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International influence in the empowerment of women in Latin America

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Abstract

Women in Latin America represent almost half of the population. However, their concerns and situations are not always considered by governing powers when creating public policies. As a result, feminist Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been at the front runner alongside women in the region fighting for women's rights. This research focuses on how NGOs work and women in Latin America have been influenced by foreign actors, including international donors and organizations. Furthermore, it also tackles how international influence and women in politics have, and still are, affecting the work of NGOs.

To answer the research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the author to NGOs located in the region. NGOs had to work for women's rights or be involved with women's concerns and situations. Apart from the interviews, three articles were selected to support the interviews further. The author does not take a specific time frame. However, the author focuses on the period in which there was an increased presence of NGOs and international organizations and the current NGOs' work and situations. NGOs became the advocates and one of the main actors fighting for women's rights in the region. Therefore, this research also focuses on the perspective NGOs have on international actors, women in politics, and their current role in the fight for women's rights.

Women and feminist NGOs have used feminism to advance their agendas and advocate for their needs and concerns in their local communities. However, their agendas and the women's movement in the region has been influenced by different actors both inside and outside their own countries. This research concludes that international organizations and donors highly influence the NGOs' work. Moreover, the influence comes directly or indirectly, as most Latin American countries have signed international agreements to further advance the international gender equality agenda.

Keywords: *Feminism, Latin America, NGOs, Globalization, Women, Rights.*

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1. Introduction

During the last few decades, Latin America has experienced an increase in women's presence in different areas of society, from business to entrepreneurs and politics. However, women continue being unrepresented in most Latin American countries, and the working conditions do not support the protection of their human rights (Bando, 2019). Hence, making it more difficult for women to contribute to their country's economy and play a more significant role in their communities and continue facing gender violence. Throughout history, women have tried to make changes and be more impactful in their society. In more recent years, Latin America has been seeing an increase in women's movements that aim for a better representation of women in politics, economics, and business fields and look for an increased representation in their specific needs. Countries like Argentina have passed different bills to increase the percentage of women working in parliaments and other government offices (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008). There has also been an increase in government offices and positions that aim to support a change in women's rights and policies in the region. However, this has also increased the negative stereotype towards women (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008). It has also been debated how can the representation of women increase in representative positions.

Women's role in Latin American society and world politics has changed in the past decades. Their role and fight for rights in the region go beyond the most recent uprise for abortion rights and decrease violence. Latin American feminists were able to bring into the human rights discussion the discussion of women's rights being human rights and human rights being women's rights (Friedman, 2014). This conversation was not a simple discussion but influenced the signing of the first international law on violence against women, the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment, and Elimination of Violence against Women (Friedman, 2014). Furthermore, another primary influence of women in the region is the creation of the *Encuentros* (Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Meetings), which would be gatherings of women that would create face to face discussions regarding women's needs for change from domestic relations to economic and social roles (Friedman, 2014). Furthermore, these Encuentros would start with and for women only from Latin America and the Caribbean, now include women and feminist NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) from everywhere in the world (Friedman, 2014). Hence, the presence of the international community becomes more critical for women and their roles.

Women have moved from the private to the public spheres, increasing their presence in many different scopes. Over the past decades, women in Latin America have increased their

presence from enrollment in schools to their role in politics and power positions, i.e., leaders in armed forces to the presidency (Buvinic & Roza, 2004). Furthermore, the increase of women in public spaces has not only influenced politics but has also decreased the gender bias in many aspects of society, increasing human capital in the countries, which directly influences the socioeconomic perspective, among other sectors of society (Buvinic & Roza, 2004). By the beginning of the 21st-century, women have already been chosen as leaders in their home countries. In 2003, Panama had elected its first woman president, and Peru had a woman prime minister. In more recent years, we can see an increase of women in politics and women have led their countries, like Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner in Argentina and Dilma Rousseff. All these women have been democratically elected, making not only a women statement but also a democratic one. These elections have proven that democracy can also be in women's favor and that they can be elected by most of their countries' population. Mainly due to the historical background of authoritarian regimes.

In the 1950s, many Latin American states gave women the right to vote. Even though it did not entirely mean an increase in public policy based on gender, women continued fighting to establish quotas in political parties (Barrig, 2001). Women won this law in 1991 in Argentina and 1996 and 1997 in countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guayana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Venezuela (Barrig, 2001). Women in Latin America represent around 50 percent of the population (The World Bank, 2021a) making it an important sector of society. Women being part of public and political spaces would signify an increase in democracy as a higher percentage of the population would participate in its process and represent the needs of larger constituencies. This came with women running for the presidency and in 1974, Latin America saw the first woman president being elected in Argentina, Isabel Peron (1974 – 1976). Furthermore, the increased presence of women has influenced legislation not only on the domestic level but also on the international. Many Latin American states have signed and adopted international treaties and conventions. The aforementioned is only part of the influence women can have in society and that their role is as influencing as the role of any other actor in any sector. This also represents the changes that women are fighting for, having a voice in every aspect of their society. However, even though women's role has influenced the region, and many have raised their voices to fight for their needs and representation, many other actors continue influencing the laws, policies, and women's rights.

In Latin America, the fight for women's rights, as explained before, has been mainly a success from the *Encuentros*. These gatherings not only brought together women but also many different types of organizations. However, the Encuentros had certain difficulties; many women felt that to be able to take action in their own countries, they needed more than just the meetings. Therefore, other organizations were also boosted by these Encuentros and women would start participating in feminist NGOs in their home countries or the whole region. In the 1980s – 1990s, many NGOs and forums were created to support women in raising their voices and needs (Friedman, 2014). These NGOs have become the main allies for women increasing awareness in the region and globally. NGOs have also strengthened their position among public and private institutions by advocating for human rights and raising concerns about the population's needs. The work increased due to globalization and the need for governments to increase their economic competitiveness (Latin American Association of Development Promotion Organizations et al., 2007). However, this brings the responsibility of expertise on the matter to NGOs – that is, in the social subject to the point of focusing on the implementation of laws and social matters (Latin American Association of Development Promotion Organizations et al., 2007). Furthermore, globalization has supported the creation of many more NGOs and has served as an umbrella for said organizations (Franco, 1998). This work and the increase of women's participation in public and private spaces have impacted legislation and more awareness and debates take place on society (Latin American Association of Development Promotion Organizations et al., 2007). Even though non-governmental organizations have made it possible to create a stronger connection between governments and women's needs, the region continues to have deficiencies regarding women's rights.

