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**INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST CURRENTS IN
THE RECOGNITION OF THE SOCIAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN
ECUADOR**

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this work that takes a lot of commitment and dedication:

To God for always accompany me in this arduous and beautiful work.

To my parents Carlos Egas and María Luisa Gallegos because they are the fundamental pillar in my life, for all the support that they have been able to offer since forever, for loving me, motivating me, and equipping me with two wings to fulfill my dreams.

To Daniel for his love and support in reminding me every day that nothing is impossible when you do things with your heart.

To my family and friends for giving me all that affection and appreciation in each one of the steps of this adventure.

Finally to all those wonderful women who, thanks to their constant historical struggle, today I can freely raise my voice and make my thoughts recognized.

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive research about the Influence of the Feminist International Currents in the Implementation of the Social Rights of Women in Ecuador presents the development of various feminist currents in International Relations that have contributed as theoretical support in the formation and creation of key players who have driven the emergence of the new opportunities for women in Ecuador. In addition, this work describes the organizations and institutions and relevant international movements that have been built based on the struggle of women's groups and feminists, who have influenced States through international spaces creating instruments to address the needs of women and to encourage gender equality.

This investigation will allow to understand if the feminist currents that were born in the West influenced in Latin American feminist history, especially in the Ecuadorian State. That is why it is fundamental to analyze the advances in rights for women, such as the achievement of women's suffrage and the inclusion of important laws in the Constitution of 2008. Also is necessary to mention the public policies created by Ecuadorian institutions with the objective to eliminate gender inequality, lack of information and exclusion of women through reflection on heterogeneity.

Therefore, it is time for Ecuadorian society to break these chains full of prejudices and stereotypes through knowledge, this will allow us to reconstruct critical thinking through diversity. Which means that in the world and in Ecuador it is not possible to speak only about a woman but, of women with different ideologies that drive the struggle for their rights.

INTRODUCTION

This research is born from personal questioning about the history of women. The motivation that formed this work was due to the different opinions and debates that in the course of my university life I was able to witness. This was fundamental to investigate and gather all the concerns I had about the topic and generate a reflection that encouraged me to understand the struggle for the human rights of women and men.

International feminist movements are a great example of a struggle for rights. That is why the bases that support this work of investigation are those critical currents that have been gaining spaces and have developed within international relations. Feminism and its political and philosophical currents were the bases to achieve the recognition of rights for women, especially the social rights that can be evidenced in this work. These rights were demanded by the great participation of women and their historical struggle.

This research is carried out under a chronology from the origins of feminism to the present, following a line of important events that marked the history of feminism and where changes of positions and tendencies were found. Thus, the research question on which this work was developed was how the emergence of feminist currents has impacted Ecuador in the achievement of women's rights. In order to solve this question, this work has three chapters each one responds to a goal.

The first chapter explains what feminist currents have been present in international relations and how these currents through their feminist theory could be expanded by the western countries. Also this chapter explains the three waves of feminism, where women organized and earned women's suffrage, the achievement of international spaces and access to decision-making within public authorities and organizations. Thus, this chapter likewise describes the political criteria and other currents of thought. To decide that the critical current of feminism is the most adequate, because this current generates research tools to analyse in a depth way the objectives of this thesis.

The second chapter contains an analysis of the actions of various international organizations such as the United Nations Women's Organization, the Inter-American Commission of Women and the European Institute for Gender Equality. In addition, actions taken by Non-Governmental Organizations and Feminist Movements to create spaces, where women can meet and discuss international agendas and policies that influence the States, with the goal to guarantee the best living conditions for their society, and to eliminate the inequality in which women live are analysed. Similarly, the criticism and insights of several authors were researched in order to understand the problems of the institutionalization of feminism and the loss of activism of social movements. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the emergence of feminism in Latin America.

The third chapter describes the history of feminism since its origin in Ecuador and the influence of the Western perspectives. A short exploration is made of the creation of the Pre Constituent of the Ecuadorian Women. It is due to this achievement that Ecuadorian women today enjoy formal rights in the Constitution of 2008.

In addition, this work includes a critical analysis of the gender studies carried out in Ecuador and the measures taken by the State through public policies and through the creation of institutions working from the basis of gender perspective. To understand the reality of women within independent or feminist groups it was necessary to hold or carry out interviews with women who have been activists, militants and authorities within Ecuador who have worked for the development of women and society.

The need to collect and articulate a series of criteria is for society to become aware of what feminism has achieved in international relations. Thus the reader can draw conclusions about what really is feminism leaving aside the stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination because this theory as others has contributed to the decolonization of our thinking and have provided the necessary tools to cultivate critical thinking. The road is long but we are responsible for the change to achieve social justice and allow the new generations to appreciate human potentialities.

FIRST CHAPTER

ORIGIN OF THE DIFFERENT FEMINIST THEORIES AND LINKAGE TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

This chapter analyses the influence that feminism has had on international relations, the currents of which originated in Europe from the illustration and the evolution they have had over time. That is why, this chapter demonstrates the constant struggle of women for rights, legal equality and even recognition and visibility of them by the system in which we live.

Feminism has proved to be an incentive for the world of international relations to be viewed from different perspectives and to question whether the theories imposed by a patriarchal system are adequate to regulate public policies regarding the human rights of states. In the course of this first chapter, the three waves of feminism are explored, considering the main events that have marked this theory in the achievement of female suffrage and the change to constitutional reforms, with consequences such as access to education and economic and political linkage.

Also, I present a brief analysis about the different political theories such as liberal feminism, which considers that women should be integrated into contemporary society, for example, the theory of Marxist or social feminism fights against the patriarchal system and radical feminist theory that supports the reform of international relations to a more actual perspective of the world.

The gender issue that is one of the most influential points in the construction of feminist theories is analysed. It has had a noticeable participation in the international agenda through the criticisms that feminism makes about the definitions imposed by society. Also, the feminist perspective in the theory of international relations is explained as the change that this discipline has achieved in highlighting the history of the women, which is not complete under the feminist gaze. In addition, this chapter

contains different views of some feminist representatives about the participation of women in international relations. All this is concretely developed below.

1. Brief History of Feminism

Although it has been several years since the beginning of feminism and the constant struggle of women to claim their rights, writing the history of women remains a necessity. Thus, in order to understand how feminism has influenced various fields of interest to the field of International Relations today, it is important to understand it from a historical perspective. According to Amelia Valcárcel (2000), feminist thought has developed as a result of "The questioning about equality and difference between the sexes, at the Age of Enlightenment. It is here that a new critical discourse is born that it uses the universal categories of its political philosophy "(p.9). However, the fact that in the Age of Enlightenment some feminist currents were born does not mean that this is a feminist Era.

It is considered that the French Revolution was the main milestone that promoted the achievement of legal equality, rights and the individual development of women as a response to an androcentric view of the declaration of human rights made by the French revolutionaries. Women raised their voices and began collectively to express their ideas and thoughts. That is why Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792, published her work "Vindication of Women's rights" which explained the dependence suffered by women on men and their exclusion from the public field. This work became one of the feminist classics, exposing ideas that according to its author are the key to open several doors to women in education. If women had access to knowledge, they could develop in many fields and also they could enter into paid activities that would allow them to have power to eliminate economic dependence on men (Kramarae and Spender, 2006).

However, Mary Wollstonecraft did not emphasize the importance of the female vote or the importance of women in politics. On the other hand, feminists encouraged and supported the abolition of the slave trade, in addition to their participation in nineteenth-century British emancipation (Kramarae and Spender, 2006). This is a sign that the struggle of the feminist groups was not only for women. Likewise, the Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens by Olimpia de Gouges in 1791 had

as its main objective the denunciation of the French Revolution, since women had not been considered within concept of equality and freedom. This declaration focuses on the recognition of the right to vote and political rights for women (Valcárcel, 2000).

However, when the Napoleonic Civil Code was developed, discriminatory laws were defined against women, they were denied the civil rights that were granted to men and thus women were in total dependence on their parents, husbands and children. Nor could they could be part of middle and higher education. In this way, women felt oppressed and because they were limited in their rights, they began to organize and fight. The French Revolution was a negative response to feminism since many women who tried to fight for equal rights were either sentenced to the guillotine or exiled. One of them was Olimpia de Gouges who was arrested and executed for defending her ideals. This was a sign that the men who participated in the Revolution did not agree with feminist ideas.

Women have been through battles of resistance; for example in New Zealand and Australia, feminist collectives were formed by the change of social reform. Elsewhere, as in China and Egypt, feminist groups emerged after the revolutions of 1912 and 1919. In the United States the precursors of feminism were Cady Staton and Susan B. Anthony, who wanted to apply the principles of the Declaration of Women's Independence. In 1869 they created the Foundation for Women's Suffrage, in which their ideas of feminism were reflected in collectives or organizations such as the International Council of Women, considered one of the best and oldest women's organizations in the world (Kramarae and Spender, 2006).

Thus, the National Suffrage Association of American Women supported a substantial progress in favour of women's suffrage. This had as a result the adoption of the Amendment to the Constitution of United States which granted women's suffrage in 1920. In Britain, several groups of women combined to form in the National Union of Associations for Women's Suffrage where there were various feminist currents including radicals, socialists and liberals. For example, the Women's Protection and Advocacy League denounced all abuse and exploitation in women's remunerated activities. However, the organization that received great recognition at this time was the Social and Political Union of Women, the same one that was founded in 1903 by

Pankhust. This guaranteed the right to vote in 1918 to British women over 30 years and in 1928 they achieved unrestricted and full suffrage over 21 years old. This stage of struggle for the recognition of the right to vote in the history of feminism was constituted as the first wave globally (Kramarae and Spender, 2006).

1.1 Second Wave of Feminism

In the second wave of feminism, there existed several philosophers who were not in favor of the inclusion of women. One of them was Hegel: "The Phenomenology of the Spirit explained that the fate of women was the family and the fate of the men was the State, and it could not contradict itself" (Varcárcel, 2000, p.15). Another philosopher to give his opinion was Schopenhauer quoted in Varcárcel (2000): "the male sex embodies the spirit, while the female sex embodies the nature and that continuity in nature is the fundamental characteristic in nature." P.16). In other words, nature has created women to continue producing human beings and not to participate in politics. These thoughts were used to give a response to the non-recognition of women's suffrage.

Despite the negative thoughts of several philosophers, the women proved that they were wrong. For example in the First World War I, the men enlisted to go to the battle field, while the women were engaged in war industry, and part of the public administration. The women showed that they could perform the activities that men also performed, for this reason men could not oppose to granting women the right to vote and all of the laws for suffrage were approved. In Spain people lived a different reality, the influence of feminism came later. In 1914 Spain was already constituted as a Republic, and women's voting rights were approved. All women's organizations and groups were fighting for reforms in their country's constitutions and the granting of suffrage. Most countries in Europe accepted this type of change, but Switzerland did not accept it until the year 1970 (Valcárcel, 2000). In general, voting for women was one of the keys to promoting and achieving equal rights, access to secondary education as well as the incorporation of women in all the professions and also the right to have the same basic salary and equality in civil rights.

On the other hand, this second wave feminism began to make more influence in political and economic subjects. Radical groups were still concerned about the educational development of women. In the United States a seminar was opened, known as Naomi Wesstein at the University of Chicago, where it became clear that women's requests were being transformed into actions. In addition, another of the events that marked a series of confrontations was the publication by Betty Friedan, "The mystique of femininity" which was a work that shocked feminists at that time, by the fact that women demonstrated their skills in multiple activities, while their husbands were in the battle field. Friedan's book was concerned with the emptiness of a woman as a housewife, wife and mother. Thus, the solution to ending the problem that had no name as expressed by the author was of great importance for women to work to become independent and able to access money without the permission of her husband. Friedman was the leader to form the National Organization of Women in 1966. This organization was one of the most influential in the liberal feminist movement. Its objective was very clear; the women wanted independence and its solution was their incorporation into the political and public work life. This was the impetus for many women to develop as professionals. (Valcárcel, 2000)

Meanwhile in Britain there were protests against the Ford Company. Women were demanding fair and equal salary in their jobs. Another of the activities that promoted feminism was the First Women's Liberation Conference that took place at Ruskin College, Oxford, where feminist women gathered to ask for equal pay, day care for their children, and the right to abortion. Those attending this conference highlighted how socialist feminism was struggling against sexual and domestic violence. Their plan was to create shelters and emergency centers to assist women who had suffered rape or abuse (Kramarae and Spender, 2006).

From another perspective the second feminist wave had relevance in countries like Turkey after the instability of the coup attempt in 1980 and in Spain with the fall of Franco's death. An incentive for feminists around the world was the creation of spaces within the United Nations for women. Women held demonstrations against rapists in India, against the veil in Egypt and they also supported demonstrations for peace in Palestine and Cyprus. Another movement that had major participation was the

Organization of Women of African and Asian Ancestry who fought peacefully against the migratory laws, considered as racist (Kramarae and Spender, 2006).

1.2 Third Wave of Feminism

The feminist movement has evolved since the first and second waves because that marked great moments such as the right to vote, the collective grouping of activists in favour of women's rights, women's participation in access to decision making and above all in the constant struggle for equality and recognition. Consequently, a third wave appeared as the new generation of feminism, where grouped by affinity and motivated by the liberation of women cultural, social, religious, sexual and racial diversity groups arose. (Biswas, 2004).

In recent years, the changes have occurred in a fast and remarkable way as ideas are propagated in the shortest time and interest in the political and social sphere increase. Therefore, women have found employment and attend schools, colleges, institutes, various trades and their professions. Many of them have participated as political candidates and their participation in public positions has gradually become evident. Women's groups are stronger and more demanding in national and international agencies and institutions.

Legislation and normative bodies have been part of the incorporation of women and their change has led to the development of gender equality policies. In this third wave, women are visualized as taking a political and social position where feminist theory is reaffirmed and a series of political currents and diverse epistemological thoughts are produced.

1.3 Feminism and Feminist Theory

Over time, feminism has been the key to women's recognition and achievement of their rights; as in the first and second wave of feminism, the work done by these pioneering feminists has led women to have rights in different countries, although in some countries it occurred earlier than in other geographical areas. Women have gained ground in areas such as suffrage and political, economic and social reforms.

It is understood by feminism, all those people and groups, reflections and actions are driven to end the subordination, inequality and oppression of women caused by patriarchal structures. Therefore, feminism wants emancipation and the constitution of a society in which discrimination does not apply. (Castells, 1996, p.25)

That is why feminism has built new paradigms to respond to the reality and situations that women have to live especially in the political arena as a great step in the conquest of civil rights. At the time women were allowed to vote, they could influence the decisions of the governments (Villarroel, 2007).

Following the second wave, feminism took a theoretical twist. Feminist theory encompasses a number of disciplines such as history, anthropology, philosophy, politics, and economics, among others. The issues in which its struggle is focused are: reproduction, recognition of rights, the sexual division of labour, equality in representation. In addition, the experiences of women have become the impetus to enrich knowledge and also work towards the elimination of social discrimination (Kramarae and Spender, 2006).

According to Keohane cited by Guillén (2004): "feminist theory rethinks explanations, reconceptualises historical, economic, religious, biological, artistic and anthropological concepts. The creation of awareness is the essential first step in the construction of theory "(p.4). Feminism has been considered as a project that has allowed the growth of political movements. All this collective has as purpose to create new inter human relations, to transform the society and to influence the creation of conscience that involves all people in an equal form.

Feminist theory, according to the thought of Anne Faustus Sterling, "contemplates the body not as an essence, but as a naked framework on which execution and the right speech shape an absolutely cultural being" (Stearling, 2006, p.18). Since feminism has several approaches, culture is one of the most influential, since all societies are shaped in different spaces, so the feminist theory responds to a deep reflection of the experience, and reality of women.

Inside the feminist theory exist several currents and thoughts, which have provided a heterogeneity of political and epistemological approaches. These thoughts will be reviewed next.

2. Feminist Approaches: Typologies

While feminist theory is a set of ideas born as a critique of the patriarchal structures that characterize the modern States and which began in Europe, it has crossed a lot of borders. In the field of international relations it can be mentioned that feminism transformed the unique perspective of androcentrism and has turned it into a space where there is a reconceptualization of the objectives that the States have about the International Community. All this takes place through the development of ideas and the level of impact on international events such as globalization that has affected States internally.

In this process in which new theories arise to rearrange the international reality and explain the theoretical dynamism that exists, the traditional debate has been left behind generating a new phase. So, one group of theories that demand a restructuring of international relations are feminist theories. Feminist theories are mentioned because there are several feminist perspectives that allow different approaches by international relations. There are two typologies in feminist theories. The political criteria by Alison Jaggar and the epistemological criteria according to Sandra Harding (Villarroel, 2007).

2.1 Political Criteria

Political criteria are grouped according to their political positions and the philosophy of each of these.

2.1.1 Liberal Feminism

Some of the representatives of this current are Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor Mill and John Stuart Mill. From the beginning of liberal feminism this current aims to achieve the full participation of women in the public area. According to Jaggar, "the goal of liberal feminism is the integration of women into the current of contemporary

society" (Rodríguez 2001, 274). This political criterion has its roots in the defense of the values of freedom and equality that must exist between men and women, their dignity and the capacity to have their own liberal thinking.

Liberal feminism proposed that women were discriminated and oppressed by the fact that there are no equal rights or equal recognitions in comparison with men. They worked to eliminate the existing gap, seeking an equal opportunity that allows women to develop in society. Irene Rodríguez (2001) considers that liberal feminism has spheres that must be analysed. One of these is the invaluable representation that women have had in International Relations.

Therefore, this political criterion demands the incorporation of women in the mentioned activities, eliminating discrimination and ensuring that their participation is equal in the political field. Something that is important to emphasize is that liberal feminism does not seek laws specifically for men or only women, but it is aimed to apply more human laws. This current drives development, and another of its spheres is that women are being part of International Relations and demand that androcentrism is what has hidden and silenced women's participation.

2.1.2 Marxist Feminism

This political criterion gained strength thanks to the ideas of the communist Karl Marx. Marxist theory described and analysed the situation of women with regard to oppression, as well as providing guidelines to eliminate it. The rise of this thinking in feminist debates was at the end of the 19th century. Marx did not say much about the reality in which women lived because for Marx his priority was the development of production, and later the ideas of individuals.

On the other hand, one of the thinkers who gave a more representative sample of this current was Engels. He maintained that not always existed an oppression of women, but "it had begun with the first private property society and division classes because the desire of man was to transfer property to his heirs, and this led them to control women"(Kramarae and Spender, 2006, p.25). Therefore, if capitalism disappears, women would not have to be dependent on the economic aspect of their husbands,

parents or children. Feminism would offer the freedom of work at home and women would fight together with the workers to transform society through revolution.

