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Why Women? Gender Mainstreaming in Undergraduate International Relations Discourse

Tambria Schroeder

The College at Brockport, tschr2@gmail.com

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Why Women? Gender Mainstreaming in
Undergraduate International Relations Discourse

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Graduation in the Honors College

By
Tambria Schroeder
Political Science, International Studies & Women and Gender Studies Major

The College at Brockport
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Thesis Director: Dr. Barbara LeSavoy, Director, Women and Gender Studies

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Abstract

Over the last 30 years, feminist international relations (IR) and gendered approaches to foreign policy and security have been gaining attention in both the academy and in government. However, the systems and institutions that exist in our country are strategically designed to maintain patriarchy and privilege masculinity, so this work isn't necessarily permeating into what is taught to students in undergraduate classrooms. Using a feminist lens, I analyze if and how women, gender, and feminism are being integrated into undergraduate IR courses at various public higher education institutions upstate New York. I consider the various arguments cited by professors for not teaching feminist IR and the potential consequences of continuing to exclude feminism and gender from undergraduate international relations courses. I conclude that the only way to subvert the patriarchal dominance of both knowledge and practice is to become more curious about what we're teaching and learning in international relations.

Introduction

In 1982, Samuel Huntington stated that Americans exist “in a state of national cognitive dissonance, which they have attempted to relieve through various combinations of moralism, cynicism, complacency, and hypocrisy” (p.1). These practices have enabled systems and institutions that are strategically designed to maintain patriarchy and privilege masculinity to remain intact. Various groundswells throughout the last century have slowly shaken these foundations and we are finally seeing major cracks in the walls and ceilings. The rays of light that shine through remind us that there are still even greater opportunities to generate change. In order to do this, *we the people, of these United States*, must make a more conscious and concerted effort to become critically optimistic, curious, and honest about the world in which we live.

These efforts have to start somewhere and I argue that place is in higher education institutions. Colleges and universities are key sources of knowledge dissemination. When institutions withhold female-centered or feminist knowledge, knowingly or inadvertently, they reinforce patriarchy and masculinity, and our whole country suffers. This may seem like an extreme claim to make, but in reality, these institutions are responsible for educating and preparing the next generation of American professionals. If this is what we teach, it will be what we practice. The consequences of ignoring certain bodies of knowledge within undergraduate Political Science and International Studies programs should not be underestimated. Undergraduates will eventually become the political leaders of our country and, at present, they will do so with little knowledge of feminist international relations (IR).

Over the last 30 years, feminist IR and gendered approaches to security and foreign policy have been gaining attention in both the academy and in government. When she became Secretary of State in 2009, Hillary Clinton proclaimed that the rights of women and girls are vital to American national security interests and, therefore, need to be a cornerstone of United States' foreign policy initiatives (Hudson & Leidl, 2015). Two years later, the U.S. formalized this commitment through their National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. Likewise, some universities began developing programs that would allow students to focus on gender and security. Undeniable gains have been made in the field of feminist IR and on women, peace, and security, but this progress should not be overstated. Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security has been slower and more trivial than what was envisioned by its creators in 2000 and feminist IR theory continues to be a relegated to the margins in academic settings.

We are quick to blame those in our federal government for failing to address gender equality in more meaningful ways because it is easy. It's much harder for us to take a step back and consider how we, as citizens, have contributed to these failures, as well. In this paper, I argue that one reason for the slow progress of feminist foreign policy initiatives is the exclusion of gender and feminism from undergraduate political science and international studies courses. I begin by reflecting on my unique journey as a student and federal agency contractor. Not only do these experiences authorize my thinking as a scholar, but they also led me to conduct a brief study on how women and gender are being integrated into undergraduate IR courses at a sample of public, comprehensive colleges in New York State. Using primarily transnational feminist and feminist IR

thinking, I analyze and respond to what professors said about this issue. My research indicates that the majority of professors in my sample are not integrating women, gender, or feminism into their coursework, and this is primarily due to a lack of respect for feminist IR discourse as a legitimate space of knowledge. The purpose of this paper is not to debate the merits of different IR theories, but rather, to think critically about why feminist IR is not being included in security and foreign policy studies, and to consider the potential consequences its continued exclusion has on the current political climate of our country and world. I conclude that the absence of women and feminist knowledge from undergraduate IR courses needs to be addressed immediately if we are truly interested in protecting our national security.

Key Terms

The purpose of this section is to provide clarification to readers from diverse backgrounds on a number of discipline-specific Political Science and Gender Studies terms that I use throughout this paper

International Relations (IR) is used to refer to the academic discipline that focuses on the interaction of actors in international politics. Theorists tend to focus primarily on the state.

Feminist IR is a subfield of IR that focuses on interaction of actors in international politics through a gendered lens with a primary focus on individuals and their experiences within the state (Tickner, 2014).

Foreign Policy is defined, by the Oxford Dictionary, as a government's strategy in dealing with other states.

(It is worth noting that “state” is used to refer to a country, whereas “government” refers to an administration. When governments change, foreign policy approaches and priorities change).

National Security is the concept that a government should protect the state and its citizens against crises. Sometimes this is achieved through displays of power; other times through peace.

Gender Mainstreaming is a global strategy “for promoting gender equality...[and] ensuring that gender perspectives...are central to all activities,” including but not limited to policy development, program implementation, and research (UN Women, 2017, p. 1).

Subaltern are people who are thought to be and treated as subordinate, inferior, or of a lower rank. In this context, subaltern individuals are those who live socially, politically and geographically outside of hegemonic Western power structures (Spivak, 1988).

The Authenticity of My Voice

By simultaneously pursuing degrees in Political Science, International Studies, and Women and Gender Studies, I put myself in a unique position to consider the intersections of these disciplines. I love studying feminist and political theory and am fascinated by foreign affairs. I found myself particularly intrigued by my National Security course because it merged theory with practice. We used liberal and realist theories to analyze different threats to and types of security (i.e. military, human, environmental, etc.), and debate contemporary national security issues. The following semester, a professor asked if I had ever thought about the role of women in security. I

hadn't, but the mention of it piqued my interest. To my surprise, and apparently to that of the professor, there was a whole school of thought and a number of government initiatives devoted to women in security settings.