In 1980 there was an increased fragmentation of feminism in Latin America (Franco, 1998). Fragmentation only made it difficult for NGOs to focus on their work as governments established the parameters (Franco, 1998), making it more challenging to raise awareness of women's rights and social needs and the situation living in the region, regarding revolutions and military regimes. This fragmentation made it more difficult for NGOs to find funds and work together to achieve the same goals. Furthermore, the polarization of feminists groups negatively influenced the relation they had with governmental institutions (Franco, 1998). Even though globalization and economic competitiveness put women's rights and social issues into the hands of the NGOs, these organizations continue having difficulties in making impactful changes in society and legislation due to the technical work they need to focus on. Furthermore, even though that NGOs have raised awareness of women's rights, they continue having

setbacks on legislation and women's representation in positions of power in society. As they increase awareness of the needs for women's rights does not implicate that governments will indeed create policies and pass laws (Franco, 1998).

Another critical factor for setbacks on policies and representations is the increase of the international presence of other foreign actors in the region, i.e., the high influence of the already well-established institution, the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is an institution that has influenced not only politics but also basic human rights. In Latin America, 90% of the population is considered Catholic (Teutonico, 2017), and if not catholic, any other religion that would have established roles for women in society. This influence impacts the domestic policies and international treaties signed by the Latin American states, i.e., the American Convention on Human Rights (Teutonico, 2017). Thus, Latin America is a region where domestic policies are created and passed based on religious beliefs, directly impacting the lives of women and their role in society. This also influences women's fight for women's rights and, therefore, the actions of any actor who participates in those objectives and goals, setting back the results that NGOs and women have had in the region.

These setbacks on legislation, lack of women representation, and the polarization of feminists' groups directly impact the goals and objectives of NGOs in the region. Hence, directly having a negative impact on women's and gender equality rights. On the other hand, NGOs have become the leading specialists on women's needs without the complete support of the state. They have also become important actors in the international community, advocating for human rights and society needs. Therefore, it is essential to understand how the NGOs' work impacts society norms and the main difficulties they currently face. This thesis will try to understand the main activities, discourses, policies inside and outside the region that impact Latin American non-governmental organizations. Therefore, the main research questions are:

- Has the work of non-governmental organizations working in Latin America for women's rights been influenced or pressured due to the increasing international presence of other organizations and foreign policies in the region?
    - Have specific international agreements and actors influenced states to make changes in favor or against women's rights?
- How has having female politicians and leaders impacted the NGOs?

As not only the influence of the international community is the one that has impacted countries, like Argentina and Brazil, but also the fact of having an increased female

representation and female presidents could have hindered or assisted the NGOs' work. For example, even though having President Rousseff has made a difference, policies and rights for women could have had more successes (Fagundez & Mendoza, 2016).

1.1 Research Design

Based on the research questions introduced above, the focus of this thesis will be on the work on Feminist Non-Governmental Organizations in Latin America, specifically in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. As explained before by the author, Non-governmental organizations have had decades working and supporting women in the region. However, current globalization and worldwide struggles have influenced the NGOs' actions, goals, and successes throughout the region. This thesis intends to better understand these organizations' current struggles and how foreign actors have influenced them. Feminism as a theory of international relations will support the author in explaining the work of those actors who have helped or work for the women affected every day by international politics and foreign actors. Feminism is important in this work not only because it focuses on women but also it is the theory that puts the work of women and women groups, including NGOs, in the center. Feminism starts to understand how the most minimum women activity can influence international relations and the world power (Enloe, 2014). However, the author has chosen Post-Colonial Feminism to explain further the current situation of a very diverse region, where not only the difference goes from country to country, but the diversity is found within the same countries, from race and ethnicity to language and legal differences (Tyagi, 2014). Postcolonial feminism as a theory in international relations will be able to establish that the difference between the global north and Latin America, specifically, is that their needs are not the same. Therefore, the work of NGOs located in the region cannot be entirely the same as those in the global north. This theory will also support the search for the answers to the research questions as the work of NGOs might be high and directly influence by foreign international actors and discourses.

The history of feminism and NGOs in Latin America has several decades, and women's raise of voices as well. However, the current global situation (globalization, human rights advocacy (including the advocacy for trans-women rights) have influenced feminism in Latin America. Therefore, in the methodology section of this thesis, the author has decided to include two different types of data collation in the methodology section. The primary data collection is interviews with Non-Governmental Organizations in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. The

secondary data will be focused on articles that will support the information gathered from the interviews. The secondary data will also support the background information, which will focus on the work NGOs have done in the region and how it has changed due to globalization and different policies in the region but most specifically in the three countries mentioned above. In addition, the data will also support answering the previously stated research questions by explaining further the work NGOs do in the region and how foreign influence will. Finally, the methodology section will conclude with a brief explanation of the limitations of this work.

After presenting the theories of feminism, postcolonialism, and postcolonial feminism and stating the main difference between them, the author will develop deeper the reason and the importance of postcolonial feminism in understanding the region and its application. After the theory, the methodology will be introduced, explaining the main actions taken to answer the research questions. The background of this research will introduce feminism in Latin America with the explanation of previous work of women and non-governmental organizations as main supporting actors of women in the region. With this introduction, the data gathered for this thesis will be introduced and explain. The primary and secondary data will be developed further to bring into perspective and notice the information needed to answer the research questions. Last, the analysis section of this work will include the information that has been gathered from the interviews with the connection to Postcolonial Feminism and the background, getting the entire data of this research into a more holistic perspective to finally conclude whether both of them can, in fact, answer the main research questions. Finally, this research will be completed with conclusions and implications of the research as a whole.

2. Theory

As it has been stated in the introduction, postcolonial feminism is the theory chosen to support this research. However, in order to fully understand the theory, both feminism and postcolonialism will be introduced. The author intends to comprehend the bases for both theories, the basis for postcolonial feminism, and how they diverge from one another. Mainly as it could be understood, postcolonial feminism is part of both theories. However, this is not entirely true and hence the importance of bringing it into this research. Furthermore, the author will be able to use said differences in the analysis in section six. That being said, feminism will be introduced first, postcolonialism second, and third postcolonial feminism, including a subsection to establish the differences and how those support the research.

