the most progressive.[31]

Investigating how global structures and processes constrain women's security and economic opportunities requires asking what difference gender

makes in our understanding and practices of international relations. What kind of evidence might further the claim that the practices of international politics are gendered? Through what mechanisms are the types of power necessary to keep unequal gender structures in place perpetuated? Does it make any difference to states' behavior that their foreign and security policies are so often legitimated through appeals to various types of hegemonic masculinity? These are empirical questions that can be answered only with reference to concrete historical instances, taking into account that women are differently located in terms of race, class, and nationality. Answering these questions may enable us to see that what is so often taken for granted in how the world is organized is, in fact, legitimating certain social arrangements that contribute to the subordination of women and other disadvantaged groups.

Such questioning of the way we have come to understand the world, as well as the forms of power necessary to sustain dominant forms of interpretation, demands quite different methodologies from those generally used by conventional IR. Questioning the knowledge/power nexus and its normalized reproduction has been a focus of discourse analysis. Recovering the experiences of subjugated people demands methods more typical of anthropology and sociology than political science. Consequently, feminists are turning to methodologies such as ethnography and discourse analysis to answer their research questions, methodologies that have not traditionally been used in IR.

Feminist Methodologies

Charlesworth has described feminist methodology as an "archaeological dig" where different methods are appropriate at different levels of excavation.[32] No single methodology is sufficient for analyzing complex social phenomena. Since feminists are using tools that are rarely included in a standard IR methodological training, their methodologies tend to be eclectic. There is a sense that research should be grounded, whether it is in people's everyday activities or in the close reading of texts that can offer interpretations about how people construct their world and, therefore, act upon it. While it is important to do research, which is linked to concrete historical cases, it is also important to rethink the theoretical assumptions that led to consideration of these cases in the first place.

In order to answer the kinds of questions outlined above, feminist research looks both up and down, at both structures and agents; looking up enables the investigation of how structures of political and economic power as well as dominant forms of knowledge are created, upheld, and legitimated. Looking down involves investigations based on the lives of those not normally considered as bearers of knowledge; this type of research may involve looking in strange places for people and data—in households, factories, and farms—or "lower than low politics."[33] One methodology appropriate for such research is ethnography, a method more typical of anthropology and sociology than IR.

Ethnography

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz has described ethnography as "a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which human actions are produced, perceived and interpreted and without which they would not exist."[34] It is not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning; its task is to uncover the conceptual structures and meanings that inform subjects' acts. Geertz speaks of an interpretive approach as an aid to gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can converse with them.[35] Writing about the natural sciences rather than the social sciences, Evelyn Fox Keller describes the method used by biologist Barbara McClintock in a similar vein. She contrasts McClintock's work on genetic transposition in corn with that more typical of modern science, which is premised on a division between the observer and the observed and the search for a single law of explanation, a methodology that encourages researchers to overlook difference. Claiming that "there's no such thing as a central dogma into which everything will fit," McClintock talked of her scientific investigations in terms of "listening to the material" or "letting the experiment tell you what to do."[36] In describing her "conversational" relationship with plants, McClintock urged respect for difference; she used the words *affection* and *empathy* to describe her form of thought.[37] While Keller is careful not to conclude that McClintock was consciously doing feminist science, she does suggest that, being a woman with a commitment to personal integrity, McClintock had to insist on a different meaning of mind, nature, and the relation between them.[38] In other words, given that the meaning of these terms and their relation to

each other depend on gendered constructions, McClintock's science required a different construction of gender.

Empathy, *listening*, and *conversation* are words frequently used by IR feminists when describing their research. Christine Sylvester has used the term *empathetic cooperation* in connection with her fieldwork among women in Zimbabwe. She defines empathetic cooperation as the positional slippage that occurs when one listens seriously to concerns and agendas of those to whom we do not usually listen when building social theory. Quoting Trinh Minh-ha, Sylvester claims that empathy involves taking on the struggles of others by listening to what they have to say in a conversational style that does not push or direct; it is an ability to investigate questions in ways that open us up to the stories that have generally been bypassed.[39] Cooperation is "a process of negotiation that (real) theorists join because they have taken on board enough of the texture of marginalised identities that their Self-identity with canonical knowledge is disturbed."[40]

Similarly, Katharine Moon, an IR feminist doing second-generation empirical work, has described her fieldwork in Korea as an attempt to lift the curtains of invisibility that have shrouded Korean prostitutes' existence. Influenced by the work of Enloe, Moon's stories help us locate women in places not normally considered relevant to IR and to link their experiences to wider processes and structures that she investigated through the examination of national-security documents collected in the United States and Korea. Moon offers her research as a passageway for the voices of these women who were far from silent when she engaged them in conversation on topics that ranged from politics to child-rearing habits.[41] She claims that many of the thoughts and experiences former prostitutes shared with her in regular conversations informed her thinking and writing.[42] Her interviews are not intended to offer statistical evidence but "to give voice to people who most Koreans and Americans have never considered as having anything important to say or worth listening to."[43]