This discovery was both fascinating and frustrating: fascinating because all of my interests converged in one space, but also frustrating because I had not been introduced to any feminist international relations theory in my formal education. I realized that we had learned about the effect of certain decisions on states, but we hadn't discussed the effect on individual lives in as much detail. We had debated a variety of international security issues, but considering who is and isn't allowed to participate in security decision-making processes wasn't one of them. And finally, I realized that we had read the theories of many prominent male IR scholars (i.e. Doyle, 1986; Fukuyama, 1989; Huntington, 1993; Waltz, 1995), but we hadn't even heard mention of any leading feminist IR scholars (i.e. Enloe, 2004; Sylvester, 2001; Sjoberg, 2009; Steans, 2013; Tickner, 2014). This is where my questioning of undergraduate political science and international studies courses began.

In search of what was missing, I started doing my own independent research on the connection between gender relations and state security. I was pulled in by Mary Caprioli's (2000) empirical research on gender equality and state conflict; studies (Anderlini, 2007; Gizelis, 2011) demonstrating how women's participation in peace processes leads to more sustainable peace deals; and the number of different perspectives offered by feminist IR scholars (Enloe, 2004; Sjoberg, 2009; Steans, 2013; Runyon & Peterson 2014; Tickner, 2014). There certainly wasn't a shortage of knowledge to explore. I found myself particularly interested in the United Nations Security Council

Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and the subsequent National Action Plans and various initiatives that emerged from it. Again, I was struck with fascination and frustration. I loved knowing that there was work being done to integrate women into conversations about peace, conflict, and security. However, I couldn't help feeling that, over the course of more than 16 years, very little substantial progress had been made towards fulfilling the original charge of Resolution 1325. I found that I was not alone in this belief; a number of individuals within the international community share my sentiment (Donovan, 2010; Willet, 2010). Beginning in February 2016, I was fortunate enough to augment this research by working as an intern and then contractor for the U.S. Department of State. This allowed me to witness and take part in foreign policy decisions at the federal level as they were being made. I had the opportunity to analyze how the United States government was implementing its National Action Plan and contribute to conversations about its first quinquennial revision. I observed how women engaged in conversations about foreign policy decisions and the incredible outcomes of granting them access to this work. I also learned about the unfortunate consequences that can result from governments silencing, ignoring, and excluding women from conversations on peace and security matters. My colleagues supported my interest in women, peace, and security work by encouraging me to attend lectures and events on different gender issues that were hosted by universities in D.C. They frequently commented that it was uncommon for a student my age to be so versed on such issues and wondered if they had been discussed in my classes. Again, I wondered why they had *not* been.

After returning to New York for my final year of undergraduate studies, I reflected on all of the knowledge that I had gained over the last year. As a student, I

experienced a complete absence of feminism from international relations until I became curious and started exploring it on my own. I wondered why, if universities in Washington, D.C. were teaching courses on it and could see its value, I wasn't being taught about it at my public institution in upstate New York? Should the location of my school really determine the kind of knowledge I have access to? As I thought about my time working for the Obama Administration, I realized that I had witnessed feminism being applied to policy and programming decisions across multiple bureaus and agencies. Why didn't we talk about any of these initiatives?

As students, we are supposed to be gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to develop a career. Someone looking to work on security or foreign affairs needs to be aware of the unique role that women can play within these spheres and the efforts that the United States government is pursuing to enable that, but how can we be prepared if we're never taught about it? I believe that too many American citizens have stopped being curious about these kinds of questions and finding answers to them. In an effort to change that narrative, I got curious and I went looking for answers.

Literature Review

Recently, there has been a growing interest in gender biases and gendered perspectives in International Relations graduate education (Colgan, 2017), but few studies have taken up a similar interest in undergraduate education. Perhaps it is because I am an undergraduate student, but it seems to me that if a problem is to be solved, it must be addressed at its roots. For this reason, my study is situated within an undergraduate context, but the issue that emerged from my research is an epistemological

one about the knowledge within IR. Therefore, it is critical to understand the differences between the various schools of thought in the field. As an academic discipline, International Relations encompasses a large body of knowledge focused on understanding the interactions between states and state actors. Although states have been interacting for centuries, the origins of International Relations, as a field, tend to be situated at the end of World War I. People were eager to understand the war and to prevent another one of its magnitude from breaking out. From history, we know that early theorists were perhaps too optimistic about achieving this goal (Steans & Pettiford, 2001). Over the last century, there have been a number of both inter- and intrastate conflicts and attempts at creating peace. With them came several different perspectives about theories and approaches to international relations. There are essentially four main schools of thought within IR: Realism, Liberalism, Radicalism, and Constructivism (Mingst & Toft, 2014); and two predominant concentrations within those spaces are International Political Economy (IPE) and Security studies. For the purposes of this paper, I will be focusing my attention on realist, liberal, and feminist (constructivist) perspectives of security within IR.

Mainstream Divide – Liberalism vs. Realism

As we think about different theories in IR, I find it helpful to think of them as dancing with one another; they are at odds with each other in some ways and attracted in others, but both are interested in out-dancing the other. Liberal and realist IR thinkers have been doing this sort of formal dance with each other for decades, but the steps of the dance have existed for centuries. Today, there are many crosscutting similarities between the two schools of thought, such as the state being the key actor, the view of the state as selfish, and the belief that the international system is anarchic (Mingst & Toft, 2014).

This last point is critical for understanding international relations. The international system is the definition of anarchy; there is no overarching authority, no government (Waltz, 1979; Thayer & Ibryamova, 2010). Liberals and realists have not always agreed on this point, though, and have, indeed, taken very different paths to arrive at their few similarities. Consequently, they each have distinct ways of approaching international relations in practice. Both have served as the dominant school of thought at some point in the last century and the dance continues as scholars debate which theories are most applicable to the world we live in today.