2.1 Feminism

It is required to understand feminism as a whole and what this theory is focused on. According to Tickner and Sjoberg (2013), feminism theory in International Relations is changing and seeing the perspective of international politics through "gendered lenses" (p. 206). Furthermore, this theory has been established to explain and draw attention to how much women influence and are important to foreign policies, the global economy, and others (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013). Therefore, feminism in international relations includes the role women play and the fact that much of the knowledge in the field has been created by men, is about men and for men, leaving women behind by choice (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013). One might think that the feminism of the International Relations field is the same as the feminism that the population sees in their everyday life (if they do), but it is not. Even though feminism does focus on social relations (gender relations) over anarchy, this feminism is related specifically to the role women play in the field and how they could or can influence international politics (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013). Nevertheless, this does not entirely explain why the actions of feminists and women in different sectors and scopes continue being studied as they are.

According to Cynthia Enloe, a feminist theorist in International Relations, feminism supports the analysis of factors in the local or "ground" perspective and not only in international politics and global governance (Enloe et al., 2016). Furthermore, Enloe states that there is a need to look into the lives of those women who have been affected by war or other international situations and the work done by actors that have helped said women (Enloe et al., 2016). Based on this, it can be established that feminism is not only about what the actors of other

international relations theories consider. While in her work, Enloe is refereeing specifically on war's impact on women's lives, yet she later states that if attention is not given to personal lives affected, especially women, in international relations, then it continues becoming a field of men (Enloe et al., 2016). In her book Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics, Enloe states one of the main questions in international relations is "Where are the women?" (Enloe, 2014). This question encompasses every work women do, how that work can be connected to international relations and how their work can influence it (Enloe, 2014).

Feminism goes beyond viewing international relations through gendered lenses but follows those women in every aspect of society. It also follows those actors supporting said women in the everyday fight against oppression and continuing to ask ourselves where the women are. These actors can be described as organizations or women's groups supporting women to raise their voice, increase their chances of leaving a difficult situation in their own countries or their own home, and fight for their rights in the domestic and international aspects. Furthermore, this theory establishes that the international community should consider the international and the political spaces considered public sphere to go deeper in societies domestic and home aspects being described as private spheres (Enloe, 2014). Therefore, making private and domestic spaces part of international politics and not only part of women (Enloe, 2014). Therefore, women's actions and needs would become part of the international community and increase the chances of having a real influence on women's rights and international political actions. This change would make it possible for us to understand that women's decisions, activities, and roles in society are based not only on their own needs but also on everything surrounding them. Those surroundings can be and might always be influenced by international politics.

This theory also focuses on "recognizing and then challenging assumptions about masculine and feminine gender roles that dictate what both women and men should or can do in global politics" (Smith, 2017, p. 62). The importance of these assumptions is that without challenging them and accepting they exist, international politics and global governance will continue being a field for men, and decisions taken will impact women directly without considering the consequences for them. One of the main assumptions feminism challenges is the role women play in international relations and its institutions and how they are being excluded from high-level politics (Smith, 2017). However, they continue playing an important role and contributing to global politics, even if their lives continue being described as non-

essential (Smith, 2017). Furthermore, by making these assumptions visible and challenging them, gendered violence becomes noticeable in the world politics (Smith, 2017). Therefore, bringing into notice, the connection that exists between the violence women suffer in the private sphere and the violence they suffer in the public spheres (Smith, 2017). Hence, again connecting influencing decisions and actions taken by the world leaders. Furthermore, these assumptions and the difference they make between the public and private spheres influence women's role in international politics and decision-making.

In her article, Hooper (1999) somehow also established the same issue as Smith, women being left outside the field. Hooper introduces the lasting situation in which the gender variable is not included and the fact that the process of including it might be more complicated than expected as the field is highly focused on masculine approaches. Hooper asks why the gender variable and the feminine are added to the field as previously neglected variables have been and that international relations are also part of creating masculinities (1999). Even though the field has been largely connected to men and established that men had made the field masculine, Hooper states that it is also the field that has made the ontological construction of it being masculine. In her work, Hooper shares the light to different aspects of international relations and the world in which the masculine is constructed (1999). According to Hooper (1999), international relations influence men through different dimensions and influence one another at different levels, which is why it is even harder to introduce the gender variable. Thus, it is necessary to add the fact that there are different masculinities based on the cultural and social context of each country or period (Hooper, 1999). Even though her work does not entirely explain and answers how international relations produce masculinities, Hooper does open the door to analyze further and challenge conventional IR (Hooper, 1999).

Feminism as a complete theory could support this thesis work and focus. The theory already focuses on women and the work of those supporting women in general, therefore, in Latin America as well. However, this makes the author question whether feminism as a whole is enough to represent what feminist Non-Governmental Organizations in Latin America have struggled with in the past. The uprise for women's rights in Latin America can easily be connected to feminism; in the end, it is about women, women's needs, and the lack of representation of almost half of the population of an extensive region. However, feminism might not entirely be able to describe and analyze women's situation in Latin America.

Feminism in a broader topic invites International Relations to not only look at women's work and how world politics will influence their lives and how they influence international relations. It is also about the patriarchy on which world politics has been based and how the masculinities have closed any public field from women. Therefore, the question comes whether the situations and needs in the Global South and specifically in Latin America are completely considered in feminism. In her book, Enloe gives the main examples of what feminists have achieved, from the international Arms Trade Treaty to the fight and work in the transatlantic antislavery movement. However, her work continues establishing said work as a general work; indeed, the achievements of those examples were general, for all women and girls around the world, but the idea still being in the general perspective of women needs. Hence, this general idea and needs are two of the main reasons feminism theory will not fully describe and support this work.

The role of women in Latin America is not the same as the one described in feminism. The feminist theory introduces the women outside the West as "other." It does not consider the main characteristics of the Global South regions when analyzing women and their needs and cultures. Feminism is so universal that the main relation is the oppressed and the oppressor, patriarchy, and power men have in any scope. Women in the region are still being expected to belong to domestic and private spheres. However, this is not the only characteristic they have. Their experiences and situations are directly connected to their historical context and the power perceived by men and those who had power in previous colonial states. Their experiences are the cultural, ethnic, and racial situation of the now and how their location in history has influenced those characteristics. Therefore, the universality of feminism can apply neither to the women nor to the work of those organizations that support women in the Global South and, therefore, in Latin America.

2.2 Postcolonialism

The second theory that is introduced to review and analyze Latin America is postcolonialism. According to Baylis, Smith, and Owens (2008), postcolonialism analyzes how former colonial practices have changed the former colonies and the world. This includes the continuous and persistent forms in which these former colonial powers continue influencing contemporary world politics (Baylis et al., 2008). Furthermore, postcolonialism also focuses on global inequality and those powers that make this inequality systematically possible (Baylis et al., 2008). Furthermore, Rattansi (1997) states that postcolonialism focuses on the research of the role that the colonizer and the colonized have in creating the identities of dominant

powers and the others involved in the projects of Western countries. In addition, postcolonialism states that the global hierarchies that exist are socially constructed based on racial, gender, and class differences (Baylis et al., 2008). Finally, the theory also focuses on how the world should be. It is concerned about the disparities in power and why some countries and groups continue influencing other actors as much as they do (Nair, 2017).