Marxist feminism commonly known as socialist feminism demands the change of the political, social, and economic structures that were built on capitalism. In International Relations, this theory has influenced the restructuring of the patriarchal system and capitalism. Also, this theory discusses the role of women in society. The representatives of this theory consider that patriarchy and capitalism affect at the same level in the social oppression of gender (Jaramillo, 2009). Zillah Eisenstein citing by West (2000) mentions a relationship between capitalism and patriarchy:

When someone points out that capitalism needs patriarchy to operate efficiently, someone is really noticing male supremacy ... capitalism offers the order and control it needs. While concern for profits and concern for social control are intimately linked (but can not be reduced one from the other), patriarchy and capitalism become an integral process. (p. 45)

There is talk of oppression when there is exploitation by those who own the means of production to those who do not have the necessary resources. This creates economic dependence and abuse. The representatives of this current were Alison Jaggar, Juliet Mitchell, Heidi Hartmann, Sheila Robothan.

2.1.3 Critical Feminism

To better understand critical feminism, it is essential to mention radical feminism beforehand. Since this theory can be understood from different points of view because people who believe in these theories or thoughts always try to act radically, in the sense that they will act in favour of social and political change. Radical feminism, criticizes the patriarchy that has demonstrated the domination of man over women. It assumes that it is not about equality of power but that a radical restructuring that goes beyond the simple fact that public or private institutions and even policies and laws are reformed (Rodríguez, 2001).

The main objective of critical feminism is the transformation of the contemporary system, that is, to form a counterculture that changes the way in which the world is organized in a patriarchal way, thus granting an international system without taking stereotypes or gender conditions. Within this current, we find critical feminism that expresses the need to go beyond a traditional feminist theory where it is transformed into reality and correct recognition is given to the communities and social groups that are part of the exclusion dictated by European theory that do not share the same reality (Red del Feminismo Descolonizado, 2013).

Consequently, critical feminism has cast a glance beyond traditional boundaries, demonstrating that the contributions of a feminist plurality based on diversity and critical thinking of the society are important. "We consider fundamental the contributions of feminist perspectives and struggles, but not of a feminism convinced of itself whose claim to universality makes it exclusionary, ethnocentric and racist" (Red del Feminismo Descolonizado, 2013, p.4). Therefore, critical feminism wants to deconstruct the colonizing discourses of knowledge, where homogeneous and structured spaces are found, they do not take into account the rich diversity with which the world counts and which can be exploited. (Red del Feminismo Descolonizado, 2013)

An example is when a society wants to be independent of authoritarian actions. They do not have a complete independence because there still exist hierarchies and an elite that has power against over working classes. Consequently, critical feminism urges people to promote their creativity, knowledge and ways of being so that they not have a single reality, so they can take advantage of that diversity to learn and share different visions and perspectives about the reality of the present (Red del Feminismo Descolonizado, 2013).

In essence, feminist critical thinking is concerned with building and strengthening a space where women's diversity can establish social relationships and that allows the construction of solutions for hierarchy, victimization and power problems. Because all of this cause so much damage to social groups who want to develop. "What brought us together about decolonizing feminisms is the necessity to separate ourselves from

those feminisms that reproduce the colonizing matrices that are imparted in the centers of power" (Red del Feminismo Descolonizado, 2013, page 7)

2.2 Other Currents

The criteria of this typology are most used in the analysis of international relations.

2.2.1 Empiricist Feminism

Empiricism seeks the incorporation of women into International Relations through the generation of knowledge. This current accepts the principles of philosophical realism, restoring in an objective way the empirical research that shows that women have been discriminated against or seen only under the conception of man. The involvement of women as a whole of universal categories that influence the international relations is sought (Rodríguez, 2001).

2.2.2 Postmodern Feminism

The postmodern feminist current considers that man and woman can not be classified in a single term. That is, the identity that society has given both men and women is rejected. People claim that exist a diversity of women and not under a female figure created by the definition of man. For example, the concept of women in several societies is considered as the middle class, white, heterosexual human being among other characteristics that depend of the origin of woman. So if they do not fulfil these characteristics they would be discriminated.

Postmodern Feminist determines that men and women have already identities. These identities depend on of the influence of their culture, class, ethnicity or religion. The representatives of this thought firmly believe that the identity of a person is seen as a combination of elements. In such a way, the woman is not a single identity, the woman is a diversity, so it means that are many women who have different histories.

This theory is based on gender identities and the needs of each of these. "People who believe in this theory seek to discover the social role that international structures and

processes attribute to men and women" (Rodríguez 2001, 288). Postmodern feminist also studies the social construction that has been assigned differently for men and women about achieving power or access to positions of power (Villarroel, 2007).

Therefore, postmodernism deconstructs the fiction in which society considers feminism by giving a broad meaning to the theory that goes beyond a structure, a definition, a situation in particular. In other words, the naturalness that has been given to female relationships should be explored and clarified making visible the experiences and activities that have made women in the course of history.

Once the category of women is dissolved, the identity of the woman becomes changed in a society that the man has constructed under his criterion and definition of woman. It is then that the identity that has been given to women is reformulated through a plurality of differences (Rodríguez, 2001). In postmodern feminism there are a number of perspectives from which it is difficult to define a single epistemology. According to Harding as mentioned by Irene Rodríguez (2001), "the essence of feminist postmodernism can be summarized in its resistance to the construction of a true history and to the conception of a falsely universal perspective" (p.290).

In addition, this ideology rejects the fiction of a single story that has been constructed to tell a story that groups or unifies the experiences of certain women and marginalises others. For this reason, postmodernism proposes the ideas or experiences of the other can be counted in order to get them out of the invisibility in which they have lived. "As Hooks puts it, research about the voices of black people who are displaced, marginalized, exploited and oppressed are legitimized" (Rodríguez, 2001: 291).

Feminist theories in their different versions seek to insert in the international agenda the situation of women, since the international system is increasingly diffused as globalized, when the State, a privileged actor in the international system, is questioned as endowed of identity, which allows the emergence of multiple identities seeking claim and recognition. (Villarroel, 2007, p.71)

3. Gender Focus

It is necessary to understand what gender is and how it has been one of the fundamental themes of feminism that has been present notably in international relations. The term gender in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, better known as CEDAW (2010) states:

Gender is a set of characteristics, roles, attitudes, values and symbols that create the duty of each man and each woman, imposed dichotomously to each sex through the process of socialization and make the sexes appear as diametrically opposed by nature. Being a man or a woman may be different from one culture or another or from one historical era to another but in all cultures women are subordinated. That is, being a woman or a man is a social and cultural condition constructed historically. (p.5)

It can be said that the term gender is a definition that was assigned by society to describe both a man and a woman. This has nothing to do with biological sex, but rather because since infants, humans have been separate by social stereotypes. For example, girls play with dolls and men play with cars.

Feminist studies and perspectives with a focus on gender have allowed the socialization of the reality in which women live in inequality, exploitation, oppression, because socially constructed gender has been one of the categories that limited access to the power for women by this type of identity (Borja, 2013). Feminist research has tried to break with the classification that is given to humans by their sex. In other words, the differences that human beings have biologically should not justify the practices of some in certain activities as difference to others.

For example, a woman biologically has the ability to feed her child, but this does not mean that she must be the one who takes care of the infant, without the intervention of man, with the justification that biologically he can not produce food to breastfeeding his son. With this simple example one understands how feminism has worked. The distinction between sex and gender is important although biologically women have reproductive functions and this can influence their behavior but it should not be a

determinant that justifies the fact of who participates or not in the practices or activities that are carried out in a society.

The focus of gender in social relationships is a demonstration of the relationships between men and women. Society determines the roles that each has and the social differences based on ethnicity, race, culture, sexual preferences, among others. Through this social reconstruction one differentiates or establishes parameters or elements that human beings must fulfill to be categorized as men or as women. All this has generated, according to the feminist position, that men justify how they have developed the relations of power that have consolidated their dominant position against women.

Many women perform different roles than men, and when one thinks of a woman linked to the political, economic and social sphere there is an inequality that can still be seen.

Enloe, quoted by Rodríguez (2001), questions society and states how gender helps us think about International Relations. It is a question that makes us to think if the participation of the woman in the international scene is really visible. However, low participation is notable thanks to the inequality of the sexes in International Relations. This encourages feminism in the search for opportunities that allow women to stop being that invisible subject in front of a patriarchal system, showing where women were and what they did when international events occurred.

"But if the inequality between men and women has penetrated different areas of International Relations, it is not surprising ... the fact that a gender perspective also reflects on the concepts ... of International Relations" (Rodríguez, 2001, p.253). Therefore, it is not only to incorporate women in International Relations, but also of review if their theory has been based on gender.

4. Feminist perspective in the theory of international relations

In order to understand feminism in international relations, it is important to mention that neorealism and neoliberalism, although each one reaches different conclusions

about international relations, these two thoughts have a point in agreement and it is that they think that in the international aspect, the States are developing in a situation of anarchy since there is no world government which serves as regulating entity of their actions.

It is also possible to expand from the geopolitical perspective that the State is not the only an actor in international relations but also the influence of non-state actors as economic agents, international and non-governmental organizations, groups and mobilizations created by civil societies and other agencies that have become influential in the cooperation between States. Even so, it continues to be said that States are only concerned by their own interests. The two thoughts mentioned are considered rationalistic theories that were created based on the theory of rational choice. After the culmination of the Cold War, constructivism that alleges that the system does not move independently of the action of the man appeared. Therefore, for this new type of approach, States are taking second place and encouraging or giving more importance to culture, to ideas finally to give the necessary importance to men and women. The individual is in charge of improving their reality and this influences either nationally, internationally or even supranationally (Vázquez, 2012).

In the whole field of international relations, feminism appears as a postmodern thought, it should be emphasized that not all feminist theories in international relations are postmodern since some do not deny rationalist thinking. That is why over time women have struggled for visibility not only within the State to which they belong but in the field of international relations where it has taken force through the debates or criticisms made by doctrinaires.

An example of this was Ann Tickner who challenged the status quo of realism as a dominant theory in international relations especially in international politics. Tickner was responsible for analysing each of the six key points of Morgenthau, who closely studied international relations, Tickner said that there are issues of forefront in international politics where women do not participate like in military service, diplomacy or science because they have been domains of man . And these are more inclined to issues in the background of the international agenda as the economy or international security. Thus, her criticism is based on the fact that international

relations have been socialized or taught not only in discriminatory ways towards women, but also by differentiating and selecting human beings for international activities (Villarroel, 2007).

The objective of Feminism, and its most provocative characteristic in the intellectual debate in the discipline of International Relations, is to challenge the realistic and liberal paradigm that argues and justifies the operation of an international system that keeps man in a superior position and advantage over the woman in a status quo that is absolutely unfavourable and oppressive. (Vázquez, 2012, p. 147)

Feminism seeks its own place within international relations not only to benefit women but also men. Eliminating the masculinized system that has had the international agenda and it has been considered as normal. Creating an environment where there are rules in favour of the human being without focusing on whether they are men or women to whom it benefits.

The contributions that have been made to the international scene by different scholars such as Ann Tickner, Cynthia Enloe, Robert Keohane and others are used in the current debate on international theories. Their ideas and perspectives have contributed to the thought of a theoretical revaluation challenging the perspective that man has on issues that not only affect men and reformulating that the woman can accede to the power that has been established or managed only by the man. Although women have rarely been part of this power, they have been shown to be able to handle international affairs more persuasively than coercion (Vazquez, 2012).

Feminist critiques and their contributions in international relations do not focus only on power or security, they also take strength from their ideas regarding the environment, the international system, war, international security and the activities they carry out the different political positions liberal, social, radical among others. Feminism has gained a broad field in international relations by linking with power. Understanding this "as the human ability to act in concert, or the action that is taken in connection with others who share the same concerns" (Tickner, 1988, 434).

Currently, we have women who are in charge of governmental or non-governmental organizations, women participating in the army and other functions previously considered exclusively for men, but it is fundamental for all to continue working for visibility, justice and equality that they deserve. The world of international relations will realize that it is necessary to reformulate the system and include the feminist contributions that help to improve it.

Finally, to continue this tendency that distances women from the idea of being the weak sex and, on the contrary, demonstrates that it can bring wisdom, efficiency, firmness and leadership in public and private affairs, it will not be much time to achieve a society with less discrimination, more just and with greater gender equity. (Vazquez, 2012, p.151)

Feminism from the outset has been a movement that has contributed to the social, political and economic progress of society. At present it has spread in several areas, in which it has developed knowledge that has allowed the extensive work of women to be more evident and recognized. The combination of these efforts has resulted in the introduction of taboo subjects such as abortion, access to decision making, women's rights, economic independence, and others included in the political debate. By which society is gradually being transformed, many women know their rights and fight for those who are still unaware of them. But the road is still long, the elimination of existing gaps both among women themselves and among society remains one of the main goals for which feminism must work.

Today we can not speak of only one feminism, as I explained in this first chapter, the theoretical, political, critical and social currents are several. Each one of them has contributed so that both men and women are united in favour of this fight against the patriarchal system. However, in the following chapters it is important and necessary to take a critical position in order to analyse the different local, national and international actors, institutions, movements or organizations that influence the development of the feminist movement and its struggle for women's rights.

Therefore, I consider it necessary that critical thinking provides analytic tools to deepen the knowledge of the reality in which we find ourselves. Not to settle for a

single story, with a single way of seeing feminism and the currents implanted by the west, but to understand the roots of several points of view that allow us to rethink in new ways to decolonize the thought of the society. Thus, the following chapters will make us think if we are really acting in favour of women, men and society in general or in favour of the same structures implemented by androcentrism. In addition, if the richness of diversity is considered a problem or if we are still in time to open our thinking to leave aside the exclusions, generalizations and stereotypes that are so damaging to those who seek change.

SECOND CHAPTER

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS' CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS ACHIEVING WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

1. Feminism and International Organizations

International politics has been a major field on masculine participation.

The masculine gender has been associated with concepts such as power, security and objectivity, and in politics, these are key concepts. On the other hand, the feminine gender has been associated with emotions, reproduction and subjectivity; in politics, these concepts are not a high priority. (Hurtado, 2014, p.1)

This does not mean that women have not contributed to international relations, especially, international politics. Instead, a well-deserved recognition of their theoretical and practical participation has not been made.

International relations have been mostly ruled by men; in this way, the classical notions on international relations, as Hans Morgenthau's realist theory states (1986), are controlled by the unquenchable desire of power that men have. Consequently, this influences the actions which each State utilizes in front of the international community through their international policies; this causes a conflict of opposing interests in order to dominate, survive and prevail over others, generating conflict (Barbe, 1987) If analysed, topics such as war, power growth, and determination of who is going to stand out among other States, are the only ones where efforts have been concentrated. In this manner, feminist critiques support the idea that there is a limited vision on other fields that need the interest of the entire international community such as migration, rights, environment, social conditions, among others (Hurtado, 2014)

International organizations have become a means that allow social topics that are minor before the eyes of masculinity to be investigated. For this reason, feminism has fought in favor of the creation of these spaces where essential aspects in the international community such as social development, human rights, environment, ecosystem, health and common welfare, can be directly treated.

Feminism considers that international organizations can be seen as necessary tools in order to treat issues that others have not considered of interest. If work can be done within these matters, part of the conflict where international relations are focused could be avoided; also, an environment of greater stability could be generated which would develop active members and not only pending documents or letters within the participation of the States.

In order to understand the participation and contribution of women in international organizations, it is important to know the influence of feminism in the international field. As a brief explanation, this theory points that it is necessary to understand what gender is and how this has influenced women's participation. The theories implanted by the system are criticized since the intervention of women in processes such as decision-making on international topics is scarce. However, this is not because women do not want to be part of these processes, but because the patriarchal vision considers that women are not really prepared to have a more objective vision.

Therefore, the feminist theory of international relations argues that since politics is largely dominated by men, the vision of the whole international panorama has an androcentric perspective of reality. In addition, another criticism of the traditionalist theory of international relations is the approach that the powers have in prevailing and overpowering other States, using their influences to give orders, benefits and threats as the case may be, to achieve their objectives and to maintain the security of their States against threats or any type of destabilization.

The options presented by the feminist theory are making decisions that allow the States to fulfil a series of objectives and that about security, Ann Tickner cited by Hurtado (2014), believes that "Genuine security requires not only the absence of war, but the elimination of unfair social relations, including unjust gender relations" (p. 1) This

means that one cannot speak of genuine security if there are still gaps that do not allow women to contribute with their knowledge and their actions in the decisive processes which the States maintain. While one continues to talk about including women in a subordinate form in areas of male control, it is not possible to speak of complete inclusion, but what is really happening is that women are given spaces for a temporary conformity.

To learn in depth what the contributions of international organizations have been in the achievement of rights, opportunities and benefits for women, it is important to take into account the following organizations that have formed commissions or councils dedicated especially to these and have been influential in the actions of the States.

1.1 The United Nations Organization and Women

The United Nations Organization (UN) was officially founded on 24 October 1945 following the ratification of 51 member states that signed in favor of the Charter of the United Nations. There are currently 193 State members of this organization, which are represented through their heads of State in the General Assembly. At that time, only 30 members recognized the women's right to vote and also allowed women to be hired in public offices (UNIC, 2007).

As the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations mentions, from the beginning they considered equality of rights between men and women. In spite of this, it has been a long time to recognize that various social injustices have been based on gender discrimination. This is how the UN began to work for the benefit of women by developing research into the conditions in which they live around the world. Thus, it codified a series of laws that allowed women to escape invisibility and to have their rights recognized by more and more States (UN, 2016).

However, this organization realized that creating legal norms was not the only way to promote equal rights. That is why they wanted to go further by developing projects through plans that would allow women to be included in the different processes of the States. The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women was created in 1946 with the aim of promoting women's rights and gender equality in politics, economics

and in the social sphere. Later, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was adopted in 1967, and in 1975 the International Year of Women was established, where the first world conference with its headquarters in Mexico began (UN Women, 2016).

The first conference aimed at eliminating gender discrimination by recognizing that men and women mean equality and that their rights, opportunities and responsibilities should be equal. It also establishes that it is the responsibility of States to create the necessary facilities to enable women to integrate in an equal manner in society. It was also included that the participation of women is very important for society and therefore needs access to education, so that it can contribute to world development and peace (UN, 1975). Subsequently, three more conferences were held to enhance the participation of women.

The next conference was held in Copenhagen in the year 1980, which dealt with more specific topics thanks to the first conference. Not only were equal rights between men and women emphasized, but the exercise of these rights and the access to justly paid employment, the integration of women in education programs offered by States and health. However, it also faced problems because of the lack of participation of men in this equality project, the lack of funding from the States, and something that was evident, the lack of participation of women in positions where decisions were constantly made (Coordinator-Gender Theme Unit, 2016)

The third conference was held in Nairobi in 1985 bolstering change in the perspective of societies to account for the need of women's participation in society and how they can contribute to generate well-being. Finally, the fourth conference held in Beijing in 1995 had a greater impact because of the participation of more than 30,000 people and also because it was not just talking about the equality of women and men, but it also began to socialize the concept of gender. In addition, people could already speak of feminism on a world scale. Within this conference, there was a greater interest and depth in addressing women's issues, and not like in the previous conferences which struggled so much to achieve results and failed to complete all that was proposed (UN Women, 1995)

However, Beijing allowed the adoption of a statement establishing points that are of important analysis. The term woman was no longer used to speak in general, but the diversity between them was already recognized. It is necessary to take into account that although biologically women are equal but at the same time they are different. This difference is due to the environment in which they were raised, by their culture, their beliefs, their roots and a series of variables that can influence their behavior and the perspective that each has of the world.