Much of liberal thought can be traced back to Immanuel Kant's 1795 essay, *Perpetual Peace*, in which he argues that spreading true democracy could lead to the elimination of war. Classical liberal theorists maintain that human nature is inherently good and can lead to social change. They also believe that corrupt social institutions cause injustice, war, and other manifestations of evil human behavior (Mingst & Toft, 2014, p. 86). The more contemporary roots of classical liberalism emerged in 1918 as World War I came to a close and U.S. President Wilson advocated for the creation of a League of Nations (Mingst and Toft, 2014; Jackson & Sorensen, 1999). He, like other classical liberal thinkers, believed that cooperation was "an innate characteristic of humanity" (Mingst & Toft, 2014, p. 90). They saw this cooperation manifesting through the spread of democracy and Wilson believed that an international organization, like the League of Nations, could serve as a world government. When World War II broke out less than twenty years later, it became clear that this was not feasible and liberalism fell out of popularity for the next two decades.

Liberal thought resurfaced in the 1970s during the Cold War, rebranded as neoliberal institutionalism, and took up the question of *why* certain states – those that are liberal and democratic – tend to cooperate with one another (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985; Mingst & Toft, 2014). Neoliberals, like Axelrod and Keohane (1985), found that the prisoner’s dilemma is often at play in the international system, determining both the level of cooperation and the “mutuality of interests” that exists therein (p. 229). Essentially, the prisoner’s dilemma is a situation in which two actors “have an incentive to defect no matter whether the other player cooperates or defects” (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985, p. 229). Each has been given different consequences based on whether they choose to cooperate or defect, with the most severe punishment if one cooperates and the other defects. There is a moderate penalty if both defect and the least severe if both choose to cooperate. In most rational cases, both actors will choose to defect because, without the assurance of knowing what the other will do, it leads to the best possible outcome. As they continue to play this game, “the likelihood of reciprocity makes it [more] rational for each to cooperate rather than defect” (Mingst & Toft, 2014, p. 89). This is analogous to state interactions within the international system; states aren’t predisposed to cooperate with each other, as classical liberals suggested, but rather they choose to cooperate with one another because it is in their own self-interest to do so.

In the 1990’s, neoliberal thinkers began developing what is known as “democratic peace theory.” Essentially, this theory states that democracies don’t fight with one another; they will fight non-democratic states, but they will not fight each other (Doyle, 1986; Thayer & Ibryamova, 2010). It goes on to explain why states behave in this way and is one of IR’s “most empirically grounded theories” (Thayer & Ibryamova, 2010, p.

38). Michael Doyle (1986) is a leading scholar of democratic peace theory and takes much of his inspiration from Kant's teachings about peaceful restraint, the possibility of a global peace, and the consent of citizens to go to war. Although the research to support this theory has been empirically tested and the results are statistically significant, it does not prove that "democracies are more pacific than non-democracies" (Mingst & Toft, 2014, p. 155). This leads to a larger debate about the *spread* of democracy and the consequences of going about it carelessly. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder (1995) offer a realist perspective on the fact that the transition to democracy is often volatile and causes states to "become more aggressive and war-prone" (Thayer & Ibryamova, 2010, p. 54). They argue that the potential risks of pursuing aggressive democratization efforts and ways to smoothen transitions must be considered before actually taking action. This debate and the perspective offered by Mansfield and Snyder (1995) provides a perfect segue into what actually is considered to be the more dominant theory in International Relations – realism. Realism actually has a much longer history than liberal thought, dating as far back as Thucydides' teachings about the state and security in ancient Greece (Mingst & Toft, 2014; Jackson & Sorensen, 1999). Machiavelli's arguments about power and security, and Hobbes' "state of nature" are central to realist thinking, as well (Mingst & Toft, 2014, Jackson & Sorensen, 1999). However, its contemporary application to international relations emerged after that of liberal theory, which is why I've decided to discuss it second. Shortly after World War II, Hans Morgenthau (1948) published *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, a work that "was for several decades the most influential American book on IR" (Jackson & Sorensen, 1999, p. 42). In it, he defines six principles of political realism and

characterizes international politics as a struggle for power (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 4-15). The focus on power and the state are central to realism. Power is always relative; as some states gain power, others lose it and the struggle will continue indefinitely. Therefore, it was necessary to maintain a balance of power in the international system, an idea that became particularly important during the Cold War. Both Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State to Presidents Nixon and Ford, and George Kennan, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, were influenced by and “based their policy recommendations on realist theory” during this time (Mingst & Toft, 2014, p. 82). Kennan is known for his role in shaping the containment policy adopted by the U.S. throughout the Cold War (Mingst & Toft, 2014) and served as a proponent of conducting foreign policy sans morality (Kennan, 1986). This departure from ethics is a marked characteristic of realism.

Beyond that, though, realists began to split over approaches to foreign policy. In an attempt to reconcile these differences and unite realists under a single theory, Kenneth Waltz (1979) proposed the concept of neorealism, or structural realism. In an earlier book, *Man, State, and War*, Waltz (1959) described each of those three entities and concluded that the anarchical nature of the international system is the root of wars and will continue to serve as a source of permanent insecurity. In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz (1979) explains international politics since the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648. It is here that he offers the neorealist argument about the distribution of capabilities and of power as potential inroads for peace in the international system (Thayer & Ibrayamova, 2010, p. 54). By tracing the history of international relations, Waltz (1979) is able to make the argument that bipolarity, having two superpowers and one conflict dyad as it was during the Cold War, is the most stable arrangement of the

international system. Prior to that, the world existed in a state of multipolarity (multiple powers, multiple conflict dyads). It was unstable and extremely conflict prone.

Unipolarity exists when there is one hegemon in the world and realists are divided over whether this leads to greater stability or not. Neorealists maintain a focus on power and structures, rather than individual [state] behavior, to explain outcomes in the international system (Mingst & Toft, 2014). Realism is often considered to present a very pessimistic view of global affairs, but realists claim that they are merely describing the world, as it exists.

As the 21st century neared, two famous liberal and realist IR scholars offered two very different theses about the future of international relations. Liberal thinker, Francis Fukuyama (1989), offered his perspective on the triumph of the West and the possibility of the *end of history*, as we know it. He believed that liberalism provided the best approach to international relations and presented the “universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 4). In contrast to that, Samuel Huntington (1993) offered the realist perspective of an impending clash between Western civilization and all others. In *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington (1993) predicts, “the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict” in the post-Cold War world “will be cultural” (p. 22). There are multiple civilizations in today’s world and each has their own distinct values system. As the world shrinks and becomes evermore interconnected, conflict is bound to arise between cultures (Huntington, 1993). He rejects the idea of a universalization of culture and ideology, presented by Fukuyama, and instead offers three potential approaches that states will

take; they will isolate themselves, westernize, or attempt “to modernize but not to Westernize” (Huntington, 1993, p. 41).