Rattansi explains that the identity of the "West" was not defined through colonization but only waiting for it to be imposed into the "victims of the colonial project" (1997). Therefore, identifying the West as "white, Christian, rational, civilized, modern, sexually disciplined" (Rattansi, 1997, p. 482). This identification was only put into place when the identity of the "Other" ("black, pagan, irrational, uncivilized, pre-modern, libidinous, licentious, effeminate and childlike") was created and not before (Rattansi, 1997, p. 482). This identification also comes with the responsibility of the West to civilize and govern the Other (Rattansi, 1997). Therefore, both identities influenced the colonizer's culture and the colonized; due to colonization, both actors were intrinsically connected (Rattansi, 1997). Furthermore, postcolonial studies focus on illustrating the role of class, ethnicity, and conceptions of the family gender play in creating the colonizer and colonized identities based on geographical and historical contexts (Rattansi, 1997).

Postcolonialism brought attention between the 1960s and 1990s due to the increased anti-colonization movements in the Third World (Shohat, 1992). Shohat (1992) further states that postcolonialism has a bigger or increased presence in the field after many Third World countries gained independence after WWII. However, Shohat states that it also refers to the immigration and other circumstances in which the population had to either exile or immigrate to First World countries. For Shohat (1992), one of the main concerns regarding postcolonialism is that independence from colonial states is stretched between different decades, creating a gap among different independencies. This brings into the table the possibility of putting postcolonialism as something in the past, without further analysis and understanding of the implications colonialism continues having as of today (Shohat, 1992). This would include the forms of new colonialism that globalization has brought into the field or the global systems and institutions that continue having a structure coming from western powers with colonial forms (Shohat, 1992).

According to Mishra and Hodge (2005), postcolonialism was established as a term to explain the moment in history in which new literature and analysis grew from a part in the

world that had long been silenced, to review both past and future from and with a different perspective. Through their work, they examine how other "post" theories have come into play hand in hand with postcolonialism (Mishra & Hodge, 2005). They introduce postmodernism and the new connection it has to globalization (Mishra & Hodge, 2005). Through this connection, the authors state that there are new ways of colonization based on previous forms (Mishra & Hodge, 2005).

Chowdhry and Nair (2002) state that the global focus on liberal economies has only increased the "peripheralization of the South" in economic, political, social, and cultural aspects. Therefore, the postcolonial literature has been highly focused on increasing its presence in the IR field (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002). Chowdhry and Nair (2002) bring into the discussion the role of power in postcolonialism. First, they state that conventional IR comprehension of power gives an advantage to hierarchies, rationality and focuses on a Eurocentric worldview (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002). Chowdhry and Nair (2002) argue that it is only when we start questioning the conventional views of power, we can further understand in a more holistic view the embeddedness with structures, cultures, and social relations. Second, they focus on the fact that critical IR interrogations of the assumptions of conventional IR lack to also focus on the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in producing power (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002). Third, they focus on how IR feminism cannot concentrate on the influence of race and neo-imperialism (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002). Even though there was an increase of research and efforts of feminists to focus on the marginalized groups, IR feminists continue avoiding the concerns of women in the Third World (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002).

Postcolonialism is, in fact, a theory that can bring to the table the need to review the situation of former colonies based on their historical context. This continues emphasizing the role former colonizers have in former colonies. Their roles are also influenced by the identities built during this time, and they are highly intertwined with the position they have been given in world politics. Furthermore, postcolonialism also focuses on the current situations different countries are going through, which have been directly impacted by their colonization period and the new forms of colonization, not only by former colonizers but also by new powers. Finally, postcolonialism is a broad theory that, even though it focuses on the main concerns of former colonies, does not entirely consider gender. Hence the importance for this research to focus on postcolonial feminism.

2.3 Postcolonial Feminism

As stated in the previous subsections, feminism as a whole does not entirely represent the work of women and non-governmental organizations outside the West. However, this does not mean that the work and achievements of feminists around the world are undervalued or non-existent. On the contrary, because of their work, other kinds of feminism have come into this arena. Therefore, it is crucial for this work to understand better what postcolonial feminism is, its characteristics, implications, the main difference between feminism and postcolonial feminism, and how it has challenged and changed the International Relations field. Furthermore, it is important to understand how this work has influenced world politics and, therefore, understand how it applies to the work of women's non-governmental organizations and their work.

Postcolonialism was also introduced. As stated above, it could be thought that postcolonial feminism is a branch of both theories. However, postcolonialism focuses on the broader picture and the continued influences of colonial powers in today's global institutions and nations. Furthermore, the theory has the dilemma of the period in history, which brings into the field a wider discourse, which is something that does not entirely connect with postcolonial feminism. Nevertheless, postcolonialism gives the author a certain basis and commonalities among theories, which will be further explained in the section.

There has been an increased awareness of the global work of the international community and many organizations regarding feminism globally. However, an increased concern in relation to the global definition of feminism has been seen in Latin America (Franco, 1998). Through postcolonial feminism, it can be stated that the global feminism definition might not support feminism in other regions, including Latin America. According to Dunne, Kurki, Smith, Tickner, and Sjoberg (2013), as postcolonialism, postcolonial feminism tries to blur the differences between 'self' and 'other' as they increase the difference between racial and cultural stereotypes making the other seem as inferior. Also, postcolonial feminism is against the claim of universality as that experience is from privileged Western women (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013). In reality, the differences and situations of women outside the Western region might be completely different (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013). Therefore, this universality does not include the historical context of women outside the West, creating this homogeneous group only categorized by gender. In order to understand postcolonial feminism to the fullest, it is necessary to go deeper than the only description of the theory.

Chandra Mohanty (1984), a postcolonial feminist theorist, states that social and cultural context analysis is one of the main methods to understand the differences between Western feminists and the 'other' (women from the third world). In her work, she states that universality and ethnocentric assumptions with the self-consciousness regarding the effect of Western scholarship on the "third world" drive a large amount of western feminist work on women in the third world (Mohanty, 1984). Furthermore, Mohanty bases her work on three main basic principles that are part of Western feminist discourse: categorization of women without taking into consideration class, ethnic or racial locations, and only taking into consideration gender or sexual difference, the use of certain methods that bring proof of universality and cross-cultural validity, and the use of both the methodologies and analytic strategies (Mohanty, 1984). These principles can explain the main challenges postcolonial feminism does to feminism.