It is therefore important to recognize this diversity because not every woman in the world lives day by day under the same conditions. That is why it is necessary to regulate or to apply policies according to the understanding of the environment in which they live and taking into account the needs and demands of each group. That is one of the subjects in which international organizations fail to apply a single policy for all human beings, it is one of the causes for conferences, declarations and documents not to obtain the expected results because societies are not reflected or represented before the impositions that the system performs. Thus, policies are mostly imposed according to the needs of developed countries and for the rest of the most vulnerable countries, the only thing left to do is to adapt to these policies even if their priority needs are not met.

Another point discussed, is the visibility of feminist movements in which, over time, more women have been added in order to fight for their rights and get a voice in the environment in which they live. The Beijing Declaration of 1995, thus, encourages States to allow the participation of women of equal status as men in all spheres of society; and to ensure that when it comes to the rights of women and girls, all the necessary instruments are used to enhance equality, development and peace, which are the objectives on which this organization is based.

The United Nations also implemented a Platform for Action to create a program to help implement the necessary conditions for women to become more integrated into society. This platform is also born with the desire to hasten the achievement of the objectives of the various global women's conferences and to remove obstacles to women's participation in the public and private sectors by calling once again the States to unlock these obstacles and to facilitate the full participation of women in decision-

making processes in economic, social, cultural and political matters (UN Women, 1995)

The Platform for Action covers 12 areas of special concern that continue to be as relevant today as 20 years ago: poverty, education and training, health, violence against women, armed conflicts, the economy, the exercise of power and decision-making, the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment, and the girl. (UN Women, 1995, p. 9)

Although the creation of these action plans and the call for the conferences are means to be able, in one way or another, to influence the achievement of a fairer picture for women and contribute to the achievement of their rights, this has also been an object of analysis. The problem of declarations in a certain part may encourage States to better manage their public policies; yet, it still falls into the absence of binding agreements by States to comply with the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality. Organizations can carry out as many conferences, declarations and agreements as they wish, but if a binding legal instrument is not available, all efforts will be a waste of time because a legal vacuum would remain in the accountability of States with respect to the violation women's rights.

This is extremely important and it is criticized by UN members and other organizations because if recommendations are only made and structured goals are not set, as well as specific and binding instruments, the States will take this as advice and not as a policy or law that must be respected. We must remember that women's rights are human rights and these are higher standards within the domestic legal system. For this reason, women's rights violation is equal to the violation of human rights.

Moving forward with the historical events that the UN has done in favor of women; after the Beijing Conference, the commissions for the promotion, prevention and protection of women's rights began to take a new path by establishing the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. After a few years, in 2011, "The Division for the Advancement of Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser

on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Development Found of the United Nations for Women "(UN Women, 2016, p. 2) formed what is now UN Women known by its name as the Secretary of the Commission on the Status of Women.

UN Women was born with the objective of providing direct support to intergovernmental entities in the creation of international policies and norms. It also favors the States by providing them with support and assistance in the integration and implementation different standards that are planned to achieve the objectives that have been reflected in the conferences, especially in the Beijing Conference and the Action Plan that continues in force and every 5 years it carries out a review and analysis about the progress that have been made by different agencies in order to achieve the goals. Therefore, UN Women not only provides technical support to States, but it also provides financial support for activities that are supported by reports and that benefit alliances with both public and private sectors (UN Women, 2016).

Annually UN Women presents its accountability and for the year 2015-2016 is working on an agenda with objectives based on gender equality by the year 2030. UN Women is a means of support before the constitutions, laws and policies that promote the participatory leadership of women. Only in 2015, "eight gender-sensitive constitutional reforms were carried out and 32 new laws were adopted and fifteen new parliamentary committees for gender equality were created in countries where UN Women work" (UN Women, 2016, p. 9).

Similarly, they encourage the elections of the States should be administered equally with respect to the gender and thus to avoid the electoral violence. Thereby, this organization encourages women to participate in spaces where they hold positions in their society and open the path to other women who are often not heard because they belong to minority groups. UN Women in figures demonstrates that "31 countries have increased the budget allocation for commitments with gender equality. Almost 15,000 civil servants were trained in gender mainstreaming and in gender issues" (UN Women, 2016, p. 29)

In spite of all that the United Nations has tried to achieve, this has been seen as insufficient by feminist groups. UN Women works under a network of feminist, women's or mixed non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This organization called

for them to approach the governments on duty to establish a single report on the current situation of women and recommendations issued by the Organization. And because of this, the actions that this body has taken, they have been criticized for being inclusive but arbitrarily (Falquet, 2003).

By this, I mean that NGOs were indirectly losing their autonomy as a feminist movement against the actions taken by the States to which they belonged. The UN specifically settled how information should be presented and what data needed to be gathered, generating consistent reports in all States. And the consequence of this type of diagnosis and reports made local work difficult because the situations in which women live are different and the same recommendations cannot be taken to encompass all. It is here, where generalizations are formed which does not allow the provisions to adapt with greater interest for women and men.

Likewise, international funding to eliminate existing gaps in gender cases has created a dispute between the international agencies in order to access it. As a result, there are non-governmental organizations which have easier access this type of funding because the only ones that access this fund are those who have the capacity, with professionals and those who have the greatest results within the States. This has influenced in a negative way that women and men who were part of these feminist movements could no longer enter voluntarily but under the election of those who lead the movements (Falquet, 2003).

Feminists like Margarita Pisano, cited by Falquet (2003), believe that it is necessary to stop financially depending on private entities or cooperation agencies; since the moment the money arrives through local governments, they try to keep organizations under the same orientations.

1.2. Inter-American Commission of Women

In Latin America, following the constant struggle for democracy and governments that were not inclined to support women's participation, feminist efforts were adding up and forcing their governments to implement equal rights. The educational field was one of the areas struggling for equality. Women worked as teachers by contributing

with their work and ideas through publications that encouraged society to recognize women's rights and even more so, the feminist movements protesting against gender discrimination. The teachers formed the first feminist rallies and fought against the internal legal order of their States for the non-consideration of women's rights and the limited access to political, economic and social affairs, but especially the limited access to education (OAS, 2016).

The groups that were getting organized, realized that if they managed to have an international impact, they would make current governments to do something in favor of women's rights since they saw that this was not only the problem of certain States but of all of them. Because of the fighting spirit of school teachers who were the core of the first feminist groups in Latin America, they achieved education to be primary and secondary; this was not about conformity but equality. For this reason, they wanted to be part of the conferences that dealt with subjects of national interest. As they were prevented from being part of the Second Pan American Scientific Conference held in Washington DC in 1915, this led to the creation of a Pan American Women's Conference which resulted in the idea of creating a Pan American Union of Women (OAS, 2016).

In addition, an International Feminist Congress was convened in Buenos Aires in 1910, which presented an interesting program on equal education, women's vote and a social legal configuration in legislation to support and assist women who were working. The international conferences continued with the protocol but in 1923, in Chile, at the Fifth American Conference, the resolution which encouraged the formation of women's delegations to participate more in future conferences dealing specifically with the eradication of Constitutional discrimination against women was approved. Since then, feminist ideas have taken part on the following conferences (OAS, 2016).

Thus, in 1928, the concentration of women from the American States met in Havana to take advantage of the Sixth International Conference of American States, but the representatives of the nations, who were all male, did not allow the discussion of the Treaty of Equal Rights. Feminists did not stand back and this prompted them to protest until they officially transmitted their opinion and made their treaty public for the first

time. Although this was not ratified, the creation of the Inter-American Commission of Women known by its acronym as CIM was achieved (OAS, 2016).

The creation of the CIM was the work of the feminist movement (...) Doris Stevens, the first president of the CIM, and many other feminist leaders frequently evoked the concept of Pan Americanism. During her speech at the 1928 conference, Stevens stressed the need for action through the Pan American conference, not for each country, but to obtain equal rights in all American republics. (OAS, 2016, p. 3)

It is necessary to mention that the actions that this Commission has taken are worthy of recognition. The first leaders of the organization presented a detailed study of the diverse conditions of women in the Americas. Each nation was therefore asked to examine its constitutions and legal systems by analyzing the integration of women in these instruments. Therefore, for the Seventh Conference, it was a great achievement that the delegations were integrated by women. It was also where they succeeded, since after the analysis of 21 American republics a document was presented for each of them, explaining and showing the legal status of women within each State. Hence, this study was one of the great advances that women have had in America. The Commission carried out a series of international treaties that would allow equal rights for women (OAS, 2016).

However, only the Convention on the Nationality of Women was accepted. This Convention recognized that at the time of marriage with another individual of a different nationality, she may acquire his nationality. It should be mentioned that this was the first international treaty with regard to the rights of women. And also, that Ecuador was one of the countries that signed the Treaty on Equal Rights for Women, altogether with Paraguay, Uruguay and Cuba, but this was not adopted because the other states did not yet recognize equality. "The Commission increased its members and became the representative symbol of several feminist organizations in America, which supported this struggle, providing a forum through which women in America could communicate with each other in their struggle for legal equality "(OAS, 2016, p. 4)

Here are several key points of analysis. First, the Organization of American States was the pioneer constituting a Women's Commission, which is a reflection of the broad feminist struggle who have concentrated their demands and have come together to realize that not only in their State of origin inequality against women happened. Second, feminist movements had to protest again and again until they were given at least a few minutes to speak in front of the delegations, not counting the times they were rejected, and there was no female representative among the States. Third, feminism did not only fight for feminists but for all women who exist and live in the international community. Fourth, this Organization set an example for the League of Nations, currently known as the United Nations Organization, to realize that the abuse of women's human rights was imminent and that something had to be done about it. Finally, that Ecuador from an early moment was ready to allow a better legal status for women in its instruments.

Among the objectives presented by the Inter-American Commission of Women, the achievement of women's vote was one of the main ones. With regard to member countries, Ecuador was the third country to grant women the right to vote in 1929. The first country to top the list was Canada in 1918, followed by the United States in 1920. Although each member state allowed women the right to vote and the participation of women in public office, each occurred in different dates due to political diversity (OAS, 2016)

Another goal for feminists was the elimination of the gap between women and education. Therefore, it was necessary for women to have access to any level of education so that their education provides contributions that benefit society. On the other hand, it was extremely important to recognize fair wages and acceptable working conditions. This needed a social legislation that would allow laboring under fair conditions, since at that time the long working days were not recognized with the same salary as was guaranteed to men. The OAS and the Commission trained women in organizational and cooperative training courses, as well as funding programs and projects in which both urban and rural women participated in order to obtain a fair payment and to improve the condition in which they lived (OAS, 2016.)

The Regional Plan of Action for the Decade for Women in the Americas (1976-1985), adopted by the CIM in 1976, anticipated the full and equal participation of women in the socio-economic life of the OAS member states, while improving their conditions and giving them greater equality, expanding women's access to technical training, rural credit and agricultural property, and concentrating on rural and marginal urban populations. (OAS, 2016, p. 6)

This quote refers to the problem that some international organizations have when it comes to acting on behalf of women since being agencies that manage a large number of members, they often fall into the error of applying a single policy for the entire region without taking into account that the culture, beliefs or experiences of each of these societies are different. Hence, by allowing each of the delegations representing their States to analyze the current situation in which their inhabitants live, it is essential for each State, through the support of the organizations, to create legal instruments to benefit women by providing them equality according to their condition. By this I mean to eliminate the existing gaps between urban and rural and to consider and analyze that within the same State a richness of cultural diversity exists. This would take more time and work, but the results would be much more visible and one could speak of a total incorporation of women into the international community.

The Commission has held Summits of the Americas in Miami, Ottawa, Santiago de Chile, among others, which have succeeded in creating plans of action for the development of women in society in political, economic and social spheres such as the ratification of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women. These programs have been properly monitored to see if States are complying with that agreed at the Summits. Likewise, the Heads of State have recognized that providing equality to both men and women by conserving human rights (OAS, 2016).

Also, the year 2000 was important for the Inter-American Commission of Women, who in coordination with the OAS General Assembly, succeeded in bringing together 33 countries in certain cases represented by female Ministers, who met to discuss the "situation of Women in America and Strengthening and Modernization of the Inter-

American Commission of Women "(OAS, 2016, p. 8). This opened a path to the adoption of the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality, which the CIM has applied to this day.

Currently, the Inter-American Commission of Women is integrated by 34 delegates who are part of each of the member states. They meet every two years in the Assembly of Delegates and their functions are to approve programs or work projects. They are based on legal instruments such as the Statutes of the Inter-American Commission of Women, the Rules of Procedure of the CIM, the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM and the Agreement between the CIM and the Organization of American States. Its functions as a Commission is to "support the efforts of Member States to promote women's access to, participation, representation, leadership and full and equal incidence in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural "(OAS, 2016, p. 2).

It is important for all women, whether or not they are part of feminist movements, groups or organizations that give importance to human rights that the respect for these allows the guarantee of the necessary conditions to be able to be part of the social, political and economic processes. It is therefore a constant struggle for all, to take this responsibility to public entities and above all to the State who through the law can take the first step so that society can transform its thinking in favor of equal opportunities between men and women.

For feminism and women's movements in defense of human rights, civil, political, economic, social, cultural, sexual and reproductive rights have been recognized as the result of broad national and transnational movements; this struggle would lose its meaning if the conditions of possibility by which those rights can be put into practice are not assured. (Inter-American Commission of Women, 2013, p. 34)

1.3. Other Committees

1.3.1. The European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Union creates this institute in order to support the programs, plans and processes that allow gender equality. This body operates under the policies of the European Union but includes a gender perspective within these policies. In addition, it focuses on the constant fight against discrimination based on sex. Being an autonomous body who establishes its rules and objectives is the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. That is why the objectives defined for the years 2016 to 2018 are: First, to carry out an adequate investigation that can result in relevant data on the current situation regarding gender equality. Thus, the politicians who are in charge of making decisions, after being informed of this research, can create laws that allow equality. (EIGE, 2016)

Another goal of the Institute is that through the research it offers, it is possible to improve the living conditions of both women and men by providing innovative programs that include society and can create awareness in Europe that it is necessary to support equality of rights. Likewise, administrative and financial standards are placed in order to improve the needs of the people who come to the European Institute of Gender Equality. In the period from 2016 to 2018, it is planned to continue with five specific programs that characterize this institute, The Gender Equality Index, the mainstream Online Gender support platform, the Beijing Progress Reports and finally the Gender Statistical Database (EIGE, 2016).

It is important to mention that the mainstream gender approach in Spanish known as the “transversality” of the gender perspective became the official policy of the European Union with the aim of overcoming gender-based social discrimination and promoting equality. The mainstream works to analyze the gender situation in the countries and this allows the implementation of public policies to correct the inequalities that exist in institutions or in society itself by creating profiles, distributing responsibilities and motivating society to include gender in their processes (Rigat, 2008).

On the other hand, a widely-used indicator is the Gender Equality Index created by the Institute, which was developed so that the Member States of the European Union observe and act through the results of the latter, measuring on a series of variables that produce as a quantitative result a percentage within the limits: 1 for gender inequality and 100 for complete gender equality. As an example of this index the European Union in the years 2013 to 2015 had an index of 51% to 52.9% which indicates that the work done by each of the Member States adds this percentage that shows that the European Union is half way to a satisfactory gender equality (EIGE, 2015).

States, through this system, monitor and evaluate the progress of policies, activities, programs and plans they carry out in the political, economic and social spheres. The index uses two dimensions "to provide detailed data, the index is subdivided into six main dimensions: employment, money, knowledge, time, power, health, to which two satellite dimensions are added (intersection of inequalities and violence)" (European Parliament on Gender Equality, 2013, p. 15).

When observing the final result, the same index provides recommendations in the areas that still need to work. For instance, in the case of Europe in 2013 if the index framework 51% the recommendations offered by the index is to improve unpaid activities such as home care, where tasks are proportional between men and women or on the other hand, to encourage women to participate in the labor market, creating jobs that guarantee fair remuneration (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013).

Regarding gender-based violence against women, the index reported that in 2015 countries with high rates of gender-based violence were reduced by the fact that training and talks by institutions and policies taken by the European Union have served to make women who suffer from this abuse to report their cases and are less tolerable in this type of action. On the other hand, EIGE also works with the UN through the Beijing Platform, offering data on Member States to analyze which policies are appropriate to implement in each State. Hence, the European Union has allowed the development of other indicators that include women on issues such as the environment, participation in the media and new technologies. Every year, new indicators have been developed and each Member State implements programs that provide help and allow an overview of the reality in which women live.

The Estonian Human Rights Center has developed the Equal Treatment Network project for the period 2012-2015, which aims to promote equal treatment and improve protection against discrimination through networking and cooperation between civil society organizations and strategic advocacy activities. The Danish Institute for Human Rights published a new status report, which aims to set out the key human rights issues in Denmark. The themes prioritized in this report for 2013 focus on gender equality in Denmark.

Likewise, the Department of Equal Treatment of this Institute is working on the development of methods for the promotion of equal treatment and non-discrimination; Some of the toolkits developed in this area are the “Diversity Wheel, The Diversity Lab for the private sector, and The Equality Lab for municipalities” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015, p. 3)

Several organizations have joined forces to ensure respect for human rights and gender equality with respect to women. The European Union and the European Institute for Gender Equality have collaborated by being a quantitative platform for the States of the International Community to be able to improve their legal instruments, policies and plans, in order to exceed the standards set each year. If this type of tools is used efficiently the achievement of the goals embodied in society will be visualized little by little.

2. Non-governmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations play a key role when government or intergovernmental organizations deal with female cases. A series of events and programs are grouped in the agenda of several State institutions. Far-reaching projects need the help of these non-governmental organizations that are born with the goal of supporting in a more efficient and specialized way, from all corners of the world, the issues that involve women. Many of them work under networks which they are members and allow to concentrate the necessary information so that governmental

organizations that have the direct financing of the State can take action with the policies or programs that help women of the entire International Community.

On the other hand, governmental organizations have been a focus of criticism by some feminist groups because, being financed by the States, many of these organizations do not use their resources efficiently; therefore, it falls into a vicious cycle, where the plans, projects or programs are nothing more than papers since they do not have the correct money management and do not become viable. According to Maria Schumacher and Elizabeth Vargas, "Civil society organizations appeared as an interesting alternative. By presenting a clearer action profile and showing themselves more viable to establish more defined partnerships, NGOs present themselves as an effective mechanism for the implementation of public policies, whether they are progressive or non-progressive "(Alvarez, 1997, p. 147)

Several critics say that feminist NGOs often do the work that state entities should do. But seeing little involvement from the State does not give any choice to these organizations than to help in any possible way to eliminate the unjust conditions in which women still live. As mentioned before, the Beijing Conference developed by the United Nations has been the platform of debate for non-governmental organizations along with State entities. These reactivations of the Beijing Conference have succeeded by developing a series of networks among NGOs that involve the participation of feminist movements through them.