Feminist IR Theory

At the same time that liberal and realist IR scholars were debating the future of international relations, feminist IR scholars entered with a perspective that had yet to be considered by anyone in the field. Feminist IR scholars (Sylvester, 2001; Blanchard 2003; Sjoberg, 2009; Steans, 2013; Runyon & Peterson 2014; Tickner, 2014) present the argument that gender factors into the power relations of the international system. Cynthia Enloe helped to initiate the exploration into this idea with a simple question: “Where are the women?” (Enloe, 2014, p. 1-36). This question needed to be asked because, as J. Ann Tickner (2014) observes, until 1988 “it is safe to say that...the presence of women and gender issues had been completely ignored by the IR discipline” (p. xv). Since then, feminist IR scholars have encouraged people to be critical of the knowledge within IR “because it is based on assumptions about human nature that are partial and that privilege masculinity” (Tickner, 2014, p. 8). A common misconception is that feminist IR scholars claim that other IR theories are incorrect. Rather, much of the knowledge claims that, as credible as mainstream perspective of peace, power, security, and protection within the state system may be, they demonstrate only a partial understanding of reality because they’ve been defined absent of the individual and gender relations (Sylvester, 2001; Blanchard 2003; Sjoberg, 2009; Steans, 2013; Runyon & Peterson 2014; Tickner, 2014).

Feminist IR thought is the application of centuries of feminist theory to theories about international relations that emerged throughout the 20th century. Like most feminists, those in IR seek to expose this privileging of masculinity and androcentric ideologies in mainstream academia (Harding, 1986; LeSavoy & Bergeron, 2011; Tickner,

2014). As Tickner (2014) stated, feminist IR scholars want to expose the plethora of ways that “international politics is a man’s world” (p. 5) through language and action, theory and praxis. We, in the Western world, tend to speak in dichotomies – object vs. subject, reason vs. emotion, public vs. private – and associate them with masculinity/male vs. femininity/female, respectfully (Harding, 1986). The former, masculine approaches to knowledge production are frequently more privileged than the latter feminist approaches to knowledge production and the results are “flattened misrepresentations” of reality (LeSavoy & Bergeron, 2011, p. 141). Tickner’s (1988) analysis of Hans Morgenthau’s (1948) six principles of political realism highlights the extent to which his vocabulary “contains many words associated with masculinity” (Tickner, 2014, p. 9). Additionally, within IR, women and femininity are often associated with peace and subsequently seen as being soft and weak. Conversely, men and masculinity are linked to power and valued as being hard and strong. This allows realists, who focus almost exclusively on power, to write femininity out and masculinity into their theories with little hesitation. Some liberal theorists, such as Keohane (1998), have actually been receptive to integrating gender into IR. While the potential benefits of this should not be discredited, the gendered element to it should also not go unstated. Liberal theorists are interested in peace and cooperation, so by advocating for feminist thought, they perpetuate the belief that women are more peaceful. Both examples reinforce LeSavoy and Bergeron’s (2011) conclusions about ways male centered knowledge dominates the research lexicon. Therefore, the final thing to note about feminist IR is that scholars (Blanchard 2003; Sjoberg, 2009; Runyon & Peterson 2014; Tickner, 2014) are proponents of separating women and femininity from peace when considering international affairs. Although it is true that peace deals tend to

be longer lasting when women are involved (Anderlini, 2007; Gizelis, 2011) and states with greater gender equality experience greater stability (Caprioli, 2000; 2014), women have comparable roles in supporting violence and terrorism (Fink, Barakat, & Shetret, 2013). By dissociating peace and power from sex and gender, feminist IR scholars create a space for those very issues to be examined neutrally and as they truly exist within the state system.

Towards a Feminist Foreign Policy

Over the last two decades, women and gender issues have received a great deal of attention from the international community. The 1990's were laden with violence as ethnic power struggles and genocides swept through various countries (Hudson & Leidl, 2015, p. 20-31). Not only did the world witness these “wars being fought on women’s bodies through the use of sexual violence,” but it also became apparent that the international system was extremely “limited in its capacity to prevent such wars”(Anderlini, 2010). Women sprung to action in the wake of these struggles by calling attention to their situation and demanding a presence in matters of peace and security. However it wasn’t until September 1995, when leaders from around the world gathered in Beijing for the United Nation’s Fourth World Conference on Women, that a conceptual framework began to take shape (Miller, Pournik & Swaine, 2014). It was here, that Hillary Rodham Clinton famously proclaimed, ‘Human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights’” (1995, p. 3). It was also here, in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, that the international community formally acknowledged the link between gender equality and peace. It made specific note of women’s crucial role in “[preserving] social order in the midst of armed and other conflicts” (United Nations, 1995, p. 58).

In their book, *The Hillary Doctrine*, Professor Valerie Hudson and Patricia Leidl (2015) state that “linking women to “hard” national security affairs” through what would become the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), “was the obvious next step after Beijing” (p. 21). The five years between Beijing and UNSCR 1325 were filled with a surge in women’s activism at the grassroots level that brought “the human face of war into the Security Council” (Anderlini, 2016). On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325. At just over three pages long, the legal and political framework provided therein is hailed as a milestone for international women’s rights because it was the first resolution of its kind designed to specifically “address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women” (UN Peacekeeping, 2017, p. 2). The document is not necessarily about women’s inclusion, but rather, it “it first and foremost about peace and security” (Anderlini 2010). UNSCR 1325 calls upon member states to recognize the necessity of protecting “women and girls during and after conflict;” the role that women play “in the prevention and resolution of [such] conflicts and in peace-building;” and “the importance of their equal participation and full involvement” in maintaining and promoting peace and security (UN Security Council, 2000, 1). The Security Council (2000) also recognized a need for gender mainstreaming in all peace, conflict, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts to ensure a more sustainable peace. All of these elements – protection, participation, prevention, and gendered perspectives – are essential to state security and the promotion of peace.