The first principle, "women as a category of analysis," is based on the assumption that all women are part of the same homogeneous group without considering class, culture, ethnicity, or racial differences (Mohanty, 1984, p. 377). In western feminist writing, feminist analysis is characterizing women in a group based on the oppression they have historically received (Mohanty, 1984). This grouping would then describe women as "powerless" and victims of economic systems, defining them as *object status* (Mohanty, 1984). This being one of the main challenges that should be done by postcolonial feminists (Mohanty, 1984). Meaning not only are they claiming a difference between the first world and the third world, but they are considering themselves with the power of doing so and stating what is right or wrong regarding the experiences and culture of women in the Global South.

Barani Maung Maung (2018) explains, in her TEDx Conference, that women in her country would be seen as not feminist due to the cultural and traditional context and situations. Therefore, feminism and the need for support among women cannot only be characterized by gender (which has been socially constructed) but by the political and historical context of each woman (Mohanty, 1984). This makes it more difficult for those women in the Global South and the organizations that support them to completely raise their voices based on their specific needs and therefore pass policies that will support them in advancing their objectives. Furthermore, in her analysis, Mohanty (1984) also establishes that the use of "women" as a category and the universality use of it would only limit the definition of women based on gender and not consider any ethnic, racial, social, or economic class. This limitation only

continues with the division among men and women, the powerless and the one that exerts power.

The second principle is the methods to prove universality and cross-cultural validity. This method is largely used to identify and design the image of "Third World Women" (Mohanty, 1984). As Mohanty states it "the more the women wear the veil, the more universal is the sexual segregation and control of women" (1984). This goes on not only with veils but also with any kind of concept, from reproduction to labor and marriage. Therefore, all women that fall into said categories are universalized without considering any other type of context. Without context from each one of the "concepts" and how they have been formed in the society of women being analyzed, then it gets harder to create "effective political strategies" (Mohanty, 1984). Therefore, without these, then human rights and women's rights in a specific country cannot be entirely generated. This universality eliminates the distinction between "woman" and "women" and therefore is what influences the creation of the Third World Woman image by Western feminists (Mohanty, 1984).

According to Mohanty, the third world woman image goes as follows: "truncated life based on her feminine gender [...] and being third world (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.)" (1984; p. 377). This image is perpetuated throughout western feminist writings and, therefore, power is being forced from western women on the Global South. Therefore, both the categorization of women and the methods used to prove the universality group together women in a sole group that performs in the already explained binary division of power (Mohanty, 1984). This definition and division put together all women's difficulties into binary structures (Mohanty, 1984). Furthermore, this also defines women as "subjects outside social relations" without analyzing how women are constructed in legal, economic, religious, and other structures (Mohanty, 1984, p. 351). Therefore, these structures are being judged by the western feminists' standards and this universal proof is only trying to categorize women as powerless (Mohanty, 1984).

In her work, Mohanty is focusing on Western writings and International Relations. However, these differences can be linked to global politics. Latin America has had difficulties regarding feminist representation over its whole history. However, the difficulties that they present are not related to only women in general. These differences include racial to social classes and culture. According to Tyagi (2014), the work of postcolonial feminism is even more problematic. Furthermore, she states that women's misrepresentation from the West

only creates what has been called "doubled colonization," which refers to women as colonized subjects and as a woman experiencing colonialism oppression and patriarchy (Tyagi, 2014). By not being able to portrait the social, racial, political, educational, and culture, Tyagi states that Western women become oppressors of women outside the West (2014). The judgment of western feminists to women from the Global South only exerts more pressure towards them in fighting for the same as Western women are fighting for. This could also be linked to the work of international and foreign actors to the work of non-governmental organizations.

Postcolonial feminism theory, even though it challenges western feminists, also challenges postcolonialism. This happens since postcolonialism is viewed as a male-centered field that has excluded and exploited women's concerns (Wright, 2018). In her chapter, Wright shares how black men have left behind black women's needs and their historical influence in the fight against racism and abolition (2018). Black men's writings (specifically the ones in the United States) state that they are the ones that will save black women from racism, class, and context inequalities (Wright, 2018). However, they leave behind the patriarchal norms that have been oppressing black women apart from the colonization process that black men and women have gone through (Wright, 2018). It is normally understood that feminism as a whole is only for and by women, yet, as a movement and as a project, feminism has also worked to further include men, which cannot entirely be said from their counterparts (Wright, 2018).

Furthermore, the nationalist discourse used to fight colonization has also done the same as western feminists to colonized women; they have controlled them by categorizing them in stereotypes, working as oppressors (Tyagi, 2014). As shared above, western feminists have universalized the cultural and historical context of women outside the West and imposed their models of feminism. This imposition is the main way they have worked as oppressors (Tyagi, 2014). Furthermore, this is also connected to Western women's belief that the solutions they have found for advocating their oppression will apply to all equally (Tyagi, 2014). Without considering the context of women outside the West and the fact that the needs might not be the same. Therefore, the rights and policies to which Western women have fought in their own countries might even be more difficult to be implemented in the Global South and fought by "Third World Women." One of the examples is the Encuentros created in Argentina, where at the beginning, not all women were invited, therefore only targeting some very specific issues (Friedman, 2014). However, in later meetings, a larger number of

poor and indigenous women took part in the movement, increasing the voice for their problems, stating mainly their social and cultural background (Friedman, 2014).

International conferences and agreements have also increased the discussion regarding human rights and use by those who have been oppressed (Grewal, 1999). Therefore, there has been an increased perception and actions in creating development plans to foment peace, equality, and justice among countries (Grewal, 1999). However, by using human rights as a tool to further analyze the development process of a country, it continues giving the notion that the South does not have human rights, and the North does (Grewal, 1999). Thus, creating expectations for the South to achieve development through human rights. It is important to note that Grewal is not against using the need for human rights as a tool to fight against the oppression of women (Grewal, 1999). However, Grewal does state that international laws might not be utilized as their creation does not take the countries' context, making it more difficult for these laws to be passed (Grewal, 1999). Therefore, "women's rights being human rights" is another attempt to further universalize "women" as a category and will only be able to introduce women's needs and situations in very limited ways (Grewal, 1999).