It is here that a non-governmental organization is distinguished from a Feminist Movement. In the first case, an NGO has trained and professional staff who are paid and in some cases, and in others, there are a number of volunteers. This organization is funded by donations made by individuals, private foundations or multilateral organizations. They contribute to society through projects or advice to the movements, in this case women, to apply the programs in a direct and efficient way (Alvarez, 1997)

On the other hand, women's movements are groups of women who are united by a similar thought as it is feminism. Members meet voluntarily, meaning there is no salary for being part of the movement. They have a largely informal organizational structure

and have a smaller budget, which allows actions or goals to be carried out (Alvarez, 1997.)

The Beijing process has shown that the increasingly formalized links between Latin American feminists working in NGOs and those operating within political domains, parties, states, institutions and multilateral organizations dominated by men have increased significantly, in recent years, the power of influence of the promoters of feminist rights. (Alvarez 1997 p. 154)

The involvement of non-governmental organizations in the feminist field has been seen as a clear path for feminist activists to raise their voices in international spaces where policies, laws, actions are all discussed with the aim of transforming inequality and raising awareness to the society of cultural thought that needs to be transformed. The analysis and criticism given to these types of events is that at the moment of getting involved with the State Organisms, they may be silencing their voices and losing the activist base that many women have to claim what is theirs and end up doing what those elite groups plan to have more funding.

In spite of the risk involved, it is important to recognize how these organizations have been making advances and international spaces that have benefited women both in the political sphere and in the rights that have been obtained by constant struggle of the feminist movements. In addition, a number of cultural, scientific, political and other contributions have been made available through the feminine gender, which has served as an instrument to improve the current conditions.

2.1 Women in Equality

It is a non-governmental, non-profit organization. It was founded in Spain and it has consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Its foundation was in 1992 with the name of National Federation of Associations of Women for Democracy; yet, in 2007 it was denominated as the National Confederation of Women in Equality. This NGO has more than 200 associations that coordinate along with the Confederation (Women in Equality, 2016).

This organization works hand in hand with the European Union of Women as it is part of it. Therefore, it contributes with its programs and investigations promoting to create European interest in the women affairs. It also has a strong connection with the United Nations, enabling the consultative body within the Economic and Social Council to assess, processes and progress on gender equality. Therefore, its work is reflected in the promotion of women's rights in political, economic, social and educational fields. "In 2008 we were classified as BEST in Best Practices in the VII United Nations International Prize (Dubai 2008)" (Women in Equality, 2016, p. 1).

There are more than 40,000 activists working to achieve the elimination of violence against women and to raise awareness in society, providing support to women in shelters. Also, they are responsible for training and promoting women's rights, so they know the instruments and resources they can access. Women in Equality offers several resources so that women can report any type of discrimination in the labor, educational, social and wage aspects. This organization allows the labor and social integration of immigrant and young women who, because of their age or circumstances, who are considered as a difficulty, cannot access a job with fair remuneration (Women in Equality, 2016).

With regard to international cooperation, Women in Equality along with the collaboration of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Fenosa Union has built a Vocational Training School in the Dominican Republic so that the young people with limited resources can access education and improve their quality of life in the area of Santiago de Caballeros. The studies carried out by the organization later showed that 80% of the students managed to get a job, and even some created their own business which is a good thing for the organization that is not only working for women but also for the benefit of society (Women in Equality, 2016).

The assistance provided as a non-governmental organization has been evident after being part of the research carried out in Spain about Gender Equality. Research on gender violence and the creation of manuals on how to prevent female genital mutilation, workplace harassment, gender-based violence towards migrants and maternity discrimination has led to Women in Equality being awarded and recognized with several awards and recognitions around the world (Women in Equality, 2016).

2.2 Women's Learning Partnership for Right's Development and Peace

The Women's Learning Partnership for Right's Development and Peace, better known by its acronym WLP, is a non-governmental, non-profit organization. It was founded due to the existing needs for a group of activist NGOs within the Middle East Region and the North part of the African continent as a result of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995. It is important to recall that the Beijing Conference was a platform that concentrated a large number of NGOs and encouraged them to contribute to the development of women (WLP, 2016).

Its objective is to raise awareness and mobilize international support so that women's rights, which are fundamental human rights, can be vindicated in the southern hemisphere, especially in Muslim society. Therefore, they support the cause of defense of the rights through the promotion and collaboration with the network of partner organizations to promote a legislative transformation of the countries. They remain in constant struggle to demand equality of citizenship for Arab women, eliminating Iran's reservations to the Convention. They also constantly publish easily accessible documents to encourage family equality, especially in Muslim societies. And it issues alerts to the community in order to support the campaigns or movements that are carried out (WLP, 2016).

WLP promotes the participation of women in public decision-making through networks, curricula and training. "The struggle for the rights of women is often seen as a struggle between tradition and modernity, where tradition and cultural practices can subject women to the private sphere" (WLP, 2016, p. 1). Therefore, this organization considers that human rights are for everyone regardless of their culture, beliefs or class, and struggle for the visibility of women who are still under regimes that do not allow them to give their opinion.

They have won awards such as Charity Navigator, which is a prize for financial health and their strategies for managing the projects they apply and the Guide Star award for the transparency and fidelity of the information it presents. The organization is distributed in 20 States some of which are: Palestine, India, Brazil, Nigeria, Pakistan

among others. Although the needs are many and the demands for help are urgent, the Association works together with other NGO networks to train and strive tirelessly to achieve the goal of democracy and equality of fundamental human rights (WLP, 2016).

3. Feminist Movements

A social movement, in this case transnational, is a set of activist actors who wish to generate social change, through actions and mobilizations where volunteers from various countries participate to influence the decision making of a social interest issue that involves and directly influences the movement in front of an entity (Sinkkink, 2006.) "Theorists of social movements argue that the capacity of movements to produce social change is linked to their disruptive or threatening capacity of the existing social order" (Tarrow, 1999, p. 67).

Therefore, it can be said that this is where this activist essence that drives people to take to the streets and protest for their ideals is kept. In doing so, this mobilization has an impact on people who, in my opinion, manage to achieve their objectives more effectively than other types of collective organizations because they may have a stronger identification and collective union.

However, to speak of an international social movement, it is necessary that the activists who are part of the movement can count on the capacity to mobilize its members and organize them. One of the examples that most resembles to an international movement are women's movements. On the other hand, a very interesting analysis is to examine how these kinds of movements emerge in society. It is said that social movements are primarily national and depending on the structure that governments have politically they will be able to influence different policies. So much, that if one speaks of a closed government structure, such as authoritarianism, social movements perceive this blockade by the national government, to listen to their needs, they resort to the formation of international social movements that have more strength and repercussion in the International Community where there is greater openness (Sinkkink, 2006).

However, there is also the argument of the boomerang model. This means that closed governments, meaning where there is repression, encourage activists to seek a plan

that is of international or regional influence (Sinkkink, 2006). With the aim of being able to open a space in their State that allows him to achieve social change. For instance, feminist movements have shown that their ideas and plans are mostly served in an international rather than a national space. In this way, these movements aim to reach the national government through international pressure.

Still, the question is, do feminist social movements actually strengthen or weaken on the international stage? According to Sidney Tarrow (1999), there are a number of variables and it is not easy to give an affirmative or negative answer. She believes that it depends a lot on the circumstances in which that movement is handled; for some allowed them to be strengthened and others were only an echo (p. 50) "As Bidasca maintains in her work on the Farming Women's Movement in Struggle, regional links with other groups have been an important resource for their expansion and strengthening" (Sinkkink, 2006, p.161).

Consequently, if national feminist movements see that they are not being helped by their governments, can join or get together with other international collectives to generate more social impact. But what guarantees that you get that opportunity to influence your government? Sidney Tarrow thinks that when there are international institutions, these become key points for the movements to access a pluralism of political opportunities and thus, one way or another, to be heard by the current governments (Tarrow, 1999)

"As Jelin argues, demands of women's and human rights movements were incorporated into the social and political agenda of society and the State, which is an indicator of their success" (Sinkkink, 2006, p. 25.) For a feminist social movement to achieve its objectives, it is essential that it analyze the behavior of international organizations and States, and according to that, build their strategy to generate impact. Feminist movements, even though they have been part of international networks or have declared themselves as transnational movements, avoiding State policies, meaning the closed system of opportunities, will always want to intervene nationally and influence public policies using transnational movements, organizations and States to pressure their state, through others. It must be remembered that the State is the center

of power and more if it is a hegemonic State that can directly influence another (Sinkkink, 2006).

Feminist movements along with non-governmental organizations may be the answer to search for solutions that the States often do not give. In addition to demanding international organizations the transparency and responsibility they have, through the ability to be spokesmen of the ideas and opinions of people who are directly affected. Non-profit movements and organizations, however, are often criticized for not being able to manage the asymmetries that exist within these organisms. The competition that exists in front of others and in some cases the poor coordination of activities and priorities among international feminist movements. For this reason, it is important to eliminate these asymmetries and thus, to demand the necessary democracy among international entities.

It is worth mentioning that the advances made by the feminist movements have been the result of the union of the efforts of women throughout the world by the constant fight in favor of respecting women's Human Rights. At the moment, the effort in the national and international agendas can be visualized; nevertheless, in spite of all the effort and the realized accomplishments women continue to be part of discrimination and their rights continue to be violated in many corners of the earth. But this has encouraged the condemnation of these kinds of actions that do not allow the progress of society and even more that the injustice in which women live day by day, to serve as a motor for the feminist movements to take concrete actions to demand their attention to global problems.

Thanks to the feminist movement, changes have been accomplished. Claiming in the streets, analyzing the reality of women, organizing points of meeting and reflection, advocating before the public authorities for a more just society for all; women have been occupying and transforming the spaces that we have been denied. In order to achieve progress towards real equality between men and women, it is essential to recognize the role of the feminist movement, its experience and its knowledge, to take its analyzes and integrate its proposals for social justice. (Mundubat, 2015, p. 7)

3.1 Mujeres Creando (Women Creating)

To exemplify one of the feminist social movements in Latin America let's name "Mujeres Creando". A feminist social movement, born in 1992 in Bolivia. The foundation of "Mujeres Creando" was the vision of María Galindo, Monica Mendoza and Julieta Paredes along with the rest of women within the group who wanted to create a critical and different movement since they took as a base all the experiences of women from the collective within organizations, political parties and experiences. In this way, "Mujeres Creando" is born with the purpose of constructing feminist thinking that goes beyond simple homogeneity and becomes heterogeneous. ("Mujeres Creando", 2014)

Why does this movement struggle for heterogeneity? Several groups, state and non-governmental organizations have always criticized that one of their problems is the homogeneity they manage within their discourses. This does not allow more people to identify with these groups and only some people benefit from the work being done. For this reason, "Mujeres Creando" firmly believes that heterogeneity is fundamental in a movement, because it is important to enrich discourse and actions based on different experiences of different social classes, thoughts, sexual choices, cultures and existential positions (Ortega, 2007)

All this for us enriched the discourse, allowing us to see, not as it was generated from international cooperation: 'women', in the abstract, isolated from a social context that surrounded it, but rather a complex subject, an integral part of the Society and that all the issues totally afflicted us, we are within society and all issues correspond to analyze them, question them, propose alternatives and work on those issues. (Ortega, 2007, p. 1)

Taking heterogeneity as a basis allows one to identify with others, and experiences are diverse, that the union of all those voices that are not considered as represented by a single belief can express in a critical way what really happens to them, that movements like these can pressure society to listen to what hundreds of women are currently

living, so that this society understands and not be blinded by a single reality told by elements alien to their roots.

On the other hand, “Mujeres Creando” works in favor of the relationship between public and private because it is important that the whole society is involved. "That is why the need to create in public and open spaces" (Ortega, 2007, p. 2) This movement considers that continuing the same conciliatory discourse will not bring about changes, so what stands out to this movement is social provocation and rebellion to capture the attention of people and that this makes them question about harsh reality.

In addition, "Mujeres Creando" uses public spaces to create art and awareness through graffiti that demonstrate political action in the street. One of these was presented by the anniversary of Pablo Neruda and said: "Woman I do not like you when you shut up" (Ortega, 2007, p. 3). Her graffiti attracts a lot of attention, some are strictly feminist and others add the political and questioning to her sentences.

Also through the television and radio programs, they call the attention of women who identify with the experiences of others and where it has been shown that thanks to this, women in Bolivia increasingly join in this type of public protest demanding the practice of their rights and promoting social change. For “Mujeres Creando” something very enriching is the recognition of this movement by society, often through constructive criticism, negative or positive. “Mujeres Creando” has managed to maintain that presence in society until today (Ortega, 2007).

Social movements are the fundamental and necessary basis for social change, because it is here that activism is at its highest level of expression. For feminism, it is important to create awareness through public spaces because they cause society to question their actions and develop critical thinking about the actions of the rulers and also within the laws that are approved in the legal systems of their States. They make the society investigate and do not settle for false speeches, they also educate and encourage the new generations to be part of this change.

An important characteristic of the development of social movements in Bolivia was that the majority of representatives who took power and were able to present their

political projects were men, at which time women's participation was only to be handpicked or to occupy a position that was not of great relevance. "For instance, participation within elections, there are women who have no conscience or commitment to women themselves (...) for us, their participation is a biological quota only and is not an ideological and political participation" (Ortega, 2007, p. 4). At that time, although there were social movements but none of them had the will to be part of politics and represent both men and women. But "Mujeres Creando" believes that women can do politics and that it is not necessary to be under the ideas of another representative because women have the capacity to present their own political projects and bring them into practice (Ortega, 2007).

Also, something that has undoubtedly called my attention and it is important to highlight within this type of social movements are the unusual partnerships as Julieta Ojeda calls one of the founders of "Mujeres Creando". The aim of this feminist movement is not only to grow and make itself known but to generate an impact through the creation of ties between the diverse social sectors. For example, among women who have engaged in prostitution, women who work at home, women with different visions and ideals. All of them are part of a repressed society that are poorly viewed by stereotypes or false expectations, but if we understood as people the history of each of these women we would surely change that thought full of prejudice (Ortega, 2007).

That is what "Mujeres Creando" wants, to unite the extremes, to be a means for the communication of all these sectors to eliminate the ownership of denigrating thought that is created between the same women although all are different, in culture, in thoughts, ideals, political preferences among other characteristics. This generates a heterogeneity that is recognized and appreciated by feminism, but to be able to work and to impel all sectors is necessary to understand from a vision without discrimination, nor postures imposed by androcentrism. Only in this way will the social change work.

Among the many jobs and actions created by "Mujeres Creando", there is the generation of employment within the facilities that have a library, dining rooms, audiovisual rooms where women who come there for different situations find a space to live the day to day through the work they can perform within. They also offer a legal

office for all types of cases, especially when it comes to domestic violence, divorce, family holding, among others (Ortega, 2007.) Also, “Mujeres Creando” is a means to make the actions effective and that these are reflected in an immediate action. This movement is a great example of innate activist struggle for all of their work in public spaces, for their work within the headquarters of “Mujeres Creando” and for the immediate and direct help they offer.

4. Important Feminist Movements in Latin America

Feminist movements in Latin America have been developing since the 1970s but at different times for each of the States. Until in the 1980s and 1990s they came to influence all the countries of the region (Vargas, 2002.) Several historians consider that feminism in Latin America was constituted in a more globalized form since the second wave. Since at that time, each state lived different political processes, which is why feminism appeared earlier in some countries first than in others (Canavae, 2009).

As it is known the feminist movements were born in Europe and North America and these ideas have transcended and migrated to Latin America and the Caribbean; for this reason, they have had a great impact in the ideals of the region. It is pertinent to mention that there are great differences between feminism imposed by the North and Latin American feminism. In Latin America, women who most demanded their rights were students, workers, employees driven by a radical thought of change in social relations, but they were not seen as the bourgeois women who existed in Europe defending the feminist movement. In addition, repressive regimes were more evident in Latin America than in northern countries (Canavae, 2009).

At that time, countries such as Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Brazil had military regimes; hence, feminist thinking was strongly linked to politics like other revolutionary movements. Likewise, the rest of the continent maintained restricted democracies and governments based on authoritarianism. Thus, feminists not only demanded patriarchy but also the oppression, social, economic and political repression that existed. As Saporta mentioned cited by Canavae (2009), "Feminists in military-ruled countries exposed the patriarchal foundations of State repression, militarism, and

institutionalized violence, a position gradually adopted by Latin American feminists" (p. 6)

Within the differences that existed between the feminist currents of the north and those of the south it was evident that in Latin America a heterogeneity was recognized within women movements. Identities, proposals and ideas were built; that allowed society to question the State's actions regarding the subordination and exclusion of women from democratic processes and from the public and private spheres. The efforts of women located in urban and rural sectors became known in a number of public protests that often ended with violence. Being an activist of feminism at that time, was protesting the poor working conditions, unfair remuneration and discrimination for being indigenous, afro-descendants and worse for wanting to achieve equal rights.

Thus, feminism in Latin America initially unfolds with greater force in Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Argentina. Chile, Uruguay, as well as the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, especially the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico and, later, Cuba. Since the middle of the decade, it has begun to express itself in Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Costa Rica and, towards the end of the 1980s, it expands towards the other Central American countries. (Vargas, 2002, p. 2).

Although the feminist movement was gradually expanding in the region, violence increased. It is impossible to forget the repression and abuse that many women had to pass through such as political prisoners, activists or migrants who were attacked, sexually abused and tortured. Therefore, when talking about the autonomy of women's body, it is not only a question of decolonizing, but of denouncing those governments that do not even know what respect for human dignity and rights is (Canavae, 2009.)

There are several examples of struggle in Latin America, one of which was promoted by Julieta Kirkwood and Margarita Pisano, Chileans who echoed throughout the region with the phrase "Democracy in the country at home and in bed" (Canavae, 2009, p. 8). This leads many women to reflect on the power of their feminine identity, their body and sexuality. Equally, another example that without being feminists, groups of women fought against the visible repression of governments in turn. Mothers from

Argentina, Mexico, and El Salvador who claimed the disappearance of their children, students from the Normal Rural School of Ayotzinapa, shouted at the top of their voices, "Alive were they taken, alive we want them" (Canavae, 2009, p. 8). These are few of the many evidences and events that have occurred in Latin America because of oppression and corruption that have not allowed the practice of human rights, much less respect for them. That is why the feminist movement is one of the forerunners of democracy in the countries of the region that has fought tirelessly not only for feminists but for all repressed society.

On the other hand, Latin American feminists demanded radical social change not only in the relationships between social classes, but also in power relations, which make authoritarian policies that do not allow the differences between them to be balanced against each other. That is why the feminist struggle movements are stronger, revolutionary and protest against the demand for better living conditions of the social classes, education, respect for their sexuality and denouncing violations, abuses, forced disappearances and political repression.

The persistence of feminist currents in Latin America achieved the visibility and participation of women in the public domain. In addition, to generate even a new language to mention events that previously lacked meaning such as sexual violence or femicide among others. In such a way, feminism gradually politicized problems that were not part of the debate in society.