In October 2005, the President of the Security Council commended the progress made up until that point, but stressed “the importance and urgency for accelerating the

full and effective implementation of resolution 1325” through the development of National Action Plans by member states (UN Security Council, 2005, p. 1). These plans were to serve as implementation vehicles with tangible, measureable objectives. Since then, there has been a marked shift by politicians around the world towards more feminist foreign policy practices. In 2010, as U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, proclaimed, “the status of the world’s women is not simply an issue of morality – it is a matter of national security” (Hudson & Leidl, 2015, p. 53). One year later, on December 19, 2011, accompanied by an Executive Order from President Barack Obama, the U.S. officially launched its National Action Plan (White House, 2011). Though it is difficult to identify exactly what caused the U.S. to finally create a plan, scholars actually tend to point to the growing bodies of [feminist IR] research and evidence that emerged throughout the 2000’s linking national security and “so-called women’s issues” as the framework for its creation (Hudson & Leidl, 2015, p. 29). According to the Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom (2017), “as of January 2017, sixty-three nations had created a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325” and eight more had committed to developing one by year’s end (1).

There is much debate over the implementation of UNSCR1325 and its six sister resolutions that embody what is commonly referred to as the women, peace, and security agenda.¹ The number of National Action Plans is indicative of some progress, but many of the issues cited at the inception of UNSCR 1325 unfortunately hold true today (Donovan, 2010; Willet, 2010). Because of this, there is a general sense of disappointment throughout the international community that we’ve failed to transform

¹ The six resolutions are as follows: UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013); and UNSCR 2122 (2013)

UNSCR 1325 into something more than words on paper. Furthermore, as Sanam Anderlini, one of many civil society drafters of UNSCR 1325, observed, “prevention has come to mean sexual violence prevention, but the initial promise of 1325 had to do with conflict prevention” (2010). This shift began with Resolution 1820 and has continued to gain more attention to the detriment of promoting women’s role in conflict prevention. Women around the world are speaking up about these issues and offering their help in maintaining peace and security. Are we listening? How are we responding?

Research on Undergraduate Education

By the time that I left Washington, D.C. eight months after arriving there, it was clear that feminism was alive and well in both IR theory and foreign policy practices. The only thing left for me to figure out was why I had never been taught about any of it in my undergraduate International Relations courses. Spurred by my literature review of the various theoretical perspectives on international relations, I began a small empirical research study to explore the presence, or lack thereof, of feminist IR in undergraduate political science education. My primary research question was: To what extent do Political Science & International Relations courses taught at public higher education institutions in upstate New York, particularly those on foreign policy and national security, include gendered ideologies and practices in course content? I also developed a set of supplementary research questions to give my study more depth. How are courses being taught at public higher education institutions in upstate New York? Is there a possible correlation between the sex of a professor and the content taught? What is the impact of a professor’s experience with and perception of feminist IR theories on their

course content? What are the potential consequences of excluding feminist IR from undergraduate studies?

To answer the research questions I posed, I used qualitative research methods that included content analysis of syllabi and interviewing political science professors. Using this combination of methods allowed me to gain a better understanding of how and why the professors that I interviewed designed their courses as they did. I requested syllabi from eight political science professors at six colleges and reviewed those provided to me by ~~insert number~~ professors at four of the six schools. I selected these schools based on their geographical proximity to me to allow me to travel to the institutions to speak with participating professors in-person. My content analysis involved examining professors' learning outcomes and/or course descriptions and content as detailed in their course schedule. I scanned these components for any mention of women, gender, or feminist IR and coded this data accordingly.

The second part of my study involved interviewing professors using a semi-structured interview format. I generated questions which I grouped into four broad categories: 1) Development of syllabi (process, resources, etc.); 2) Professor's own educational background; 3) Professor's knowledge and opinion of gendered security and foreign policy approaches; and 4) Openness to feminist IR & integrating it into their courses, as well as what they would need to be able to do this. Beyond these focus areas, I was most interested in having a conversation with the professors about how and why they've designed their syllabi the way they have and what they think about feminist IR theories and the role of women in security. The interview portion of my study was crucial to extend what I learned from my analysis of syllabi. By engaging in conversation, I was

able to explore more demographic factors and use them as grounds for additional comparison beyond course content. The two most significant factors to my study are gender and education. I was interested in exploring whether sex appears to influence professors' inclusion of women or willingness to consider adding feminist IR to their courses. I was also interested in considering professors' educational backgrounds because we know that feminist IR formally emerged in the late 1980s, that UNSCR 1325 was announced in 2000, and that scholars have been producing research on the correlation between gender equality and conflict since. If professors received their degrees after 2000 and were not introduced to feminist theories, studies, and practices, then it helps explain why professors in my sample subsequently excluded this area of knowledge from their own courses.

I would be remiss not to address the fact that the identity of my participants may be a variable that impacted my results. The discipline of international relations tends to be heavily male-dominated. I anticipated encountering this and navigating potential power dynamics associated with it, but what I experienced was slightly different; only one participant in my sample was male. I also had to be mindful of differences in status and rank. I am only 21 years old and was consulting professors 10-20 years my senior. Add to this that I am an undergraduate student analyzing professors who are established scholars in their field and it becomes clear that there may have been certain power dynamics at play within my study. One final aspect concerning identities is ethnicity. From the interviews, I know that four of my participants were of different ethnic backgrounds (i.e. Persian, Indian, Eastern European, and Asian). Regrettably, I did not ask participants a question about ethnicity as it relates to their understanding of

international politics, so I do not have data for all participants and can't analyze my results based on it. I mention it here, though, because one of the participants that includes feminist IR in her courses cited her upbringing as having influenced her work. She was raised in a Persian household in New York City. Her Iranian and Afghani parents would share stories of living in conflict, so she grew up very aware of the patriarchal norms and socioeconomic factors that oppress people across time and place. This suggests that different ethnicities and backgrounds may contribute to different understandings of women's roles in foreign affairs.