According to Rajan and Park (2005), first-world feminists not only need to acknowledge the differences between women, whether they are based on race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class, or by changing the attitude towards Third World women. They need to challenge further the global powers' relations, economic, political, military, and cultural hegemony (Rajan & Park, 2005). Furthermore, Rajan and Park (2005) state that regarding postcolonial feminism, there have been significant developments. The "questions of location" concerning the places in which Third World feminists would refer to feminism tend to combat and repudiate the role of the native informant, stereotypes, among others (Rajan & Park, 2005, p. 54). Furthermore, the "theory" has also been treated with hostility as they connect it directly to white male epistemologies that have hindered the creativity of black and Third World women (Rajan & Park, 2005). Another major development is the increased use of postcolonial feminist writings in western universities (Rajan & Park, 2005). However, this has also influenced the use of these texts in First World classrooms to objectify and exotify Third World women's writings and to represent whole cultures and countries (Rajan & Park, 2005). Hence, Third World feminists go deeply into projects to bring a sense of urgency and "hope" to their situations and needs (Rajan & Park, 2005).

Furthermore, postcolonial feminist scholars have opted to produce a more dialectical and praxis-oriented understanding of postcolonial feminism, which is directly linked to the division of labor in both First and Third Worlds (Rajan & Park, 2005). Through this, Rajan and Park also introduce in their paper transnational feminism, which is highly connected to postcolonial feminism as it shares the same concerns, theoretical interests, and political agendas (2005). Even though transnational feminism does not directly deal with colonialism, according to Rajan and Park, it does deal with neo-colonialism (2005). Rajan and Park (2005) further develop transnational feminism and the "issue of dignity" due to the type of work Third World women do at the global level. They further specify women's work in global sex tourism, domestic, factory, and sweatshops (Rajan & Park, 2005).

As feminism, postcolonial feminism has also developed and is connected to other theories in the field, two of them being intersectional feminism and transnational feminism. Therefore, another important aspect of this research is understanding other feminist theories and what they can bring to this work. Intersectionality feminism intends to decategorize identities that have been socially constructed and therefore excluded from power politics (Crenshaw, 1991). It further concentrates on analyzing how different socially constructed identities are influenced by different factors (Crenshaw, 1991). Meaning that this theory further focuses on different factors that increase the oppression of women, it is no longer only gender, race, sexuality, class, nationality, and religion, but all those factors combined (Crenshaw, 1991). This also increases the complexity of further analyzing how women are oppressed and how these factors are built into the world (Crenshaw, 1991).

Transnational feminism, as established above, is also connected to postcolonialism. This theory can have several meanings, "the multiplicity of feminisms worldwide politicizing their struggles in transnational terms; feminist activisms contesting processes associated with globalization; transnational organizing and the post-colonial feminist critique of nations and nationalism" (Mendoza, 2002 in Conway, 2017, p. 206). The focus of this work will continue being postcolonial feminism as it focuses on the influence of international actors and states that were once a colonizer. However, the intention of introducing other theories is to open the possibility of future analyses of the work of NGOs based on these theories.

After presenting the theory and understanding that postcolonial feminism not only challenges the oppression towards women as a whole but also challenges theories that might support the oppression of women's lives. Stating that women are oppressed by their cultural

and socio-economic historical contexts and those who try to analyze them and use their categorization to universally state the situation of women in the region or globally. This theory's importance to this work is due to the fact that as a theory, it helps bring to the table the context not only about the country and what the country has lived but the current situation of women and how different actors and situations have influenced them in the world. It is a theory that will not categorize women but brings a wider context to the IR field.

2.4 Same basis different theories

After introducing the three theories, and even though the theory chosen for this research is postcolonial feminism, it is important to understand how feminism, postcolonialism, and postcolonial feminism are linked. Understand why postcolonial feminism is not the same; even if sometimes it is considered a branch of either two categories, it represents something different. In some writings, postcolonial feminism is defined and linked to postcolonialism. However, many established the connection among both theories and acknowledged the connection between feminism and postcolonial feminism.

According to Parashar (2016), both feminism and postcolonialism have introduced a wider understanding of international relations thanks to their ability to consider diversity and the constantly changing global politics and social constructions. On the one hand, feminism allows postcolonialism to produce a more holistic nationalist discourse in which women can be added (Parashar, 2016). On the other, postcolonialism gives feminism the tools to further include the cultural, historical, and social context of women worldwide, including the different types of oppression that women suffer around the world (Parashar, 2016). However, the line between both theories has been very well established. What each one can give the other is the same that divides both theories (Parashar, 2016). This is the way in which postcolonial feminism is built. Postcolonial feminism drives and challenges both the universalism that feminism has created regarding women and their needs and contexts and the postcolonial discourses that do not consider women and, like many other theories, leaves them out.

Feminism is a theory that allows us to see power relations, international politics, and situations in the world through a gender perspective. It is a theory that, in practice, has been able to influence the role of women in foreign policies, global economies, and established international institutions. Feminism challenges the mainstream IR field and how it has been built by and for men, considering that IR might also influence the creation of masculinities.

However, feminism does not consider the main specifications of women in the Third World and creates universalities from their historical and cultural contexts. Feminism further creates rules and states what is right and wrong for women in the Global South. Even though both theories share mainly gender and how it affects world politics, postcolonial feminism has a more extended inclusion of women worldwide.

Something similar happens with postcolonialism. It is a theory that has focused on the influence of colonial powers and their actions towards countries' cultural, social, economic, and institutions. However, it does not include the gender variable and can leave it entirely out of its scope. The connection between postcolonialism and postcolonial feminism includes the cultural and social context of those in the Global South that contests the power politics built in the colonial era and how it continues influencing said countries. However, the latter goes more deeply into the group left out and focuses on how those postcolonial "fights" continue excluding women and repressing them based on hierarchies created in the past.

Postcolonial feminism further includes the work of groups of women that fight for changes in patriarchal institutions and further contests the relation with the state and other actors in the Global South, requesting accountability from their side (Parashar, 2016). This theory challenges the universality created by feminists and brings into context other feminist theories that continue increasing the variables that influence women in the world. It further analyses global practices concerning women and how and why global agendas for women representation are created and implemented in developing countries. Therefore, the importance of postcolonial feminism for this work goes further. In the analysis section of this research, the author intends to use the main characteristics of postcolonial feminism (the problem of categorization, which connects to the universality of women, the fight towards new forms of colonization, which includes international organizations and globalization, and the fight against patriarchal and constructed forms of power) to develop further the work of non-governmental organizations regarding women's rights and how this theory has supported them not only to fight already established practices and institutions but has also opened the door for more types of feminisms in the region.