Women's groups have politicized and reinterpreted various needs, instituted new vocabularies and ways of expressing themselves, and thus have become "women" in a different sense, though not unquestioned or univocal. By speaking publicly of the unmentionable (...) Feminist women have become "women" in the sense of a discursively self-constituted political collectivity, although it is a very heterogeneous and fractured collectivity. (Fraser, 1991, p. 21).

The scenario, with time, has changed; the democracy was constituted and took force in the region. The development of feminism was transformed and influenced by globalization. One of the areas of great importance was the United Nations, after the

struggle to place the issue of women on the world agendas, more non-governmental organizations were created and social movements began to strengthen because they were not only exerting local pressure, but international as well. It is here that several of the feminist movements begin to institutionalize the people who worked within the non-governmental organizations were professionals who agreed to a remuneration for their work. The United Nations worked closely with these organizations and thus expanded their ideals internationally to the institutions that influenced them locally (Vargas, 2002).

Now, it is pertinent to mention that the feminist movement has found itself going through a questioning with regard to organized and autonomous feminists. Criticism of institutionalization shows that feminist thinking is in danger. First, because it is often an economic opportunism, instead of protesting for a cause and being a voluntary member for having an affinity of thoughts, it is now necessary to be a specialist to be part of institutions to achieve the goals imposed by other agencies. Second, the professionalization of some feminists has made women become specialists in women's public affairs (Gargallo, 2004). This is why they have become experts in establishing relationships with national and international organizations that continue to maintain the same system against which feminism is fighting. Likewise, as the movements are institutionalized, their radicalism and activism are being lost. That is the basis of this movement to achieve social, economic and political change around women.

Thus, institutions listen to the demands, translate them and dialogue with the agencies and they already think that listening and acting through one or another action are already including women and making them participate (Gargallo, 2004). Here is the same vicious circle of trying to momentarily offer or satisfy feminist demands to calm their voices and quench their true courage to demand what women really deserve. I am sure that the system does not like anybody to go beyond their limits and to try; it looks for the way to satisfy it so that it returns to resume its position and does not cause disturbances with respect to its power.

In recent years, feminism has been part of several scenarios, women today do not want to be equal to men, but to transform a society that has maintained different orders and limits for each of them. Feminism wants both men and women to coexist in this reality

by questioning and striving for the transformation of society. Where there is no separation between nature and society (Gargallo, 2004). Likewise, let us not be content with the same original discourse, let us understand the reality of plurality and recognize that the difference between cultures, ethnicities, political thoughts and ideals makes us richer to understand reality from different perspectives and not only from a position and the same discourse of the oppressive, racist, convenience and colonizer hierarchical model.

Finally, what would the autonomous feminist movements be without their activism that is the basis for generating awareness and questioning? What would women who do not feel identified by currents far from their reality be without their roots and history? What would those women who love freedom and are enriched in plurality be? What would the new generations of women be if they do not understand the history of their precursors who have struggled so much that today they have their own recognition of their pluralities and rights?

CHAPTER THREE

THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN ECUADOR: CURRENT SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

1. Brief History of Feminism in Ecuador

The role women have played in the history of Ecuador has not always been recognized despite their imminent participation in the construction and transformation of the country. Feminism has contributed to Ecuador's culture through the publication of books, magazines, and poems; it has also been very actively expressed through science, politics, economic initiatives, art and many other key social areas. The feminist movement has not only fought for the rights of women in Ecuadorian society but also for the recognition of the role of indigenous women in the independence movements and battles that did not identify themselves as feminist because of fears of social repression, "for example the recognition of the historical movements of Lorena Abimañay, Manuela Leon, Dolores Cacuangó, among others. In these historical movements the categories of diversity and equality, which form a key part of the current feminism in the country emerged" (Santillana and Aguinaga, 2012, p.1).

Ecuador is a diverse country, as recognized by the 2008 Constitution: "It is a constitutional State of rights and justice, social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, multinational and secular" (Constitutional Court, 2008, p 9). Ecuadorian women have started and fostered a diverse range of social movements. Strong and independent women were present in the time of Ecuadorian independence; Manuela Sáenz, Manuela Espejo, Manuela Cañizares among others, played key roles in emancipation. These women, who are now seen as icons, have encouraged modern feminist groups to continue to strengthen the position of women in Ecuadorian society.

In Ecuador, some feminist groups started to voice their opinion about the right to vote for women through magazines or newspapers. There were other feminist groups dedicated to charity, the teaching of women and also groups that fought to improve the

living conditions of women workers. Since the establishment of secular education, during the first quarter of the twentieth century, feminist teachers and professionals led groups that demanded the government for the education of women, access to political and social benefits.

Maria Angélica Idrobo, a teacher in the province of Imbabura, with Zoila Ugarte de Landívar, Victoria Vásquez Cuvi and Matilde Hidalgo de Procel, from different places and spaces carried out movements for the education of women and made proposals for their political participation. (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008, p. 312)

Feminist movements took different fundamental approaches, some were more attached to radical liberalism, while others were driven by socialist or religious beliefs. The twentieth century was full of written works with arguments for women's rights. These works were published in magazines such as "La Mujer (1905), La Ondina del Guayas (1907-1910), Flora (1918), Initiation (1934-1935), Alas (1934)" (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008, p. 312). Many of these feminist groups supported the development of political reforms for women workers, which is why several candidates for the presidency sought their support for political campaigns; for example, Jose Luis Tamayo who participated in the 1920 Ecuadorian presidency race for the Liberal Party. (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008).

The media broadcasted European and American feminist movements to the Ecuadorian people. Seeing foreign women being able to vote, motivated members of political movements in Ecuador to stand up and claim their right to vote. However, the Ecuadorian society was not only one who learned from these international news. There were feminists including, Zoila Ugarte de Landívar, Victoria Vásquez Cuvi, Zoila Rendón and Petronila Flores, who participated in international feminist conferences and forums (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008).

For example, Petronila Flores in 1924 participated, in representation of Ecuador, in the conference of the International League of Pacifist Women. Rosalinda remembers that in the late 1920s she took part in a women's meeting in Buenos Aires where the political rights of women were

discussed. Later, the aforementioned magazine *Nuevos Horizontes*, directed by Rosa Borja de Icaza and María Esther Martínez, had connections with the Union of American Women, created in New York in 1935, whose objectives postulated the struggle for the equality of women. (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008, p. 314)

This participation allowed Ecuador to be part of extensive political processes carried out by international organizations that demanded reports on the legal status of women. Ecuador's relation with the international community contributed favourable to recognition of women's right to vote. As mentioned in the second chapter, women's movements, when they did not see results locally, sought the support of entities in the international community, and thus, exerted pressure on the State to allow the development of policies within its legal system for the recognition of women's rights.

Throughout centuries, feminism has been viewed in different perspectives. For some Ecuadorian people in the twentieth century, feminism meant rebellion; a movement that incited women to leave their home or to diverge from their daily private activities. That is why prior to obtaining female suffrage, there was an interesting discussion among feminists such as Adelaida Velasco cited by Prieto and Goetschel (2008), who had close ties with the Catholic Church, where they considered that women could participate in social problems by creating more charitable and noble programs without having to intervene in popular political elections.

Likewise, Zoila Rendón quoted by Prieto and Goetschel (2008) she considered that if a woman is part of the corrupt and turbulent politics, her femininity could disappear. Therefore, she said that the woman does play a role in politics "but not in that policy that makes her ridiculous, which makes her semi man, wanting to confront the strong sex" (p. 316).

Victoria Vásconez Cuví, who was a teacher and supported political participation for women, thought that the woman's role in society was beyond the home, inside of a university, in the parliament or in everything that involves male participation. Vásconez cited by Prieto and Goetschel (2008) stated:

Women need the vote given by justice, because they obey the laws and suffer from their policies, because women and men share equal rights, because they pay the same economic taxes to society; in one word because women share all societal duties but lack all respective rights. (p. 317)

Feminist writers fought against a patriarchal system that still controlled society by trying to confuse feminist thinking about the woman's vote with the loss of femininity or the belief that feminism wanted to abandon values, virtues of the woman and to transform women into men. This discourse came from a patriarchal society that normalized the "domestic role" of women and it is interesting to mention that at this time there were already dissident voices who were not willing to settle for that role, critical voices that already questioned the thinking of their own time. But what they did not understand was that it was not want to transform women into men, but rather fighting in favour of justice because the woman is also a human being and must have rights and obligations. That is why society needs to leave behind the thought that has shown that people must pay more than they receive.

Feminism has always promoted social relations between men and women without excluding them. This is what Maria Angelica Idrovo, quoted by Prieto and Goetschel (2008), who gave a conference in favour of women's suffrage "what can be called misunderstood feminism ... Can not be considered as such the just and legitimate aspiration of women to want to extend their radius of action towards the social organization of their homeland ". (p. 317)

Consequently, after so many disputes of the members of the Council of State, some people were in favour of female suffrage and others against. According to Prieto and Goetschel, in 1987 and also in 1906 the provision that only men can exercise the right to vote was eliminated. In 1924, Matilde Hidalgo de Procel, who was a doctor registered in the canton of Machala, was able to vote in the elections, thus becoming the first Ecuadorian woman to exercise the right to vote (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008). This fact caused a great commotion and is one of the most important acts that Ecuador has had with respect to demanding the rights for women within its legal system. That is why the constitution had some changes like the words man, adult, child that are applied to all human beings without sex discrimination. In addition, it recognizes that

the woman can take care of the patrimonial conditions of the family as well as of its sons or daughters. (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008)

So, women can get professional degrees and put their knowledge into practice both as teachers, doctors, among other professions. This resolution triggered a series of criticisms, disagreements, and acceptances by Ecuadorian society but finally, the resolution was accepted in the case of certain media such as the newspapers *El Comercio*, *El Universo*, *El Telégrafo*, etc. The criticisms that were published in 1924 were of all types, some favoured that within so much corruption and violence it was necessary to have the feminine perspective to be able to give another direction to the state relations.

However, the reports mentioned that the woman was responsible for the care of the home, both the children and the husband. Also the reports expressed that contribution of women in politics would be insignificant, because they did not have the necessary knowledge. On the other hand, some men felt threatened because they did not know how the woman was going to act in their domain. There was no shortage of cartoonist jokes in newspapers, where they depicted a man taking over kitchen utensils and carrying his children while his wife was serving as president (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008).

It is clear that access to suffrage as a political right was a change so great for men and even more so for women because they could already choose or be elected to occupy different position in a society that did not recognize their rights. The struggle for access to voting is a sample of how the system and social actors, a beginning of the century a large group of the population including women were convinced that political participation was not a matter for them, who dared to question it understood that no patriarchal government was going to grant women benefits and that the only way was the action and construction of a new discourse that counteracted the power of the system that has influenced our minds to think and miss even our own ideas. This refers to the fact that we always consider a paternal figure who can be in front of us, representing us and emanating orders that will provide us security. But we do not consider ourselves as possible representatives or actors of change, we do not consider

ourselves outside the system but always protected under the interests of the most powerful.

That was the case for many women who did not believe in themselves, who criticized others for standing outside the institutions denouncing the cases that commonly all women lived at the time, such is the distrust in believing that we can not implant our ideas through the insecurity of not being accepted, for not breaking these social bonds and for maintaining a false status full of hypocrisy in front of our own needs. Perhaps many women were waiting for some to be encouraged to face the over control of men over women, perhaps some women who criticized feminism changed their minds and now they are part of feminist circles in favour of women's visibility.

Later, the constitutional debate was paralyzed by the Julian Revolution, but in 1928 a new Constitutional Assembly was established which “explicitly states that men and women, who are adults, who can read and write are citizens” (Prieto and Goetschel, 2008, p.310). In this way, it did not generate much controversy and also a better wording of the article was established, which provides that both men and women of legal age and also people who know read and write, they can exercise their right to vote. Over time, feminists within socialist and communist parties established their axes of struggle against the oppression of women by demanding from the State their social rights as fair and egalitarian remuneration for their work, social services, retirement and fervent support of Legislation in favour of abortion. (Rodas, 2002)

On the other hand, radical feminism was nourished by the Latin American feminist encounters and followed the processes of the untiring struggle for women's rights that took place both in the United States and in Europe. Its primary objective in Ecuador was the liberation of women and the attainment of their autonomy. However, there were many international feminist currents in the country, but not all were well received because women did not feel completely identified with certain needs or proposals. While Ecuadorian women coexisted under different conditions of life, for example indigenous, afro-descendants, all women of diversity sought and demanded recognition of their rights. (Rodas, 2002)

It is here that there is a contradiction of whether or not to be considered feminist by the feeling of not being represented in large part by existing exogenous currents. But even in Ecuador, there has been progress on the part of women recognizing themselves as feminists and others simply as women, where in 1980 they really constituted themselves as social movements with more force and feminism was certainly one of the main actors that played in favour of the country's return to democracy for all women.

The important thing is to know that there is no single theory for examining the situation of women and that adherence to one or the other current is a personal choice. We must also recognize that the approach to the different ideological aspects can significantly enrich the reflection and the transformative action of women in the world. (Rhodes, 2002, p.22)

2. Ecuador Returns to Democracy

In 1979, Ecuador was once again a democratic country after overcoming political instability that resulted from authoritarian governments and dictatorships. The democratic system would foster a broader and more receptive way of thinking even though democracy does not always guarantee full compliance of human rights. Ecuador returned to democracy, but it was still a challenge to eradicate corruption and the exploitation of the illegal resources of some individuals. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, human rights movements were the key to this democratic process; civil, political and social rights that favour women, indigenous, afro-descendants, the environment, among others, were topics that surge in popularity. (Chavez, 2011)

In 1980s, feminist theories had significant influence in women's movements. It was a historic moment for women since the formation of feminist groups promoted women's activism and allowed for an equality of rights (Chávez, 2011). The Ecuadorian feminist movement also had a radical tendency to voice opinions about the inequality of social classes, gender and ethnicity. There was an ideological influence from the United Nations, which was also introducing similar policies, requirements, and recommendations to developed agreements in favour of the rights of women and indigenous people. The UN hosted a series of conferences that facilitated cooperation

among States to recognize the role of women in society; forming institutional agreements with sovereigns that allowed them to cooperate with the purpose of developing laws and regulations that focused on equality (Santillana and Aguinaga, 2012)

Additionally, there were many national women's organizations developed in Ecuador that made stellar accomplishments for the feminist movement including the fight against violence of women on national and international scales. Thus, in 1995, the Law Against Women's Violence was approved, which over time has been modified to suit current social conditions of women and the family (Rodas, 2002).

According to Article 3 of the Law Against Gender Violence Towards Women; the law promotes and guarantees: 1. The right of women to live a life without violence; 2. Appropriate environment for sensitizing, preventing punishment and eradicating discrimination and violence against women in all its manifestations and spheres; 3. Access to justice for women victims of violence; 4. Comprehensive therapy for women victims of violence; 5. Comprehensive assistance, through specialized services in protection and care for women victims of violence; 6. The development of inter-institutional public policies on violence against women; And 7. The change in sociocultural patterns that promote and sustain gender inequality and unequal power relations over women, causing violence and discrimination. (National Assembly of the Republic of Ecuador, 2007, p.7)

This law was only a start for feminist movements since it would only be possible to guarantee women's equal participation in Ecuadorian society when violence was eradicated. This law is mostly responsible for protecting the physical and psychological integrity of the woman and her family. Through different conferences and organizations like the UN, governments like Ecuador have been pressured to support the rights of women in society and to enact laws that protect women's integrity in their political systems.

Feminist movements established an institutional and political trend during this time. Ecuadorian women obtained key positions within the State, nongovernmental organizations and other political roots that allowed them to work together for the improvement of their rights. Nowadays, it has been seen that the creation of laws against the violence of gender was an instrument that served for the feminist fight against all types of violence. For example, November 25 was declared the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, "women, men, indigenous people from the Amazon, white, mestizos, afro-Ecuadorian, national and foreign, of all ages, in Quito joined under the same voice "We Love Ourselves Alive, Not One More" to reject violence against women "(El Universo, 2016). Throughout the years, we have seen a greater participation of Ecuadorian society in issues related to women as evidenced in cities such as Quito, Cuenca, Guayaquil, where feminist movements similar magnitude to the ones seen in the rest of the world exist. This shows that the issue of women's rights is one to be noted and that every day more people are fighting to improve and create a more inclusive and diverse society; it is necessary to equally recognize the rights of women and men and to fight until current conditions improve.

Autonomous feminist groups maintained a different ideology from general feminist movements. For example, The Political Coordinator of Ecuadorian Women (CPME), created in 1995, was founded with the goal of providing access to power for women to transform society and is now considered one of the largest women's organization in Ecuador. This organization could also be seen as a political party for Ecuadorian women. Other feminist groups had negative connotations about CPME because it did not want to be recognized as a feminist; they felt dissatisfied with the term. That is why CPME recognized itself as a political entity and fought for feminism to be considered a personal decision of each woman (Rodas, 2002).

In response to the CPME organization, Feminists for Autonomy called Ecuadorian women consider the fact that personal beliefs could also be political "we call ourselves feminists without any prejudice, we are feminists as we return to principles such as freedom, sexual rights, (the movements make emphasis on reproductive rights); non-discrimination in your daily and concrete life, all of which are deeply political "(Rodas, 2002, p.23). Therefore, it is not possible to separate politics from the right to decide the fate of society by guaranteeing equality in rights to solve women's daily struggles.

Pain, suffering and inequality are drivers of feminist movements and the main reason why it is a necessity for governments to rectify politics and guarantee equal status for men and women in society.

At that time, there was no legislation to guarantee health, education, reproductive rights, among others. The political instability provoked a desire to organize in a more solid way. This was the case of the Organization of Indigenous Women in 1980, the creation of Secretary of Women of ECUARUNARI in 1983, Women of Working Class Sectors, among others (Chavez, 2011). Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), Plurinational Movement Pachakutik New Country and National Confederation of Rural, Indigenous and Black Organizations (FENOCIN) were also present for the struggle of gender equality. (Santillana and Aguinaga, 2012). All this was a constant struggle characterized by the ethnic movement that denounced the extractivist model that allowed the access of transnationals in areas where indigenous peoples coexisted. Indigenous organizations and indigenous women were tired of the pollution, diseases, abuses, environmental and ecological impact that the State admitted in order to organize their economy based on oil.

However, indigenous women worked from zero, not being represented by entities such as CONAIE and other entities established by the State to work on women's issues, where indigenous women's proposals were not visible. For this reason, they decided to organize themselves in a different and autonomous way, demanding training to create a critical awareness of the leadership that is being given to the people and to the political proposals of necessary implementation (Rodas, 2002).

In the interview with Dr. María Cecilia Alvarado Carrión Vice Prefect of the Province of Azuay she mentions that:

There is a discrimination bias that we believe that rural people are unable to create their own policies to defend their environment. But the urban people, in other words, us, we have no idea. I have had opportunities to live in indigenous communities, but I still continue to learn and reaffirm that even as Ecuador and Latin America we have not understood rurality to improve the living conditions of men and women, but especially of

women who are more linked to land and water. (Alvarado, personal communication, November 08, 2016)

The country can not only accept rules that benefit women and not others, Ecuador is not a homogenous country and therefore must develop and implement policies that include all this diversity.