Christine Chin's work also responds to the question, Where are the women? Chin presents her fieldwork with domestic servants in Malaysia in a light similar to Moon's. Describing her ethnographic research—which involved living in various neighborhoods in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, over a six-month period, she, too, rejects the survey method, which in Chin's view oversimplifies complexities of life that cannot be distilled in a series of hypotheses to be tested. She describes her work as multimethod ethnographic research: she offers quotations from field notes that, she says, are a

style of evidence that allows her subjects to use their own words and speak about any issue they please. Chin writes about her efforts to establish trust and describes her analysis of her interviews as a study of narrativity, or how we come to construct our identities by locating ourselves within our life stories.[44] Narrative is a method sometimes employed by feminists to further their goal of constructing knowledge that comes out of people's everyday experiences. Such knowledge is important for reaching a level of self-understanding that can enable people to comprehend the hierarchical structures of inequality or oppression within which their lives are situated, and thereby move toward overcoming them.

Laurel Richardson, a feminist sociologist, has claimed that narratives are quintessential to understanding the sociological. She outlines some of the consequences of adopting a narrative form as a way of acquiring and representing knowledge, suggesting that it can empower individuals and support transformative social projects. Narratives display the goals and intentions of human actors and are the primary way that individuals organize their experience into temporally meaningful episodes; narratives make the connections between events that constitute meaning. Explanation in a narrative mode is contextually embedded, whereas scientific explanation is abstracted from spatial and temporal contexts.[45] Richardson describes narratives that give voice to those social groups who are marginalized—to what she calls the "collective story." While people talk of specific events rather than articulating how sociological categories such as race, class, and gender have shaped their lives, she believes that their stories have transcendent possibilities for social action and societal transformation.[46]

While IR feminists have employed ethnographic methods, often with these emancipatory goals in mind, they are not using ethnography only to narrate and understand people's lives at the local level. IR feminists provide multilevel, mutually constituted constructions. Importantly, their investigations link everyday experiences with wider regional and global political and economic structures and processes. As discussed in chapter 2, Moon's work demonstrates that military prostitution is not simply a women's issue, but a matter of national security and international politics. The challenge of her work is to analyze the interaction between foreign governments and among governments and local groups.[47] This type of understanding may reveal possibilities for social change.

Likewise, Chin uses a neo-Gramscian perspective to demonstrate how domestic service is an issue that, rather than being a personal, private one,

as is often assumed, involves the state and its international political and economic relations. Reinforcing the feminist claim of the interpenetration of the personal and political, Chin investigates the multicausal linkages between region (in this case, the East Asian region), state, and household. Although previous analyses have examined class and racial dimensions of what she calls the repressive developmental state, little work has been done on its gendered dimensions.[48]

Chin's critical political-economy approach, one used by other feminists, too, differs from rationalistic approaches in that it takes into account both the material and ideational dimensions of social relations. Chin claims that a focus on legislation is not sufficient to account for the repressive policies of the state; one must also examine the ideological hegemony necessary to formulate and legitimate such economic policies.[49] As these empirical studies demonstrate, gender is a system of meaning that comes to be expressed in legitimating discourses that keep prevailing power structures in place. For this reason, feminists have also been attracted to discourse analysis as a methodology.

Discourse Analysis

Claiming that discourse analysis is an emerging research program in IR, Jennifer Milliken outlines its three theoretical commitments: First, discourses are systems of signification in which discourse is structured in terms of binary oppositions that establish relations of power. As examples, she supplies terms such as *modern/traditional*, and *West/Third World* that are not neutral but establish the first term as superior to the second.[50] Second, discourses define subjects authorized to speak and to act; they also define knowledgeable practices by these subjects, which makes certain practices legitimate and others not. Discourses also produce publics or audiences for these actors; in this way, social space comes to be organized and controlled. This works to restrict experts to certain groups and to endorse a certain meaning of the way things should be done, excluding others.[51] Third, discourse analysis directs us toward studying dominating or hegemonic discourses and the way they are connected to the implementation and legitimation of certain practices. But more fundamentally, discourse produces what we have come to understand in the world as "common sense." Discourse analysis can also help us understand how such language works and when the predominant forms of knowledge embodied in such discourses are

unstable; this allows the study of subjugated knowledge or alternative discourses that have been silenced in the process.[52] Focusing on subjugated knowledges may involve an examination of how they work to create conditions for resistance to a dominating discourse.