3. Methodology

As stated in the introduction, the data used for this work are data gathered from interviews and journal articles. Throughout this section, the main research design will be introduced. The following subsections will further explain the descriptions of the methods used and the actions and decisions made by the author. For this research, the author will use primary data interviews conducted to NGOs in the region (*n*=4) and secondary data articles focused on NGOs, women's groups, and feminists in Latin America (*n*=3). Furthermore, this research's primary data collection method is semi-structured interviews, as secondary data collection method databases for peer-reviewed journal articles. As the final subsection, the method selected for data analysis is content analysis to focus on the information given by the interviewees and the content of the selected articles.

3.1 Sampling

Latin America is a vast region, going from Mexico to the very south of Argentina and the biggest country in the region Brazil. Therefore, this work focuses only on NGOs based on projects or working in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. These countries were chosen since they are the three biggest countries in the region, with a total population of 44.9 million, 211 million, and 127.5 million, respectively (The World Bank, 2021b). Furthermore, the female population of the three countries 51.2%, 50.8%, and 51.1% making it more significant the lack of representation they have in society (The World Bank, 2021a). Also, two of these countries have had a female president in the past, Dilma Rousseff and Cristina Kirchner, which would help understand and analyze the impact NGOs have had since they were elected for the presidency. Furthermore, it is important to understand if having a female president has assisted or hindered the work and objectives or if changes have to be made.

Several methods were in consideration for the methodology and data gathering methods, including discourse analysis. However, due to the lack of empirical data and the fact that most of the work related to feminism and non-governmental organizations dates around the 2000s, researching for data at the core of NGOs became the most important way of gathering the correct information for this work. Due to this, the research focuses on both the international influence and the female representation in society and the impacts, or even if these two topics intercept at some point. Therefore, the primary way of gathering data was choosing non-governmental organizations that have or have had worked in previously selected countries with the main aim of empowering women and advocating for women's

rights. The group of NGOs chosen is international NGOs or domestic NGOs, which helps identify the impact on domestic NGOs and whether the international NGOs have specific policies that influence the former.

As stated before, the countries in question are Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. To choose the NGOs that would fit in this work, the author searched for NGOs that would either be present in one of the countries and regional NGOs with presence in one or more of the countries chosen. Furthermore, the work of the organizations selected had to be linked to women's needs and fight in the country or region. Therefore, the organizations that worked in one or more countries would have the priority for being selected. After prioritizing based on their location, their work was categorized as women's empowerment, education, or health. This categorization was needed to understand their line of work better while gathering their data and their differences. In total, thirty-six organizations were found, twenty-one were contacted, and four were interviewed.

The secondary data used are three journal articles that have evaluated or analyzed the work of NGOs in the region and how they are connected to feminism. As the author has stated before, there is little research made on feminist NGOs for the region in recent years. Therefore, taking said articles will help understand the "then" and "now," how the work of NGOs changed in history, and how the influence of international actors has been modified. Journal articles will also support the understanding feminism has played in the region while also having the context of the NGOs' work and the state's role. The articles were selected based first on NGOs' focus, the "location" being Latin America and feminism as one topic or main thought.

3.2 Data Gathering

As stated above, different choices were considered as methodology. Contacting NGOs would support the process of gathering data to understand their current situation and work. Therefore, the main method to collect data is interviews to retrieve data based on their current situation. Thus, an interview guide was created; this way, the author focused on the main research points directed to the research questions. As stated before, the two main research questions are: How has the work of non-governmental organizations working in Latin America for women's rights been influenced or pressured due to the increasing international presence of other organizations and foreign policies in the country? And how has having female politicians and leaders impacted the NGOs?

According to Rathbun, Goodin, Box-Steffensmeier, Brady, and Collier (2008), interviews should go deeper in gathering information than other sources might not be able to do so (p. 688). Therefore, interviews in this work will assist in understanding the work of NGOs and the differences between the West and other regions, making a path to test the theories and how they converge in Latin America. Furthermore, Rathbun et al. (2008) also state that the interviewees are chosen due to "their unique perspective on a particular phenomenon or event" (p. 688). Hence, selecting only NGOs that have worked or focus on women's rights, the differences among them are not only based on the cultural context around them but also in the current political and economic status, from indigenous women's rights in Brazil to abortion rights in Argentina and violence towards women in Mexico.

Furthermore, through semi-structured interviews, this thesis gathered the information to understand the selected NGOs' culture and context (Rathbun et al., 2008). However, these differences between NGOs might make it more challenging to create a general topic or even be able to compare the situation of NGOs in a specific country. Furthermore, the authors state that this is the best applicable method for gathering these differences and understanding the cultural and social context (Rathbun et al., 2008). Moreover, through this method, the interviewer can follow a path of questions and add other specific questions that might slightly differ. However, to focus on one or both of the research questions, this path has to lead to the same final point. One of the difficulties that these interviews bring is the analysis of the data. Due to the specificity of each NGO or countries' policies, the answers to each question might differ from other NGOs even in the same region, going back to the culture and social context.

The three articles selected were found in databases for peer-reviewed journal articles containing articles for different disciplines, including International Relations, Women Studies, Political Science, and Latin American Studies. The main search was focused on feminism, NGOs, and Latin America. Unfortunately, even though several journals were reviewed, only a few would further analyze the work of non-governmental organizations in Latin America. Even less would include the work of women's groups in their research.

3.3 Data Analysis

After gathering all data, the method chosen to analyze the data is Content Analysis. According to Gray, Williamson, Karp, and Dalphin (2007), this method is objective, systematic, and quantitative (p. 283). Furthermore, even though, in theory, this method can be inductive or deductive, in practice, it is more quantitative as the examination takes place

by counting the times content is used in documents, speeches, movies, etc. (Gray et al., 2007). Furthermore, this method takes place since the beginning of the research design when categories of data start taking place (Gray et al., 2007). Finally, this method is objective because the "researchers make absolutely explicit the rules they have used in classifying the content of any communication" (Gray et al., p. 284-285). Due to this, conclusions can be evaluated, and researchers that try to replicate the analysis can do it following said rules (Gray et al., p. 28).