Women's organizations were really diverse "according to the condition of social class, political-ideological stance and the purposes of their actions. Thus, it is evident that women from middle and upper socioeconomic strata are usually organized in terms of volunteers and actions towards the poorest "(Chavez, 2011, 55). Also, there were student, political, professional associations that were part of the feminist currents that reached great participation as leftist feminism and institutional feminism within the country (Santillana and Aguinaga, 2012).

In an interview with Magister Nidia Pesantez, representative of UN Women in Ecuador, she stated:

The institutionalization of feminism is one of the important lines for making equality possible between women and men. Because one thing is activism, demand, social pressure that we women can do and on the other side is the institutionalization that is the response that the State must give to these social pressures. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain organizations that are activists, interlocutors, finally, social movements for the enforceability of rights and the State would have to recognize those rights in the institutionalization of mechanisms and thinking. (Pesantez, personal communication, November 19, 2016)

Already in 1998, the result of the constant struggle of all these diverse organizations of women was demonstrated, since the political inclusion of the human rights of the women in the Constitution was imminent. A number of laws were approved in favour of women, such as the Law against Violence, the Labor Protection Act, the Free Maternity Law and the Quota Law (Santillana and Aguinaga, 2012).

In addition, the leaders of women's movements have also achieved inclusion in 90% of the points raised by women's organizations and the Consejo Nacional de Mujeres (CONAMU) in the Constitution. Other achievements include reforms on sexual harassment and rape introduced in the Penal Code, as well as reforms to the Health and Labor Code. (Rodas 2002, 27) Equally, the political participation was evident, women were part of the executive, legislative and judicial power and formed parties to occupy seats in the assembly through elections, which was one of the most important achievements for women, since this is part of the National Constituent Assembly. Also, the participation and help of the indigenous women's movements served as a great support for the current government to understand that women of different ethnicities, cultures, colour, and ideologies are a heterogeneity by which the mother of all the legal system that is the constitution, it can not be seen as a homogeneity that responds only to the rights and obligations of few. (Rodas, 2002)

Therefore, Ecuadorian feminism has been a tireless struggle to achieve basic needs such as education, health, just remuneration, among others. The countries of the region were highly impoverished in the social sphere, for which the feminist fronts contributed their efforts to demand the fairness of the governments in turn, because women had to have social, political and economic rights that allowed them to develop and continue to confront the ideologies of inequality implanted by an oppressive and discriminatory system, demonstrating the quality and efficiency they can bring in political participation not only to gain prestige but to demonstrate that their skills and intelligence can lead a country to prosperity through equal opportunities.

Nidia Pesantez, the representative of UN Women in Ecuador, says that the perspective of a gender approach comes to Ecuador in the 1980s but with more force in the 90s and that thanks to the International Organizations and the few women who lead feminism and represent it, people began to have a broad vision of reality.

In Latin America and Ecuador; first, arrives the method of study of the gender approach, then arrives the feminist thought. The first thing that was known in Latin America was the gender approach and how to analyse the reality of the relations between men and women. And then who investigate about this method, we found out that everything comes from feminist

thinking as a society. (Pesantez, personal communication, November 19, 2016)

On the other hand, in the late 1990s Ecuador had a strong economic crisis, with high political instability where democracy was only a theory without practice by the institutions. Thus, at the end of the decade, the financial system was paralysed, the Ecuadorian economy was transformed into dollarization, affecting middle and low-income families. This caused the migration of a significant number of the population to the countries of the north seeking better opportunities. Likewise, the crisis increased the vulnerability of institutionalized feminism in its programs and projects that were to be implemented. The instability ended up affecting Ecuadorian women differently.

3. Ecuador and Feminism between 2000 and 2008

The twenty first century marked the beginning of a movement that aimed to improve the living conditions of Ecuadorians, who through their demands, also wanted to recover political and economic stability in the country after the financial crisis and dollarization of the late 1990s. In 2007, this social movement allowed President Rafael Correa to call the Ecuadorian people to a referendum for the creation of a new Constitution, which would be developed in Montecristi through the support of social and gender movements. The new Constitution would include a series of constitutional rights and guarantees for both men and women; however, the right to abortion and homosexual marriage would not be guaranteed in the 2008 Constitution (Chavez, 2011). Feminist movements in early 2000s continued to have the same group of political representatives in the parliament and judicial systems. Unfortunately, these representatives had been serving for extended periods of time and did not really accomplish expected results.

Raquel Rodas (2007), a feminist historian, believes that women's movements were losing reach and mobilization, which are fundamental in a movement. Incumbent leaders were already occupying certain positions of power, yet there were no significant results to further the implementation of rights to attend women's needs. Therefore, it was necessary to include new methods and leaders to rejuvenate the

movement as it was losing its activism motives and lacked a strong representation in national political structures (Rodas, 2007).

Women's organizations eventually began to implement new outreach methods, taking strong interest on issues that had not previously been discussed, politically or socially, including sexual rights, homosexuality, and trafficking of women, through the use of young and strong women in the movements and the extension of the framework of constitutional rights (Chavez, 2011). The creation of different associations including the Association of Women Municipalists of Ecuador and the Association of Women of Rural Parish Boards of Ecuador, allowed the feminist movement to move forward in the development of public policies that addressed gender equality and other plans and projects that focused on women's wellbeing (Chavez, 2011). The explosive growth of feminist groups throughout all regions around Ecuador was evident. However, it was still not possible to see a truly strong national movement for feminism in Ecuador as women's movements tended to have a regional focus and concentration.

Multi-cultural organizations led the creation of women's movements within local and national organizations with the belief that feminism is also rich in diversity (Santillana and Aguinaga, 2012). The National Council of Indigenous Women of Ecuador (CONMIE) was created in 2002 "to begin an autonomous fight for the rights of indigenous women and strive for gender equality. The organization of Afro-Ecuadorian women has a growing presence in different political fields "(Chavez, 2011, p. 59). This movement was a step forward in incorporating the diversity of women into the Ecuadorian political structure, but the intercultural dialogue was limited between different feminist parties as communication was a daily problem among various ethnic groups. Organizations that wanted to create a national movement for feminism were not able to reach a position of power due mainly to ideological disputes that streamed from different perspectives in the recognition of a guaranteed standard for the quality of life of Ecuadorian women, so instead, many independent movements continued to be created.

CONMIE's feminist campaigns also had an international outreach through forums including the Women's Forum by the Gender Equality Fund of the Canadian International Development Agency, which was hosted in several Latin-American

countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Ecuador. The forum has its origins in 2002 with the objective of "contributing to the development of the citizenship of women, starting with strengthening democratic participation and decision making in positions of power, at the national and local levels" (Rodas, Reyes, Durán and Amores, 2005, p. 167). This forum was able to consolidate a regional women's movement that allowed the outreach of feminism as a field of human rights and encouraged the participation of women in the public and private fields.

The Forum also worked with Ecuadorian women through non-governmental organizations. It encouraged women's organizations in Ecuador to participate in the IV International Women's Conference held in Beijing. One of her greatest achievements was the impetus it gave to the feminist movements for Sixto Durán's government to set up Women's Commissaries and to enable women to be trained to participate as candidates for the elections. It also had close ties with CONMIE and its political organization of indigenous and afro-descendants. (Rodas, Reyes, Durán and Amores, 2005).

The Forum promoted diversification in the sense of involving the broader sectors, not only those directly linked to the specific problem; and the consolidation, in the sense of articulating sustained proposals, levels of responsibility and concrete actions aimed at achieving permanent changes in the symbolic and practical. (Rhodes, Reyes, Durán and Amores, 2005, p.174)

This forum was important because it was a social forum that allowed Ecuadorian women themselves to generate social change in the State since their public policies have a gender approach. At the moment of influencing public policies, the sphere of social, political, economic and cultural allow women to be part of the participatory democratic construction that Ecuador so badly needs.

The participation of women's movements from different localities in conjunction with non-governmental organizations, the criticisms that feminism has had regarding the collaboration of these international organizations is not at all beneficial for the participation and inclusion of the rest of women. It may be that the motivation to

implement projects that fully benefit women have meant a breakthrough. However, the political agendas of various organizations did not establish in large numbers such important issues as the cultural, ethnic and sexual plurality. That is why they did not have the necessary reception, forgetting the importance of including diversity.

But the question is, if they knew it was important to include the diversity of women, why did not they not do this? A special example was the Movimiento de Mujeres located in El Oro, which received finance for its projects by non-governmental organizations. As it is known to access financing, certain requirements established by the entities must be met. In this way, in exchange for receiving the financing for the projects, this movement began to hire professionals, became more technical, the hierarchies existed vertically and inside of this movement democracy did not exist but only internal impositions. The movement lost the activism that recognized it as a social movement and began to strategically weave networks for interests (Manzo, 2011).

This is just one example of the many cases in which Ecuador has lived. The imposition of the system continues to interweave their networks and now the participants of some movements do not want to go out to protest on the streets or cultivate that motivation that drives people to get involved. That is the case, people who want to get into a movement, need to fill the requirements imposed by exogenous entities who put to test their knowledge and use them to receive remuneration, leaving out the activist feeling that has been the basis for social change in the country.

Feminism in Ecuador has been a process of struggle for the visibility of women's demands; its achievement has been to reflect changes in legal norms, in the organization of institutions and in the construction of better policies based on gender equality. It has undoubtedly marked great transformations in the history of Ecuador with an emphasis on human rights and the recognition of all women who have contributed their ideas and knowledge through organizations and movements. Its members may or may not be feminists but I am sure that the feeling for living in fairer conditions is the affinity that unites us as women and that throughout Ecuadorian history it will be possible to continue showing the expansion of these opportunities as it was in 2008 with the new Constitutional Charter.

3.1. Pre-Constitutional Assembly of Ecuadorian Women

In June 2007, women's movements united as part of a national meeting called the Pre-Constitutional Assembly of Ecuadorian Women, where a series of feminist political proposals were planned and discussed that prioritized women's rights that needed to be included in the new Ecuadorian constitution. This national movement accomplished their goals when their demands were included in the Constitution of 2008 creating a national organizational change to gradually eliminate mechanisms of repression such as violence and sexism. (Palacios, 2008)

There were nine key points on which this Pre-Constitutional agenda was developed, which later established what is now known as the "Pact for Women's Rights"; a political agenda that was recognized and signed by members of the general assembly who were part of this national restructuring process. According to Palacios, the themes of this agenda were the following (2008):

- Maintain all the rights of women conquered in the Constitution of 1998.
- Laic State which implies the right to freedom of conscience and to take decisions.
- The right to real or material equality to compensate for historical situations of discrimination.
- Right to decide: people have the right to make free and responsible decisions about their body, health, sexual life and reproduction.
- Parity: equal representation of women and men in all functions of the State, control agencies, autonomous regime, sectional governments, and public offices, whether popular election or designation.
- Gender justice: special protection for victims of sexual crimes and gender-based violence, obligatory for judgments to be based on international human rights instruments ratified by the Ecuadorian State.
- Eradication of sexism, machismo, androcentrism and discriminatory practices.
- Prohibition of access to public office, who owe alimony or be responsible for sexual offenses or gender violence.

- Reconciliation of productive and reproductive labour. Determination of the productive value of domestic work and compensation with the right to social security to those who perform it. Equitable distribution of resources between men and women. (p.3)

It is important to remember that among the achievements made by women in 1998 Constitution was non-discrimination before the law and a life without violence. Also, it was possible to add in the normative bodies the equal participation of women and men when they are elected to occupy a public dignity, as well as the right to women to make their own decisions regarding their sexuality and reproduction. On the other hand, there is also education without discrimination, formal recognition of domestic work and the State's obligation to support gender equality through public policies or institutions (Palacios, 2008).

All the proposals that were gathered in this national meeting were not only focused on the rights of women but also harmonized the laws of the Constitution. It can be emphasized that women really fought so that domestic work can somehow be linked to wage labour, in other words, the formal recognition of the domestic work and its relation to the national economy. They also established that the State must generate public policies that allow the equal redistribution of domestic work and also the State have to intervene in the approval of these demands as they are priorities for women and allow better conditions for women to live, because they had to adjust their time to work, do the housework, take care of their children, and reduce the hours of rest which it was not considered fair and it also deteriorated the quality of life of women. (Cárdenas, 2014)

Otherwise, all the work and participation of all women meant a victory, as expressed by Ximena Abarca, director of CONAMU in an interview with Radio Quito "on the women's agenda constituted with women's representations from all over the country were established 125 articles, of which 98% are included in the new Constitution "(Abarca, 2008). Thus, having a constitution that recognizes women in various fields means that a society is governed by the just guidelines of a normative body. This was a great step forward for all women in Ecuador, and even more so that this process of adding a series of provisions was due to the high participation of organizations, groups,

institutions, unorganized women who came from all the parts of Ecuador to proclaim their ideas and to get integrated in the elaboration of this new constitution.

Also, the presence of the indigenous women's movements that addressed issues such as indigenous justice and the equality of sectors that are further away from urbanity were highlighted. In such a way it was a complete participation in that all these women organized an agenda to be able to be part of the monitoring when the proposals were treated in the different work tables.

3.2. Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador 2008

During the presidential elections of 2006, Rafael Correa was one of the candidates that offered, within his political campaign, the creation of a new constitution. His policies were supported by various social movements including women, indigenous, afro-descendants, and environmentalists. After winning the election, President Correa initiated the due process to create the Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008. A National Constitutional Assembly was formed which exercised its functions from Montecristi located in Manabí. The new constitution was part of a constitutional referendum process in 2008 and became effective in the same year (Pachano, 2010). It contains 444 articles which are divided into 9 titles, has a derogative provision, a transition regime and a final provision (Corte Constitucional, 2008).

The Constitution of 2008 is one of the largest constitutions in comparison to those of other States around the world. This document was characterized by enacting policies that guaranteed equality in participation of all diverse groups of the Ecuadorian population. The Ecuadorian Constitution was recognized as a political masterpiece that established diversity and inclusion as a priority, which was not previously seen in other Ecuadorian Constitutions. This Constitution could be seen as the price of all women's movements; it represents their effort and struggle through the fight for gender equality and it allows for their inclusion into society and has set high standards of respect and tolerance towards women in the Ecuadorian legal system.

Rafael Correa was the first president to consider that the formation of his cabinet as equitable. So, there was parity between men and women when occupying the different

positions. In 2007, the National Plan for the Eradication of Gender Violence against Children, Adolescents and Women was issued, which demanded the constitution of institutions, programs, and projects that would enable Ecuadorian women to live a life full of rights (Ministries of Justice Human Rights and Cults, 2007). In such a way, the women's movements, both feminist and non-organized, presented their proposals in the new constitutional text that included political, economic and, above all, social rights.

The Constitution of 2008 developed its provisions based on rights and justice, which is a demand for the State, its institutions, and the functions of each of the Ecuadorians who carry out their acts based on these foundations. In this way, this Constitution has guaranteed and inclusive elements (Cárdenas, 2014). For example, new prerogatives have been incorporated in line with the historical evolution of society, the new world order, recognition of the country's ancestral roots and new subjects of rights have been added taking into account the conditions of the State and its inhabitants. Also, greater mechanisms of guarantee of rights have been included: norms, public policies, and jurisdictional actions. Finally, it has been recognized that there are structurally discriminated groups that require concrete actions to obtain a real equality and not only in a formal way. (Cárdenas, 2014, p.37)

Within the discriminated groups are women. For a long time, the roles of women and men were completely different, the position in which they were was granted by a gender difference that is why the positions and activities were unequal between men and women. Likewise, women were viewed as dependent and inferior to a society governed by men and women who exercised their power only in domestic tasks (Cárdenas, 2014). But in this new constitution, the legal reality is different, rights and guarantees have been integrated in favour of women, although the articles of the constitution are extensive, the most relevant ones will be dealt with in respect of social rights and other provisions which are the means to achieve these.

Within the Constitution of Montecristi are the rights already mentioned that were added in 1998, which also contains inclusive language and an extension in the rights of women. It is also based on the principle of equality, recognizes the secularism of the State, guarantees of good living and entities such as CONAMU acquires a

constitutional status (CONAMU, 2008). Mainly important as the State is recognized "art. 1. - Ecuador is a constitutional State of rights and justice, social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, plurinational and secular. It is organized in the form of a republic and is governed in a decentralized manner "(Constitutional Court, 2008, p.23) This indicates that all acts of the State will be developed within a framework of rights and justice, separating the church from the State and recognizing that we are a diversity of people with cultures, different beliefs but under the same territory.

With regard to the principle of equality, the Constitution states that no one can be discriminated against on the basis of "ethnicity, sex, place of birth, gender identity, cultural identity, marital status, ideology, judicial past, socio- sexual orientation, health status, disability, physical difference "(CONAMU, 2008, p.7). If any act of discrimination occurs, this body of legislation would sanction it. Consequently, the fact that the constitution recognizes all diversity benefits women of different backgrounds, such as indigenous people, Afro-descendants, and women from the rural and urban areas, although a great difficulty existed within the women's groups to integrate all. Today, the Constitution demonstrates the work they have done despite their differences, they have made their affinity for women stronger than their contrasts and that their voices are heard in their own State.

Potentially, thanks to the principle of equality, women's and men's parity and alternation are guaranteed, that is, women can be chosen to occupy positions, for example they can present their electoral candidacy, they can be part of strong positions that are responsible for taking decisions, being part of control bodies, can administer justice among other functions. This allows the participation of women in a broad way in the acts of the State and that the State itself guarantees equality between men and women (Rosero and Goyes, 2008).

On the other hand, the Constitution guarantees that the State will implement the necessary instruments to ensure food sovereignty for all people, so that they can acquire healthy food, and even prevent any privatization of water, its sources or concentration of land because these must fulfill more as a social function for all (CONAMU, 2008). It is important to mention that in order to achieve these rights, the

indigenous women's movements within CONAIE and the Confederación de Pueblos de la Nacionalidad Kichwa del Ecuador (ECUARUNARI), together with the women's movements, joined their proposals and ensured that in the different working groups that were created to elaborate the Constitution will be able to include proposals like these, so today all Ecuadorians have the right to access to the resources that our land offers us in a conscious way.

In the case of employment, the State will ensure that women have equal access to jobs, which can count on fair and equitable remuneration. It will not even allow any type of discrimination, harassment or any act of violence against women at work. Jointly, the constitution establishes that no woman in the capacity of gestation may be fired and paternity leave is granted. Similarly, unpaid work performed at home is recognized as a productive activity and it is encouraged to reciprocity between men and women with regard to domestic work and what has to do with family obligations (CONAMU, 2008). In this case, the domestic work is shared, the duty to care for the children is of their parents and not only to the mother. The naturalization of the wage gap between men and women has included the scope of domestic tasks, these are the least recognized and generate an environment of dependence. This has made the domestic environment a hierarchical place and that is why it is important to recognize the work of women in the home and the domestic work that is performed even it is not paid but this is a productive activity and this is no reason to impose any control over others. (Federici, 2015)

According to the Constitution, education is a social right for all, in other words for men and women in order to guarantee the development of human beings without any spirit of discrimination or violence and in a universal way. "Art. 27.- Education (...) will be participatory, obligatory, intercultural, democratic, inclusive and diverse ... it will promote gender equality, justice, solidarity, and peace; it will stimulate (...) individual and community initiative, and the development of competencies and capacities to create and work "(Tribunal Constitucional, 2008, p.33). It is thus that education will also be secular and society will be able to learn through the freedom of professorship and education will be free until the third level of higher education. A society that has access to education will be the key to opting for a new vision that transforms the ignorance of people by knowledge and that this will promote the

development of the country by expanding its field of action and understanding that a State as diverse as the only tool that will allow us to change the social thought of inequality, stereotypes and generalizations is education.