Unmasking the Issue

Of the fifteen invitations that were sent to professors, I received eight responses. Five professors agreed to participate in my study and three professors opted not to for various reasons. Four of the five interview participants were female professors; the three professors who declined to participate were male. Although these professors decided not to participate formally in my research, two of the responses here were very telling. One professor simply stated that he did not have time and wished me luck in my research. The second professor responded that he "could not be of much help," which indicated, to me, the likelihood that he does not include gender in his courses. The third professor was very open in his response and stated, "I can save you from the trouble. I do not have any gender articles in my syllabus." He went on to suggest that I shift my research away from professors and syllabi to "the placement of gender articles on the top-ranked political science journals." This final response was significant in ways that the professor may not have even realized. Not only did he reveal the absence of feminist knowledge from his

courses, but also, in trying to deflect my attention to journals, he implied that the field itself is perhaps to blame. Though it is not the purpose of my study to look at journals, it is absolutely true that International Relations publications have not sanctioned the legitimacy of feminist research in the same ways they recognize other scholarship, and that this inevitably impacts the materials that are available for and brought into instruction. This introduces an excellent area for further study. Circling back to my research, I was able to gain some level of insight about feminist IR in undergraduate Political Science and International Relations teaching from five of the six schools I investigated.

Year of degree completion is a variable as it relates to the emergence of feminist IR into the fields of Political Science and International Relations. All participants received at least one, if not all, of their degrees post-2000. We know that UNSCR 1325 was passed in 2000 and that feminist IR had started to really take off at this point, so it is concerning that professors were not being introduced to these in any of their studies. Two professors stated that they had only learned about 1325 and feminist IR in recent years, but not in their studies. One indicated that feminist IR was mentioned in her graduate coursework, but that they did not discuss it at length. The last two professors had more extensive, meaningful exposure to feminist IR, but also noted that they had personally decided to concentrate on gender in their studies, and without this intrinsic motivation, they otherwise felt that they would not have encountered feminist IR material. Two of the five professors that I interviewed included the words “women,” “female,” “gender,” or “feminist” on their syllabi, amounting to only three out of 12 courses that I reviewed. The majority of syllabi that I analyzed were specifically for international relations,

national security, or foreign policy courses, but two professors sent syllabi for development and global politics courses. One of these professors also happens to be someone whose course is one of the two who integrated gender into their course content. The syllabi for the other nine courses that I analyzed did not include any explicit indication of gendered analysis.

In conducting the interviews, all five participants noted that gender comes up, almost inevitably, at some point throughout their classes. Only two of the five professors indicate that they deliberately make it a point to discuss gender through a critical lens, both in theory and in practice. These two professors were the same ones that identified gender as being something they were educated on and focused on within their own research. In the first case, the professor devotes one week to feminist international relations and the role of gender equality in armed conflict. Coincidentally, her research interests specifically focus on gender and international security. The second was actually a “Politics of Development” course and therefore not quite as in-line with foreign policy and security, but certainly related. The professor devoted two weeks of her course to discussing gender in development. When I spoke with her, she expressed that there is a departmental commitment to integrating women and gender issues into their Political Science coursework and noted that they are currently home to one of today’s leading feminist IR scholars. Nevertheless, she noted that within the public university system, her department’s approach was typically seen as being less mainstream, more critical, and more constructivist. These cases indicate, at least to some extent, that there is correlation between professor’s exposure to gendered approaches and the likelihood of them being integrated into course content.

The remaining three participants indicated varying levels of awareness on feminist IR and the role of women and gender in security. To some degree, they all attributed their lack of attention to more inclusive approaches and thinking about feminist IR to their training and lack of exposure. Predominantly, though, participants expressed feeling like gendered approaches to IR were too far outside mainstream approaches, still being developed, and lacked both presence and legitimacy in the field. Two professors stated that feminist IR scholars don't integrate into the rest of, or mainstream, IR, and the one male participant explained that he felt it was "up to feminist scholars to make their arguments within a realist context that gender matters." Professors felt that because there was so much to cover on the basic foundations of IR, foreign policy and national security, there simply wasn't enough time to discuss alternative, constructivist approaches, like feminist IR theory, let alone to devote entire units to these approaches. This highlights an epistemological issue that feminist researchers commonly have to confront in their work. They pointed to there being a lack of reliable resources available on the topic. One of the professors who does actually integrate gender into her course content, sympathized with others about this, but argued that the resources *are* actually there; it's more of an issue of knowing that they exist and where to find them. Finally, four of the five participants expressed a lack of student interest in gender within the field. The one professor who felt gender inclusion wasn't an issue happens to teach the development course. She noted that students tend to recognize gender as a central issue in development. This indicates that students likely don't associate gender with foreign policy and national security issues, but then again, why would they if professors never talk about it?

Unfortunate as they might be, my results are hardly shocking. It is well known by feminist IR scholars that mainstream thinkers don't respect their work or regularly teach it in undergraduate classrooms (Tickner, 2014). There is little we can do now to go back in time and address the training received by professors, but there is much we can do moving forward. Professors do not need to be experts on feminist IR in order to teach it, nor do they need to radically change the way they teach their courses. At the moment, professors aren't teaching feminist IR at all. While it could be argued that it deserves more than one week of attention, one week would be something at this point. In 1998, a group of faculty at the University of Minnesota wrote an article titled, *Integrating Gender Concerns into IR Curriculum* (Lay et al., 1998). In it, the authors explore the multiple different issues deterring integration, provide suggestions for overcoming them, and ultimately propose a design for a course that achieves their goals. The model syllabus suggests a course that "provides a variety of approaches" and helps students "think about the relationship between theory and reality" (Lay et al., 1998, p. 191). Although it may appeal to and be considered the ideal approach to teaching IR courses by feminist scholars, doing this requires an incredible amount of time and personal will. Given that professors in my study aren't even thinking or talking about feminist IR, makes it unrealistic to recommend or ask that they redesign their courses to the extent that these scholars recommend. For now, even just mentioning that there are gendered perspectives to IR theory and providing a brief overview of what they say would be a welcome step in the right direction and more than what's currently being done.