Milliken claims that investigation of subjugated knowledge has the potential to show how the world could be interpreted differently; she claims that, since it requires fieldwork, often in non-Western-language environments, it is not a method that has been much used in IR. Nevertheless, some of the ethnographic work of IR feminists that brings marginal voices to light (see above) and the kinds of challenges that feminists are mounting to dominant discourses in development studies (discussed in chapter 3) demonstrate that this type of research is being done by feminists.

Not only have feminists investigated subjugated knowledges built out of the lives of ordinary people's everyday experiences, they have also examined dominant discourses, noting how frequently their legitimacy is created and sustained through types of hegemonic masculinity (see chapter 1). Carol Cohn has described her analysis of strategic discourse (discussed in chapter 2) as being transdisciplinary, using a methodology that combines textual cultural analysis and grounded methods of qualitative sociology and ethnographic anthropology. Echoing Charlesworth's metaphor of an archaeological dig, Cohn talks of her methodology as the juxtaposition and layering of many different windows. Her fieldwork with national-security elites allowed her to "follow gender as metaphor and meaning system through the multisited terrain of national security."[53] As a participant observer of national-security elites, Cohn was "studying up" rather than "studying down," or doing anthropological research about those who shape our attitudes and control institutional structures.[54]

Motivated by her claim that the power of language and professional discourse shapes how and what people think, Cohn also used textual analysis of U.S. Department of Defense official reports, military documents, and media accounts to investigate how national-security practices are "shaped, limited and distorted" by gender.[55] In these analyses, she asks how gender affects national-security paradigms, policies, and practices. Assuming that reality is a social construction available to us through language, Cohn has described her research in terms that she compares to Barbara McClintock's—learning, listening, and finding out what is there without imposing preconditions about subjects and issues. For this reason, she also rejects the idea of proving a point or testing a hypothesis.

Cohn acknowledges that the questioner's identity will shape the questions

as well as the answers respondents would be likely to give; she refers to her own shifting identities, from the time of her earlier work when she was a young woman in a male world of defense intellectuals, where her questions were heard as naive, to the time of her later research, when her identity had changed. Moving into the category of feminist college professor did not have a positive effect in terms of talking to the military; there was heightened sensitivity around gender issues and increased hostility to the term *feminist*.

Is There a Future for Feminism in IR?

"Studying up" takes feminists like Cohn into the world of national security and "high politics," where, frequently, the voices of women or the questions that feminists ask have not been regarded as legitimate. As I have shown, the same could be said about some of the questions feminists have asked of the discipline of international relations. In the late 1980s, when feminists began to bring their concerns to a discipline unaccustomed to thinking that gender had anything to do with international politics, their critiques and research agendas seemed out of place, given conventional disciplinary boundaries. Frequently, the feminists' own training did not adequately prepare them for investigating the kinds of issues with which they were concerned. In order to undertake their research, IR feminists have had to continue, supplement, or overturn their graduate, professional disciplinary education as they seek new methodolgies better able to investigate the kinds of questions they are attempting to answer.

IR feminists will continue to challenge disciplinary boundaries and methods that, they believe, impose limitations on the kinds of questions that can be asked and the ways in which they can be answered. For this reason, their work often seems disconnected from a discipline, centered in political science, that can appear as inhospitable terrain for gender analysis. A world of states situated in an anarchical international system leaves little room for analyses of social relations, including gender relations. Consequently, as this chapter has shown, feminists have gone outside political science and drawn upon methods, such as ethnography and discourse analysis, more prevalent in sociology and anthropology. Coming out of a long tradition of cross-disciplinary feminist theory, IR feminists are, therefore, building transdisciplinary knowledge rather than knowledge based in political science; they are beginning to establish their own research agendas, albeit using different

methodologies to do so. Listening to voices not previously recognized in the discipline has allowed IR feminists to see different worlds, ask new questions, and begin to build the kind of practical knowledge necessary to construct more democratic theories and practices.

However, these transdisciplinary excursions and methodological innovations have consequences. Power differences between conventional and critical approaches that often play out by drawing disciplinary boundaries around subject matter and methods will continue to render judgment of feminist approaches as less than adequate, and frustration with strategies of cooptation or attempted exclusion will persist. Nevertheless, as they set out on their own journeys through world politics, I believe that it is important that IR feminists stay connected to the IR discipline, particularly at a time when other critical voices are raising similar challenges. Critical questioning of the founding assumptions of IR and the investigation of issues such as human security, human rights, democratic participation, and economic justice are crucial if IR is to contribute to building a more peaceful and just world, a goal that has motivated the discipline since its founding.