In what corresponds to health, there is free access and it will meet sexual, integral and reproductive health needs especially in the pregnancy of a woman, childbirth and postpartum (CONAMU, 2008). Health was a subject of great conflict since women living in the urban sector can access all these benefits but there is still a gap between urban and rural. In rural areas, there is often no adequate medical equipment or specialized staff to deal with women and men, which is why women's movements continue to struggle to eliminate the different access gaps and precarious conditions that exist in this area, demanding the State to meet these needs, including the right to debate the right of women to have a childbirth that respects their cultural environment.

On the other hand, in the Constitution of 2008 the State guarantees social security to all those who perform unpaid domestic work, self-sustaining activities in the countryside and also for those who are unemployed. Since the State will be in charge of financing the benefits for all women who are under these conditions. Equally, women and men have equal rights and opportunities on access to property, and when it comes to the administration of property in a conjugal society, it will proceed in the same way (Tribunal Constitucional, 2008). The right to property was an achievement expected by feminist groups since the second wave of feminism struggled in legal matters so that women can enjoy and dispose of their property as required by law.

While naming all the rights and dispositions that have been achieved in this new constitution is extensive, it should be mentioned in a summarized way that the State has guaranteed sexual and reproductive rights, so that women and men can make free decisions about their sexuality in a safe way even takes pregnant or maternity women as a priority group. In addition, the constitutional rights of indigenous communities can not be violated by customary rights, in particular of women and children, therefore the State will guarantee non-discrimination and promote equality between men and women. Also, women will have participation and decision in what corresponds to the indigenous justice and in the conformation of the organisms the parity law must prevail (CONAMU, 2008).

All the above are examples of a part of the rest of articles that guarantee an Ecuadorian State based on equality and justice for both men and women. The laws that have been added were the result of the constant struggle of feminist movements like the movements of women and those women who are not organized. I can continue making a distinction between the groups but this is a sign that although some are not recognized as feminists, others are feminists of the left or the right side, whether indigenous or afro-descendants have something in particular and is that we are all women and we strive to be part of a process that will benefit us and integrate them all. Now the question is, is the law enough to recognize women and integrate them into Ecuadorian society?

4. Gender Studies in Ecuador

Gender studies by international agencies and organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, are done in order to research women's social and legal position in the country. It is believed that by understanding the role of women in society, state agencies and related institutions would be able to develop public policies to improve their life conditions. Ecuador, as other Latin American countries, lacks national research capabilities that would otherwise allow the exploration of necessary policies. Academic institutions are the ones to usually carry out these gender research projects, but are sometimes underfunded (Mosquera, 2001).

Gender studies in Ecuador have commonly discussed the following themes: First, gender studies and relevant projects have not only been developed to provide gender research to academics but to increase political awareness of gender inequalities that are commonly experienced by members of the Ecuadorian society. Many research projects that studied inequality were developed in order to incentivize public institutions to quickly devise methods to eliminate these problems. These research projects also present research implementation challenges that arise from being a diverse society with pre-existing hierarchies that stem from social classes, ethnicity, religion and race. These challenges present severe risks in terms of statistical significance of the sample set, which makes it very hard for researchers to arrive to

strong conclusions regarding the gender inequality solutions in a diverse environment (Mosquera, 2001).

There are several research reports, meetings, panels and diagnoses on different political and social processes regarding gender issues in Ecuador that have not been widely published or referenced in other research projects. However, other research fields including intra-family violence, studies have been successful as they have contributed to the development of public policies to address the issue. Other disciplines including health and domestic violence have developed gender research projects that have contributed to the establishment of goals and objectives that public and private entities need to implement to achieve gender equality. International research agencies have also developed interesting research material regarding gender equality including research projects that focused on issues that arise in rural areas: "food security, agroforestry, and biodiversity dominate the national production in the area of gender and development. Domestic violence is also a priority issue addressed by international agencies "(Mosquera, 2001, p.19).

All of this research contributes to knowledge, to understand the reality of gender in Ecuador. However, when we compare the investigations of the international agencies with the investigations of local entities, is evident that financing is one of the obstacles that prevents a constant study on the subject in Ecuador since often the projects are paralysed for lack of financing. Another obstacle is the research approach. In order to really understand what is happening, they should encourage more reflection about what the women's movements have achieved through their participation and the dynamics, some transformations in political, economic and social history of the country.

It is important to mention that CONAMU has set targets to strengthen gender information in the country. It creates workbooks with a focus on gender policies locally. One limitation of these notebooks is that they do not have as much relation to the comparison of information about gender with the rest of countries of the region because in these notebooks only the local events are described. Other contributions come from authors such as Cuvi and Martínez who carried out a comparative study of

gender between the middle and working class, concluding that male discourse is dominant in both classes (Mosquera, 2001).

Feminists like Rossi Braidotti cited by Rodas (2002) establish:

I think the main assumption on which "gender studies" are based is that of a new symmetry between the sexes, which in practice leads to renewed interest in studies for men and realized by men. Faced with this situation I would like to express my frank disagreement on this illusion of symmetry and instead claim the sexual difference as a factor of asymmetry. (p. 21)

That is why gender studies are largely criticized for having androcentric thinking, which can not understand of what social reality is composed is in which men and women allow themselves be carried away by the prejudices of a society. In addition, people without knowledge about gender create hegemonic institutions, they make decisions without knowing the reality and obtain results without specificity.

Despite finding some research on gender in Ecuador, it is necessary to involve more specialized and academic researchers, so that studies can have greater legitimacy and, apart from that, they can expand these studies to other topics and enable Ecuadorians to abandon simple prejudices. It is necessary to strengthen research in Ecuador to create our own material and contribute to knowledge so that the agendas of other international entities on gender relations in our country will no longer have to be translated. It is also important to add to the common themes of research that are family, living conditions, political, social and other fields, and add variables such as sexuality among women and men that are still taboo subjects for our society end thus for which there are few studies. Equally many of the studies associate the rural with the indigenous when it is necessary to analyse the indigenous with the urban. Likewise, gender studies on women's cultural production are minimal. That is why if new areas that are of vital importance are understood, better policies can be made (Mosquera, 2001).

5. Public Policies

Ecuador daily faces democratic challenges such as the implementation of public policies that represent the intervention of the State to improve the current situation based on gender equity. These public policies have been the result of the demands of the groups of women already recognized as feminists or autonomous groups of women who, through national, regional and international spaces, have been able to apply pressure so that even in the 2008 Constitution, it has been an obligation of the different Ministries to create public policies with a gender focus.

Thus the concept of gender equity has been inserted in speeches since the 1995 United Nations Beijing Conference. Therefore the country needed an institution that could respond and address the problems of gender discrimination. One of the demands of the feminist movements is to make the State deal directly with existing gaps and problems about gender. That is why CONAMU was recognized by the Constitution of 2008 as the entity in charge of the achievement of the international agreements and women's rights, but the government made a decision and replaced this entity on May 29, 2009, by the Women's Council and Gender Equality, which this decision caused a series of mobilizations against the government, because CONAMU was the institution resulting from the struggle of Ecuadorian women for so many years.

In spite of all the nonconformities by the Ecuadorian people despite of the decisions of the government, there are several advances in public policies to provide better conditions of life for women. An example of this was the approval of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979, Ecuador by ratifying these instruments guarantees the human rights of women and the development of secondary legal norms, these actions contribute to creating public programs and policies to analyse different problems.

In this way, the State through its different agencies presents public policies in agreement within its spheres to eliminate gaps in inequality, especially for indigenous, rural and Afro-descendant women with respect to health, education, and housing. Within the programs and plans that the government has implemented is the National

Plan for Good Living (PNBV) 2013-2017. This instrument has twelve objectives which contain national policies to serve the sectors with the greatest vulnerability and where there is social inequality. So with this plan, people can work towards non-discrimination and equality. Also, this plan works with the National Agendas for Equality that elaborates the different Councils (Government of the Republic of Ecuador, 2014).

With regard to poverty in Ecuador, it is related not only to economic income but to the lack of education, health, work, and housing. Several policies have been promoted from different themes. One of these is the National Strategy for Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy that has benefited the Ecuadorian population by providing education, information campaigns on contraceptive methods and health services. In addition, through social security, family members also benefit from access to comprehensive health care as long as they are under 18 years. On the other hand, in favour of food sovereignty, it has been shown that women work on a small scale of agricultural production, in other words for the national consumption. From this point of view, women are the ones who contribute most not only to agricultural production or animal care but also to unpaid labour in terms of domestic work and care. This is why the Sector Policy on Gender and Interculturality has been implemented since 2011, which has seven policies focused on the elimination of exclusion, racism and encourages the conservation of ancestral knowledge and the conservation of natural heritage (Government of the Republic of Ecuador, 2014).

Additionally, the Construction and Implementation of the National Priority Policy for Rural Women in Ecuador, in conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has been developed and implement objectives of regarding education, the National Plan for Good Living is the overcoming of all types of inequality, the right to education and respect for interculturality. An example of the achievements have been the Millennium Schools that have advanced technology and allow access to all young people (Government of the Republic of Ecuador, 2014). Likewise, programs such as Manuela Sáenz and Dolores Cacuango, which have been designed to provide education to young people and adults within the indigenous population have been implemented. "The number of beneficiaries of the Dolores Cacuango Program in 2011 amounted to 9,840 people" (Government of the Republic

of Ecuador, 2014, p.11). This is a good mechanism to benefit from these program in the areas farthest from urbanity. However, there is still a long way to go in this regard.

The Ministry of Public Health has developed programs and policies that have benefited both men and women by enabling them to access to comprehensive care, free maternity and child care, prevention, and control of AIDS, food, micronutrients and nutrition. In addition, the coordination of several Ministries was essential along with the Ecuadorian society to create the National Intersectoral Strategy of Family Planning and Prevention of Pregnancy in Adolescents (ENIPLA). "This strategy constitutes the first public policy developed by the State to guarantee sexual rights and reproductive rights of Ecuadorian women and men" (Government of the Republic of Ecuador, 2014, p.12).

One of Rafael Correa's campaigns was "Talk serious about sexuality without mysteries" which showed that the socio-cultural transformation in Ecuador was necessary, because young people in Ecuador have a lot of disinformation about sexuality. Today, this program allows youth be informed and prepared to make decisions about their sexuality (Government of the Republic of Ecuador, 2014). Despite the advances that this program meant to address a public health issue that particularly affects women, President Correa unilaterally decided to remove this program and replace it with the "Family Plan." The reasons for this change reflect the lack of seriousness with which the rights recognized in the constitution are taken.

Women and gender violence are other areas where actions have been established through the creation of institutions such as the Dirección Nacional de Género within the Ministry of the Interior. They have managed to train the administrators of justice, officials of the provincial directorates of the Ministry of Education among others so that they know how to deal with cases of gender violence, whether physical or sexual. Campaigns have also been issued such as "Reacts Ecuador Male Chauvinist is Violence" that has been based on the dissemination of educational messages through the media, festivals, debates, and other venues. Likewise, the National Plan to Combat Plagiarism of Persons has managed to treat and eliminate in a more visible way cases of illegal trafficking of migrants, sexual and labour exploitation, child pornography and prostitution of children (Government of the Republic of Ecuador, 2014).

With respect to the access of information and technology between urban and rural, women in rural areas do not have the necessary access to technology and many of them are unaware. Thus, the National Plan has enabled the rural population to access to the info centres and schools have connectivity and training to eliminate this gap that exists with technology in several areas. This plan has enabled rural people to be trained "from the year 2012 to 2013 have trained 48,843 women in the info centres" (Government of the Republic of Ecuador, 2014, p.21). This benefits the entire Ecuadorian population since technology is an information and a learning tool that, if it is properly administered, can be a great help in improving the conditions of the family.

In the same way, technology has made it possible, through registers and censuses, to update information on the Ecuadorian population. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) in 2016, there are 8'343.760 women in Ecuador and 8'148.970 men. In Ecuador, there are more women than men. Based on this figure and for reasons of masculine migration Cañar and Azuay are the provinces with a greater number of women. 27.2% of households in Ecuador have a female head of household. Most of the paid activities that they are dedicated to are 23.7%, agriculture, livestock and fishing with 21% and education and health services with 11.9% (INEC, 2016). On the other hand, with regard to the last census in 2010, 39.8% of women have access to private or social insurance, and 60.2% do not have insurance. While 42.1% men have either social or private insurance and 57.9% do not have insurance.

In education, the percentage of men accessing a higher education and postgraduate education is 47.4% and women 52.6%. In the economic sector, the activities of women compared between the periods 1982-1990 and 2001-2010 increased from 15.8% to 36.5%, which shows that women have opted to become more involved in paid work (INEC, 2010). These are just a few figures that show the development and involvement of women in activities that were once the privilege of men, yet in rural areas of Ecuador, there are still gaps in education and health that must be treated urgently by the State and society.

There are other national plans and agendas that integrate public policies, however, the relations of discrimination and lack of resources in several parts of Ecuador remains

one of the problems. In addition, the weak public institutionality of gender and the lack of political action in economic, political and social situations that are experienced by men and women are undeniable. However, the way forward is still long, but the effort invested in these provisions is a way of rebuilding the thinking of society by offering education through programs, security through laws and the necessary support for actions. The State, as well as society, are the key to change that allows both men and women to be part of a world where they can develop under the guarantee of living in better conditions.

Dr. María Cecilia Alvarado Carrión, Vice Prefect of the Province of Azuay comments that:

Government institutions play a very important role in society, generating public policy. In general, there are significant and relevant advances, not enough but at least there are issues that are already in the public debate. In the Provincial Government itself, we have been able to generate ordinances for women and for the LGTBI population. A law does not serve by itself, it is a rule written on a paper, we are the people who have to take that role to believe that and demand that it be fulfilled. If the law does not use it as a tool by itself, it will not produce anything. (Alvarado, personal communication, November 08, 2016)

6. Feminism in the Present

After several years of feminist struggle, the society in which we live is constantly calling for social, political and philosophical change. The story that has been written by the first women who raised their voices has become more evident today. Several there are several names of the characters that stand out when people talk about feminism, and several are the anecdotes that each one has. As people say what we are today is the result of all the history that we have marked and to understand the present and what will be of the future we must first understand what we were. Thus, feminism has a long history and has been built on the basis of a constant social struggle but also on the basis of a self-critical look to respond to current requirements. Nowadays, women have access to education, they are part of political parties, many of them hold public and private positions, they are mothers and they carry the economic sustenance

to their home, they are recognized by the legal norms and they are part of institutions dedicated especially for its development in society. Also, different international actors are part of this struggle through the development of conferences, programs, contributions and influence the State so that it can dedicate agendas and plans that contain public policies, campaigns and training to improve the living conditions of beings humans.

So women have become aware of the world that we live in and each time they are more who express their feelings of freedom, equality and fraternity. However, feminism has been incorporated into reality in a universalistic way. While this thinking has allowed the achievement of equal rights and it has been the engine of struggles, today it can be part of the change. Over the years, the feminist discourse on equality has gained strength, although it had to overcome its Eurocentric or classist gaze to think of other forms of struggle that were incorporated by the voices of indigenous women, Afro-descendants, lesbians, rural women, among others for the simple fact that there is still a thought within society about who has a more developed culture compared to others.

So we can not encompass all women under a single feminist ideology but recognize that there are several feminisms and currents related to these, we are human beings, and each one contains a different way of appreciating life. That is why we have such a richness of creating discourses from our own experience but not from exogenous experiences. Our multiculturalism is a gift that should be used as the free expression of society.

But if we speak of differences compared to a legal framework imposed by the State that recognizes women equally, we may not think that laws are being created based on a thought that is often not involved in reality, with this I mean that there is still a great gap to be eliminated. It is good to construct laws that include women fairly. However, we can continue to fall into the same problem that those who carry out the policies do not live the reality by those who are directing these because they do not know the diversity of women that exist and their different conditions. That is why they create laws, programs and others without specificity. Policies are made and unmade without prior analysis, when really the goal of a State should be the search for equal rights in relation to the freedom, difference and decisions that each woman can have. In such a

way, the generalization that is applied in the acts of the State as in its policies and in some discourses of the groups of women recognized as feminists, these must suffer the change.

But the question is why do we need a change? It may not be necessary to continue with a delimited universal idea of "Woman", people try to join forces to promote an idea of common justice, which can be redefined because as society changes over time, so do theories and Policies which must be reinterpreted. The scenarios change as our thoughts do, so the needs are different and you can no longer speak of a feminism but of several feminisms (Velasco, 2011).

It would not be a closed system, a finished theory. Feminist theory is a theory linked to a social movement that builds a collective identity, so it must be intrinsically linked to practices, to the construction of subjectivities which they are always linked to different experiences with the various systems of oppression (gender, race, class, sexuality...). It would try to listen and receive in the feminist discourse black women, lesbians or any other social group as long as those discourses respected basic criteria of rights. (Velasco, 2011, p. 297)

CONCLUSION

After the historical struggle of women, it can be asserted that there are several feminist perspectives that have influenced international relations marking milestones throughout history. Thus, the currents of liberal, social and radical feminism managed to transcend the borders allowing women to raise their voices and demand from their governments the recognition of their rights and freedoms.

That is why women have built a feminist ideology that seeks to eliminate the system of oppression generated by patriarchal structures that have maintained subordination and inequality between men and women. In this way the feminist ideology calls women to become aware of the reality in which they live and to reflect on their experience to reconceptualize the traditional, generating a proposal for change that allows a socio-cultural transformation.

Feminist theories seek to form a proposal that changes the way the world has been organized leaving behind the invisibility of women and breaking the schemes imposed by a society that establishes roles for men and women and so decolonizing our thinking built on discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender and social classes but gives another focus to international relations so that it does not focus on conflict and generates more response to the needs of the international community.

Critical feminism is one of the most influential currents that recognizes women within heterogeneity and wants to be dissociated from the feminism that shared colonizing matrices. Critical feminism recognizes and includes the diversity of women before a common justice in addition re-evaluating theoretically the perspective that man has on issues that not only affect men and thus allow society to question whether international relations are based on gender.