The point raised on having an inadequate body of scholarship for introducing feminist IR in the classroom is an interesting one that ultimately ties into the root of the

problem in this field. I reject the claim that feminist IR is new and that there are not enough scholarly sources. Feminist perspectives formally entered the field of IR over 30 years ago and the idea that women play an integral role in peace and security has been promoted by states within the international community for more than two decades. Although the U.S. was slow to create a National Action Plan on women, peace, and security, the last three Presidents have affirmed the importance of women in foreign affairs through their appointments for Secretary of State.² Today, there are even entire research institutes solely devoted to producing knowledge on women in foreign policy settings and sharing that knowledge with government agencies.³ There is hardly a lack of feminist IR knowledge or government initiatives around the world supporting its credibility. Finding it, however, is certainly an issue. The problem is four-fold. The first lies in our government working on gender initiatives, but not necessarily publicizing them to a wide audience. Secondly, professors simply aren't looking for the information and perspectives outside of what they already teach. The third issue is that, if they are interested in teaching feminist IR, professors don't know where to find "materials and approaches [for teaching it] at the undergraduate level" (Lay et al., 1998, p. 181). The fourth and final problem is how introductory IR textbooks treat feminist IR theories.

Though the United States is now under a new administration, federal agencies should strive to publicize the work they are doing on gender in foreign policy (to the extent that our national security isn't jeopardized, of course). Whether they agree with

² President Bill Clinton named Madeleine Albright the first female Secretary of State in 1997. President George W. Bush followed suit with the appointment of Condoleezza Rice in 2005, and President Barack Obama with Hillary Clinton in 2009.

³ See Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security and Inclusive Security as examples of this.

them or not, professors should take care to represent all IR theories in their courses. Finding materials on feminist IR and gendered perspectives on security is a challenge. When I went looking for resources in the security studies section of my college library, I found one pink book titled *Gender in International Relations* (Tickner, 1992). I was able to find a few books and chapters on feminist IR in the general IR section, but I found some of my most informative sources in the stacks devoted to Women and Gender Studies. For political scientists, this is problematic. A great deal of scholarship on gender and security has emerged since Tickner's text was published 25 years ago and feminist IR is as much a theory about international relations as any other IR theory. Excluding it or relegating it to gender specific section of the library further obscures its visibility and reach as being important to the IR field.

Finally, as I explored a sample of three introductory textbooks on international relations (Mingst & Arreguin-Toft, 2014; Jackson & Sorensen, 1999; Steans & Pettiford, 2001), I realized the depth of the problem went beyond a lack of resources or visibility. Out of these three texts, only one (Steans & Pettiford, 2001) devoted equal attention to *all* theories, perspectives, and themes of IR. Co-author, Jill Steans, is a leading feminist IR scholar, so this makes perfect sense. The other two texts pay much less attention to it. Jackson and Sorensen (1999) mention gender in the table of contents and as a subheading within a chapter. They address "gender" as a source of a dissident voice and an alternative approach to IR as an academic subject (Jackson & Sorensen, 1999, p. 59-61). Jackson and Sorensen (1999) later devote approximately six pages to considering gender as a "New Issue in IR" to in international relations (p. 257-262). This classification is interesting. Formally studying gender as part of the academic discipline was, indeed, still

fairly new at the time this text was written. Gender itself, though, was not a new issue in international relations; it just hadn't ever been considered. The text by Mingst and Arreguin-Toft (2014) is more challenging. In contrast to the previous text, *Essentials of International Relations* is a fairly recent textbook (2014), yet it doesn't even mention gender or feminist IR in its table of contents.⁴ Rather, readers will come across such topics under alternative approaches, radical perspectives, and in a nifty "you decide" section. This final section is the most problematic of the three because it implies to the reader that they get to decide whether feminist IR is a legitimate body of knowledge. For example, the given prompt is: "Assume for the sake of argument that due to systematic exclusion from state leadership opportunities (or female self-selection out of such opportunities) Tickner is right. Would a world led by women be more peaceful?" (Mingst & Arreguin-Toft, 2014, p. 99). The language used by the authors is almost condescending and seems to suggest what readers should be inclined to decide. Beyond that, the prompt fails to depict accurately feminist IR theory because it associates women with peace, when in reality, feminist IR scholars challenge and seek to disrupt the association of femininity and being female with being more pacific. The professors in my study admitted that the textbooks they use in their foreign policy and national security courses fail to include gender at all. The fact that so many IR textbooks don't include gender, or do so in a way that is dismissive, inaccurate, and almost negative, makes it challenging to integrate feminist IR into coursework.

The issue of how feminist IR is treated in textbooks speaks to the larger epistemic issue present in the discipline as a whole. There seems to be a consensus amongst those

⁴ Mingst & Arreguin-Toft recently released the 7th edition of this textbook in 2016. The updated version is slightly more inclusive of feminist IR theory.

partial to mainstream IR theories that feminist IR theory is not a legitimate field of knowledge. As mentioned earlier, Political Science and International Studies are masculine disciplines in both knowledge foundation and research orientation. Conversely, Women and Gender Studies as a discipline is often met with skepticism by traditional academics who guard the patriarchal code at the center of higher education's origins (Ginsberg, 2008). Therefore, when you roll the two disciplines into one, as feminist IR does, its omission from conversations on "hard issues" in IR is, again, not surprising. This was made clear by the male professors' comment about gender scholars

Epistemology is the term given to theories of knowledge and knowledge production (Letherby, 2003). It begs the question about who can create, possess, and control knowledge. One might be inclined to say that anyone can and does, but we know this isn't actually the case. Knowledge production has historically "been dominated by patriarchy and men have used their positions of power to define issues, structure language, and develop theory" (Letherby, 2003, p. 20). Epistemological challenges tend to be amongst the very first issues that feminist researchers confront when making knowledge contributions and it is one that they must continually push back at throughout their career. Gayle Letherby (2003) distinguishes between two different types of knowledge – "*authorized knowledge* [or] the knowledge of the academy and *experiential knowledge*," which can be defined as "the knowledge generated from experience" (p. 20). Men and masculinity are privileged with a sense of legitimacy and authority in the academy that is often denied to feminist knowledge constructed outside the patriarchal code. This was evident in the male professor's comment about gender scholars needing to frame their thinking in realist terms. As Tickner (1988; 1992) has highlighted, realism is

fraught with masculinity from its focus on power to Kenneth Waltz's (1959) not-so-subtle *Man, State and War*. Therefore, this professors' remark indicates a lack of understanding about what feminist IR theories are trying to do.

It also raises an important dilemma. Due to the nature of the two ideologies, feminist IR scholars can't really make their arguments within a realist context. Feminist perspectives, unlike realist, account for individual experiences and how they impact state relations and behavior. By focusing only on the state, much of mainstream IR has effectively silenced the voices of the individuals living the reality of what is "state." Postcolonial and transnational feminism ties very closely into feminist IR on a number of levels. Chandra Mohanty (2003) and Gayatri Spivak (1993), two leading feminist scholars on post-colonial and transnational thought, expose the ways in which western feminisms overshadow and silence the experiences and feminisms cultivated by women in the developing world. Feminist IR scholars (Tickner, 2015) apply this line of thinking to the silencing and absence of colonialism and indigenous voices in mainstream IR. It also provides a great lens for thinking about the dilemma presented here. In her 1988 essay, Spivak asks, "Can the subaltern speak?" She considers how western logics have supplanted the local logics (i.e. ways of living, thinking, being, etc.) of individuals living on the margins in the developing world and concludes "the subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (Spivak, 1988, p. 105). In the field of International Relations, women and feminists are the subaltern; they cannot be heard or read, and they never will be if professors continue to wait for feminism to enter mainstream perspectives like realism.

Curiosity, Complacency, or Complicity?

During the Obama administration, there was a marked commitment to promoting and empowering women both domestically and abroad. Women served as some of President Barack Obama's top advisors and he explicitly stated that he "made advancing gender equality a foreign policy priority" (Office of the Press Secretary, 2016, p. 7). Despite the fact that women were present and actively participating in foreign policy decisions for the last eight years, professors were not talking about feminist IR and gender concerns in their national security and foreign policy courses. Now, we have President Donald Trump. Within his first 100 days, the Trump administration and Republican Congress have made it unbelievably clear that advancing women is not one of their priorities. Rather, it appears to be the exact opposite. Only three days into his presidency, Trump signed an Executive Order to reinstate the Mexico City policy, more commonly referred to as the global gag rule. This law prohibits international organizations that provide family planning services from receiving U.S. funding. Other restrictive measures on women's health and minority rights have been introduced and passed in the weeks and months since. It's become commonplace to see images of white men standing together and smiling as these measures are moved forward and minority rights are simultaneously drawn back. The absence of women in these images is similar to the absence of women and feminism in the IR discipline and undergraduate classrooms. Increasingly now, women are nowhere to be seen or heard.

We know, from a variety of empirical feminist studies (Caprioli, 2000; Caprioli, 2005; Hudson et al., 2008), that state stability is inherently linked to gender equality; that states with greater gender equality are more stable. As freedoms are taken away from

women, the disparity between men and women only widens. As the schism grows, the stability and security of the United States will slowly begin to breakdown in its place. As Margaret Atwood recently stated, “change could be as fast as lightning [and] established orders could vanish overnight. Anything could happen anywhere, given the circumstances” (2017, p. 2). In describing the government takeover of Gilead in Atwood’s (1985) *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Offred recalled, “I guess that’s how they were able to do it, in the way they did, all at once, without anyone knowing beforehand...There wasn’t even any rioting in the streets. People stayed home at night, watching television, looking for some direction” (p. 174). Over the last year, Atwood’s (1985) dystopian novel has become remarkably popular and relevant again. This is not a simple coincidence. The subjugation of women, the use of religious tyranny, and totalitarianism are central themes in the book (Atwood, 2017), and they’ve become all too familiar for people in today’s America. Unlike Gilead, many people are actively taking to the streets to advocate for rights and protections of all, but this can only go so far when you have equally as many people sitting at home without a care or concern in the world for what’s going on around them. Beyond the reasons given in official statements and through different media outlets, many have stopped asking why; we’ve stopped being curious. Feminist IR scholar, Cynthia Enloe (2004), wrote about becoming “more and more curious about curiosity and its absence” (p. 2). She said that in becoming curious about something, we must also confront our previous lack thereof. If we are not being curious, we are likely being complacent about or complicit in what our government is doing. Either way, we find is that “so many power structures – inside households, within institutions, in societies, in international affairs – are dependent on our continuing

lack of curiosity” (Enloe, 2004, p. 3). Therefore, it is imperative that we make haste in rediscovering our sense of curiosity and seeking answers to questions that aren’t currently being asked.

Conclusion

In regards to women and International Relations, students and professionals alike have stopped asking six basic questions that we’re all introduced to in elementary school. *Who* is missing? *What* do feminist scholars have to say about peace, power, and state security? *“Where* are the women?” (Enloe, 2014, p. 1-36). *When* did women begin playing a role in IR? *Why* are women and feminist perspectives so critical in today’s world? *How* do we integrate women in what we teach, study and practice? We start with education. We may not have definitive answers for all of these questions or know all that there is to know about feminist IR and the women, peace, and security agenda, but we never will if we don’t start somewhere. If professors don’t introduce students to these ideas during their undergraduate career, some may never learn or be exposed to them. We have had women playing active roles in national security and foreign policy and we did not talk about them. Now they have been taken out of the picture, literally and figuratively. If we continue to silence and exclude feminist perspectives from International Relations, masculinity will continue to dominate our politics. If we move towards including women and feminist perspectives in International Relations, we will move towards gender equality and state stability.

From my research, I conclude that undergraduate IR professors, particularly those teaching U.S. Foreign Policy and National Security courses, need to adopt a mindset that

is oriented towards gender mainstreaming. Washington, D.C. is not sending a message of hope that the Trump administration and the 115th Congress will be prioritizing women and gender concerns in the foreseeable future. We, the citizens of the United States of America, have the option to accept this message or reject it. Undergraduate professors of Political Science and International Relations have the choice to continue to exclude women and gender from their courses or to bring them into the fold of theoretical perspectives that shape our understandings of state interactions. I am not calling for a complete alteration of teaching style or even course content. When theories are presented, *all* theories should be presented and students should have the freedom to explore them equally. The choice between curiosity, complacency, and complicity is ultimately theirs to make. However, let us not forget the words of our very first U.S. Secretary of State and 3rd President, Thomas Jefferson: “All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of conscience to remain silent.” Through curiosity, conversation, and action, this generation of students and educators can be the beacon of hope that is lacking from our government.

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