As for other international actors such as governmental and non-governmental organizations, feminists see them as necessary tools to influence authoritarian governments in order to enable States to take action to eliminate discrimination and inequality that threaten women. It is essential that organizations within the international community achieve inclusive participation and that their treaties,

conventions or other instruments cease to be a mere recommendation and become mandatory. It has been shown that the struggle of women has resulted in the creation of spaces within international organizations allowing the creation of programs, agendas with public policies and conferences that are a great benefit to women. Even the creation of networks between non-governmental organizations have constituted and strengthened women's movements.

However, it is essential to remember that we work for the rights and freedoms of women, but not on the same guidelines of an authoritarian, hierarchical and discriminatory system that certain agencies have continued to reproduce, thereby reducing the autonomy of NGOs and the activism of the feminist movements. For this reason, it is significant to depoliticize and eliminate the favouritism and dependence that institutions create by continuing a traditional trend and maintaining the transforming essence of the collectives.

On the other hand, feminist currents immersed in Latin America have emerged radically in front of authoritarian governments, restricted democracies, militarism, and violence. While feminist movements were influenced by the ideologies of the West, they soon realized that the realities were different. Thus, their speech was created for multicultural, heterogeneous and revolutionary audiences who denounced the abuse of power and forced disappearances. The lack of action by the governments showed that they only wanted in a certain part to create institutions or to grant functions not so relevant to the woman, so they momentarily satisfy the demands of women. The problem of feminism in Latin America was due to the loss of strength in their speeches, as they linked to the demands of NGOs against their own guidelines and to the governments and institutions in trying to support the activist groups by generalizing them and directing them towards the same orientation of the system.

Now in Ecuador, feminism has taken on a variety of categories and terms that include diversity and equality since we are a multi-ethnic and multicultural country which has been a struggle worthy of recognition. Consequently, in this research, it was possible to verify that the feminist ideology of the west influenced the construction of the feminist positions in Ecuador. Since the beginnings of feminism, few women have defended this thought. However, as they began to gain force, more women were aware

of the suffragette movements in the west and shared their ideas through magazines, newspapers, books, and art, which prompted many women to recognize themselves as feminists and to participate in conferences and international acts that strengthened the movements by making them part of the liberal, social, Christian and critical currents. Despite the contradictions that appeared later, when they saw that the conditions of life were different from those of the west, they decided to create their own guidelines and improve them, without demeaning the original struggle of the west that prompted them to be critical and thoughtful women to be able to act within their State and to improve the real conditions in which they lived.

Therefore, the conquest of the right to women's suffrage triggered a new way of promoting relations between men and women. Feminism and women's groups sought the achievement of political, social, civil and economic rights, like the rest of the countries in their region. But especially social rights were the milestone that marked the history of Ecuador. Women were able to include in some constitutional charters rights such as education, health, just remuneration, political participation, access to security and laws against violence. To achieve this, several factors as much as ideological currents influenced international organizations through linking with the Ecuadorian State. By demanding that programs and policies ensure the improvement of the living conditions of Ecuadorian women and the fundamental support to other minorities groups of women, who left aside the differences and achieve comply their demands so that today women can be recognized by the legal system with rights and freedoms.

In spite of these great advances that the Ecuadorian woman has achieved, an institutional weakness exists today. While it is the State that should guarantee better living conditions for its population, in the case of women, there are several public policies that have been put in place to benefit women in different areas but this benefit has not been for all, because the generalization is still maintained without making a distinction between the demands of each sector from which the diversity of women come. In other words, indigenous women, women of African descent, “montubias” rural coast workers, and women in rural or urban areas, each one of them lives a different reality and therefore their demands are different and the policies of the State have a lack of specificity and fall into the single determination to be a woman.

It is important to remember that feminism has been one of the pillars to create awareness and questioning in women and men. The efforts have been several and were exemplified in the new constitution. Nowadays, women can enjoy equal access to education, health, just remuneration, basic services and other constitutional guarantees. However the work is still long, the State can change the laws in legal form, the actions of institutions and programs can be more inclusive. However, if we do not transform our thinking and expand it to new criteria of reflection, we will continue to be colonized by the same structures that will not allow anyone to influence their interests.

Consequently, ignorance can misrepresent what feminism really is and this same ignorance has made society have misconceptions about it, causing women to be afraid to recognize themselves as feminists and in the case of men make them consider that it is the opposite of machismo. It is time to liberate our thinking, not to make women better than men and vice versa or worse to submit to or eliminate men. It is time to collaborate in a society in which men and women can break those chains full of prejudices and stereotypes through the knowledge. It is time to rebuild our critical thinking that will surely free our action against the postures imposed by a society. It will allow recognizing that diversity is the key so we will no longer speak of feminism but of feminisms in plural.

ANNEXES

APPENDIX 1

Interviewee: Dr. María Cecilia Alvarado

Position: Vice Prefect of the Azuay Province

Day: Tuesday, November 08, 2016

What is the role of women in Ecuadorian politics?

The struggle of women in Ecuadorian politics begins with Matilde Hidalgo, she was not only the first woman to vote but she was the first woman elected. They did not allow her to position herself because there existed a trick in the system despite she was an elected deputy. In Ecuador there was no movement of suffragists as in Europe or the United States where you can see that struggle for the conquest of political rights. Here we had the luck of an eruption where a woman said why do I not have to vote? And she stood in line to proclaim their rights.

Although Ecuador was one of the first countries to get women's right to vote, it took so much time for women to have a political presence. In the year 1997 with the quota law, it is guaranteed that women have an obligatory partition in politics. For many people who do not believe in feminism it has been an unnecessary law. Not having a quota law makes equity much slower. Here in Ecuador, thanks to this law, parties are forced to include women in an obligatory way inside political participation, but we have reached parity 50% men and 50% women. However, it does not mean that women hold half the political positions in the country because it is one thing to be on the list of the parties and another is to win. Thanks to the constitution of 2008 and the quota law, we currently have a large presence of women in legislative positions both in the National Assembly, in the councils, and in the parish councils, numerically speaking. This does not mean that they support the thesis in favour of women. But where there is a huge deficit is in the executive positions. The Constitutional Court asks that the binomial for Prefect and Vice Prefect it should be a multi-person election and it does apply parity. That is why I had the opportunity to be Vice Prefect, however, the same

Constitutional Court did not replicate this for the presidential binomial, it is a unitary election and it does not apply parity.

This gives us a guideline to realize that this principle of parity realized by the constitution is applied in an unequal way. If there had been no law of quotas, a principle of parity, the presence of women today would be minimal. On the other hand, a woman occupying a position in politics is not necessarily a woman feminist or that she fights for the needs of women. In spite of that, I believe in women, even if they only come to have a symbolic or numerical participation. I prefer that the country has different voices and more if they can give an opinion about the economy, education, environment, and health before that this discussion only has a masculine face. It would be much better if women do not just mean a number, it would be ideal for us to go with an agenda to have a commitment to women because I know all the struggles of women and what these represent for them.

What are the challenges you have had to face in your political career or career for being a woman?

I am a woman, I am a mom, I like politics and I want to do politics and because of that, I am a bad woman or a bad mother. The first question that women have when they enter into traditional male careers is that people raise the issue of parenting, that you will not fulfill your role as mother. The first thing is to free yourself from that guilt, not to let them question your quality as a mother because of being in an activity that demands a lot of time. Whereas you have to divide the responsibilities with your husband and when the father does he is not just helping you, but he is fulfilling his role. On the other hand in the political arena, I consider myself a great and strong woman, I always believed that I have the necessary for not to show fragility and I think I can do everything. Since I was educated as a fighter, the strategy is not victimization or belief that I need a favour. The strategy is to believe that I am capable of achieving everything. That is why we are involved in a world still dominated by men where the reflection of women is difficult to understand and we have to explain again and again. If I have ever felt discriminated against, it is because of these micro machismos. When I first arrived the municipality as a councilor elected with my jean and my backpack, the guard said to me. "Hey you! Where are you going? And I said, Sir I am the

councilor, and he said to me, you councilor?" Then there are several things that appear when they come to my office and they treat me as "reinita" are things that I do not tolerate because they do not look at you as equal but they look at you as less.

After your great professional career, which it has always been committed to people, how does your relationship in the struggle for equality arise?

As I always said I was in these spaces as in the student council of the school, in the university always motivated with the aim that things were fairer for all and from there to approach the women's movement to which I tell the old feminists of Cuenca, who are my friends, I approached the women's movement and when I assumed the position of councilor I also assumed that the authorities can not disconnect from the people that they want to represent and also I demand that women not leave us alone, do not forget about us, because we can fight together.

Already in the council, I linked to the women's movement and then that brought me to meet with the feminists at the national level. One fact that let me to be a feminist was when I wrote my thesis my feminism was exacerbated when I was very involved in the world of the church, I was a missionary, I discovered how perverse the church can be with women. From the figure of Maria the virgin the way that society thinks that all women are saints, we get wings and we smell like roses. It is a male vision because when that woman makes a mistake immediately that woman stops being Maria the virgin and becomes a whore. Women are neither whores nor saints, we are human beings some good and some bad. So my thesis made me realize that I did not identify with what the church thought about women and that was the point of greatest exacerbation.

It is known that government institutions play a very important role in society. How do you think these have contributed to improving the current conditions in which women live?

Generating public policy in general there are significant and relevant advances, not enough but at least there are issues that are already in the public debate. In the Provincial Government itself we have been able to generate ordinances for women and

for the LGTBI population. A law does not help by itself, it is a rule written on paper, we are the people who have to take that role to believe that and demand that the laws can be achieved. If you do not use the law as a tool by itself, it will not produce anything.

I was astonished with the conditions of the woman in the world at the moment of seeing the figures of violence and I realize that we continue fighting for the same subjects that our great grandmothers also fought. The more than women are visible, the more rights they have, the more aggression and violence become evident. Women have a huge challenge in finding a strategy how we do that this fight does not mean a more aggressive response because that fight is counted with dead. On the other hand, in the work of the Prefecture thanks to ecofeminism I have been able to understand more rurality that is a subject of necessary attention by the governmental institutions. It is so mis-leading that urban people who have no land as I say, were able to discuss the problems of rurality and propose solutions.

There is a discrimination bias that we believe that rural people are unable to create their own policies to defend their environment. But as urban people we have no idea. I have had opportunities to live in indigenous communities, but I still continue to learn and reaffirm that even in Ecuador and Latin America we have not understood rurality to improve the living conditions of men and women, but especially of women who are more linked to land and water. However, the work that the Prefecture has done for society and women is to provide training, access to generate their entrepreneurship, that can sell what they produce and generate jobs. Because if you have economic independence you can also be independent to make your own decisions.

Do you consider that feminism has contributed to the achievement of the social rights of women in Ecuador? And why?

Ecuador presents from its constitution great advances in de jure subjects, such as rights and norms. However, we are still in diapers with respect to the actions. Feminism has contributed not only to social rights but to justice in the world. Feminism is for me a political and philosophical current that advocates more for social justice. That is why feminism is that cause that understands the discriminations that exist by ethnicity,

sexual orientation, or even disability, because when we demand non-discrimination we mean that this should not exist for any cause. When feminism has questioned the patriarchy that is stereotyped in that white, mestizo, heterosexual, economically active man you question that model that implants a society since if you do not 100% comply with this stereotype you are discriminated against. Women and feminism question that, we break that androcentric view of the world and allow diversity to be looked at and nothing in the world has contributed to the construction of justice and non-discrimination like feminism.

After your participation in Habitat III held in the city of Quito by the Organization of the United Nations, what do you think about the cooperation of international organizations in the development of Ecuadorian women?

The issues of cooperation are quite confused by the policies of the national government. The national government's strategy always tries to centralize international cooperation has also been hampered in deciding where it cooperates, for whom it cooperates. But at the United Nations level there is no possibility of working for development if there are no gender policies. That is why all the international documents that are subscribed in the various summits, some more specific than others, but incorporate the differentiation of women. When the gender approach is incorporated we realize that a situation can affect men and women differently. And if you only look through that male perspective you are leaving aside the rest of the population that is vulnerable. It is thus, that UN Women try to include all these gender indicators in the policies or documents. However, unfortunately now it is necessary to measure what is the impact of UN Women is in the United Nations to know how much weight this demand for policies and gender indicators is to measure development.

For me, the United Nations lacks much in spite of its commitment to gender equity. Above all, no goal of development will be possible in my view from the centralist States. The central State is not really focused on the direct basic needs of citizens. In those needs are the Decentralized Governments then if I do not strengthen the parish, the municipal government; to the provincial government It will be very difficult to think that the national government will meet the needs of its citizens. And more so when that national government sees only macroeconomic indicators such as mines,

sees hydroelectric plants and sees oil and does not see the conditions of men and women.

What would you say to the future generations of men and women who are trying to penetrate national politics regarding gender equality?

Machismo is a bad business for men and women. Machismo is not good for men and bad for women. It is perverse with men and perverse with women, machismo has prevented men from exploring their feminine side, it has made man afraid to make a mistake and think that man should always bring sustenance to the family, and be the strong male figure. To generate a culture of equity that does not include things of man or things of women, but there are simply things and tasks of those who have the desire to do it. Doing different jobs does not make us less men or women, that there is no sexual division but people can explore our tastes and desires and that there will be opportunities for men and women in equity. If someone believes that this is true, get involved in politics to legislate, make decisions and allocate budget so that this happens otherwise what happens is that they get into legislating to continue with a discriminatory society that divides us and limits our developmental possibilities.

APPENDIX 2

Interviewee: Magister Nidia Pesantez

Position: Official representative of UN Women in Ecuador

Date: Saturday, November 19, 2016

After your great professional career, which it has always been committed to people, how is your relationship in the struggle for equality?

My involvement from a young age was with human rights, especially with the human rights of young people and children. I began to study and specialize in the human rights of children in the framework of the convention for the rights of the child of 1989 and little by little while I was doing that job in the different social organizations or in my own spaces of work which were at time the Instituto Nacional de la Niñez y la Familia and the Familia INNFA and then child to child that we found for obtain answers to

the problems that the children went through and how to eradicate the problems of the society I realized that we had a problem. In all of the speeches were said that children are a priority, but they were not a priority because children were in the hands of their caregivers who were generally mothers and mothers were not considered as a priority voice, as I said, we have clear indicators where discrimination is shown.

So if we have a society that discriminates against women and boys and girls are the responsibility of women, this gap is deepening. If women are second in this country, boys and girls are third, the elderly are fourth because they remain the only responsibility of women. Because women have been given social responsibility for care, responsibility for food, responsibility for survival even when men have the responsibility to give material provides in the home, women are the real responsible for these actions. For example, a man goes to work in another city, whether it is due to external or internal or seasonal or permanent migration, if the money does not arrive, the women have to guarantee the provisions for their children. So in doing that I get involved in the study of gender and work for the specific equality of women.

Do you recognize yourself as a feminist and why?

Yes, I recognize myself as a feminist because I think that the political and philosophical thinking of feminism starts from an absolutely humanistic vision. Because what it tries to guarantee is the rights to all and to guarantee a coexistence on equal terms but now, more than ever, because Feminism took a step further. Feminism is not only humanistic but also has a strong anchorage in one of the currents called ecofeminism where the human being is no longer the center of actions so that the web of life can be the center of actions, and that all environmental factors and where humans are also able to have a harmonious coexistence assuming other forms of behavior, other thoughts, and other priorities together with another scale of values. Feminism for me is a broad current that allows me to do work in favour of the web of life. That's why I personally identify with ecofeminism.

Do you consider that feminism has contributed to the social rights of Ecuadorian women?

Of course, it is a product of the questioning of patriarchy that we have advanced in rights and the questioning of patriarchy has been made only by feminism. So it's feminism that says why women do not go to work for a remuneration, why women do not vote, they do not inherit, why women can not get divorced if the man is an adulterer. Since before the men could and the woman could not. A lot of questions, I'm talking historically why women can not study medicine or why women can not study astronomy and little by little those questions in a social reality that people were living historically they were finding answers in the feminist thinking that was generating instruments to respond and change society from political activism, from feminists in local, national and international movements to the academic approach of feminist thinking and the generation of working methods that is now known as the gender approach to positioning issues . So it has been a great consistent, coherent and systematic struggle that is generating results and we have seen those results over time.

After her work in UN Women. What do you think about the cooperation of international organizations in the development of Ecuadorian women?

In fact, in Latin America in general and in Ecuador, all feminist thought came directly through the gender channel, but in a broad sense it is not that the organizations or institutions reflected the feminist thought but rather this was by very few people, very few women who defended feminism, in fact, feminism comes through the organs of international cooperation. Then bilateral or multilateral international cooperation, both private and public, came to Ecuador in the 80s but with much more force in the 90s. I mean the thought of equality. They arrived in the 80s but more strongly in the 90s to argue that the investment that is made should have a gender approach. In Latin America and Ecuador, it is not feminist thinking that first lands but the method of study of the gender approach. The first thing we met in Latin America massively was the gender approach on how to analyse a reality from the perspective that we can see how the relations between men and women are. And then we deepen in this method, we

learn that all this comes from feminist thinking as a society. So the cooperation agencies really have a very important role in this history in this area in Ecuador and in Latin America since before it was not worked from a gender perspective nor discussed through feminist thinking. As a result of this, we began to discuss feminist thinking in a much broader way.

What do you think about the institutionalization of feminism?

Institutionalization is one of the ways, in fact there is a current of institutionalized feminists who are the feminists who trust in the State and who establish that it is the State that has to generate by demand of women and society that these should be institutionalized mechanisms, the norm, the policy, the budget so that equality is possible. So I think that is one of the important lines to make equality possible between women and men. Because one thing is the activism, the demand, the social pressure that we can make. And in the other side, exist the institutionalization who gives the answer of the State. Therefore it has to be, but that does not mean that it would be the only way to respond because is the social pressure that forces the State to make the changes. Then it is necessary to maintain the organizations that are activists, interlocutors, finally, the social movements for the enforceability of rights and the State would have to recognize those rights in the institutionalization of mechanisms and thinking.

What do you think should be the current roadmap for feminist movements?

The feminist movement in Ecuador has a rather interesting roadmap, in fact feminist women recognized in the country such as Solanda Goyes, Dolores Padilla, Margarita Carranco and many others they sat down to develop a proposal on what would imply for the Ecuadorian State and society the turning towards gender equality and the things that must be generated and taken into account. It is interesting because it is a comprehensive proposal that manages to raise what feminist thinking has always said is the exercise of women's rights for a better society. It is from women for the improvement of the whole society because gender equality has a positive impact on improving the quality of life at all. Ban Ki-moon said in March 2014 on International

Women's Day when negotiating the 2015 agenda, the progress of women is the progress of all.

What would you say to the future generations of men and women who are trying to enter in the national policy regarding gender equality?

Let them not be carried away by stereotypes, let them not be carried away by conceptual “amarillismo” about what is the gender that they do not see the word gender in a simplistic way, that they investigate more and question themselves because the truths of the social sciences are changing. Then I would advise them to investigate and question. When they see a case where there is a differential treatment for men and women, ask why and do not take it for granted and also they need to start even asking for things that are thought to be as a normal, to deepen their responsibilities, especially in the politics. Eliminate those micro machismos, which are difficult to identify. See where they are and work to eliminate this discrimination that is making women less or inferior to men. Then we need to encourage research.

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