Furthermore, content analysis is systematic because it follows a strategy established before, which decreases the researcher's biases to the analysis of the data (Gray et al., 2007). However, even though it has been stated that content analysis is a quantitative method, this research focuses on the context, values, and other motivations that will make this a qualitative study. According to Payne and Payne (2004), the qualitative content analysis focuses on the meaning and context behind the words. Furthermore, qualitative analysis will discuss the interpretation, while quantitative analysis will focus more on tables, graphs, and summaries (Payne & Payne, 2004). To compare both primary and secondary data, qualitative content analysis supports the analysis of both types in this research. Even though there is no time frame established for this research, it is essential to analyze the data and compare the current situation in the region to what has been done in the past. Content analysis has given the author enough information to present in the following sections of this work and review the possibilities of analyzing the data gathered from a different perspective.

For the data analysis of this work, the NVivo 1.4.1 system was used to analyze both primary and secondary data. NVivo is a system used for content analysis based not only on quantitative data but also on the connection of codes with the data. It can also bring the broader context, which is what the author is focusing on. The main categories used for the data analysis or the interviews are directly connected to this work: feminism, international influence and globalization, NGOs work, and women in politics. Feminism accounted for 53 references that included the following codes: feminism difference, feminism from NGOs perspective, and feminism interviewees perspective. Furthermore, this category accounted for 6.17% average coverage in the four interviews. International influence and globalization had a total of 39 references spread in the following codes: funding, globalization, and international influence. This category had a total coverage average of 7.48% in the four interviews. The third category NGOs work accounted for 55 references in the following codes: differences among countries, NGOs' characteristics, state's interference, and work with a total coverage

average of 8.09%. The last category is women in politics with reported references of 29 in the following codes: influence of women in politics and women's human rights with a total coverage average of 4.36%.

For the secondary data, the same system was used to do the content analysis. To connect both the interviews and the secondary data, the author used the same main categories. However, new subcategories were created: Feminism as a movement, NGOs History in Latin America, NGOs in politics and public agendas, and Examples regarding State Interference. Furthermore, as the three articles focused on the work of NGOs, the category Women in politics was not used. Therefore, in the feminism code, apart from the three previous subcategories (feminism difference, feminism from NGOs perspective, and feminism interviewees perspective), feminism as a movement was added. Therefore, this category among the three articles accounted for a total coverage average of 25.38%. The second category, international influence and globalization, did not have any further modifications and accounted for a total coverage average of 25.38%. In the last category, NGOs work, two main subcategories were added apart from the previous stated: NGOs History in Latin America and NGOs in politics and public agendas. This category accounted for a total coverage average of 43%.

For any research, it is also essential to establish the limitations of the work. The author has decided to add them in this section as the limitations can be highly directed to the methodology (this does not mean that the methodology is lacking, but that in future research, more information can be included). The first one is the fact that only three countries in the region were selected. Even though these are the bigger countries based not only on territory but also on the population, the region is extensive on culture, social, economic, and political diversity. For example, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico are diverse among themselves. Therefore, even if other countries might be mentioned in the following sections, the analysis and results provided in this research might not entirely apply to all countries in the region. The second limitation, which is connected to the first limitation, is the number of interviews conducted by the author. As stated above, the diversity among countries also means diversity among NGOs both in the region and in each country. Therefore, countries, NGOs, and women's factors, actions, aims, and others are different from each other. The fact that only four NGOs were interviewed makes it more complicated for the author to make a general assumption. Hence it is essential to state that future research can include more interviews and might bring a different result.

4. Feminism in Latin America

Feminism has been present in Latin America since the independence of countries belonging to the region, and therefore their work has had many different fields and aspects (Gargallo, 2007). Feminism in Latin America is lived directly by the actions of women and those groups that support them in these actions. The role of women in Latin America has been influenced by their communities (before colonization), the colonization powers, and international institutions that arrived in the region. These powers have also influenced their current governments and other socioeconomic factors in their countries, cities, and communities. With these factors affecting the region, the concept of feminism was promoted as pejorative mainly by the Catholic Church and political parties, making it more difficult for feminism to be developed (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). Furthermore, the women's role has also played an essential part in the fight for democracy in the region. For example, in Nicaragua, women fought and were militants in Sandinista activism and movement and were part of gaining democracy (Giaconda Belli in Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). However, the importance of their role was not translated into feminist policies and women's rights, as the progressive opposition continue being male-dominated (Sternbach et al., 1992). At that time in the *Encuentros*, women started to discuss the type of power and autonomy they needed and how they would get it, whether creating new organizations led entirely by women or go in already established organizations, in which they would need to fight for their power and importance (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993).

Feminism, apart from being a theory of international relations, in Latin America has transcended to become part of a social movement. Even though feminists in Latin America were challenged in the past, feminism as a movement grew in the region so much that feminists groups were able to go against oppressive regimes, be acknowledged by their governments, or fight for women's liberation (Sternbach et al., 1992). Latin American women have established that even though some think that feminism does not apply to them, different types of feminisms have grown in the region and represent the women's movements and organizations (Sternbach et al., 1992). NGOs and the feminist movement in Latin America can be traced back to the 1970s when many collectives and groups started to being established (Barrig, 2001). During that time, feminists and women's groups fought against already established patriarchal norms and against the military oppression the region was going through, joining forces with opposition forces (Sternbach et al., 1992).

What women in Latin America have accomplished regarding their rights and feminism has also been pushed and accomplished due to the support of NGOs. As shared previously, non-governmental organizations have been key actors fighting for women's rights in Latin America. In the 1980s and 1990s, many countries in the region started their democratic processes, some of them after long periods of violence. During this time, Latin America also lived a process in which many international actors started influencing policies, mostly economic international organizations, apart from the influence of the elites of each country (Matos & Paradis, 2013). The policies and influence decreased the work and participation of the government in many social scopes (Matos & Paradis, 2013). This lack of government involvement in social needs directly impacted the women's movement and their role in the fight for democracy in the region (Matos & Paradis, 2013).

More recently, feminism and feminist advocacy have increased the perception and awareness of the need for women's rights in many countries in the region. Furthermore, their search for rights goes hand in hand with their role in the communities and how women in Latin America have fought for their rights and their active participation in the political arenas of their communities by getting their "citizenship"[1] (Sánchez Olvera, 2006). Through international conferences and actions taken by regional organizations as the *Encuentros*, women have become aware of the rights they deserve, but most importantly, aware of their right to have rights (Sánchez Olvera, 2006). A clear example is Brazil; in 2006, they passed the federal law Maria da Penha to prevent domestic violence towards women, in 2009 changes were made to the Criminal Code regarding sexual crimes, and in 2015 the criminalization of femicides (Rodrigues Elias & Vier Machado, 2018). As a result, women have been able to move their needs to spaces where their situations and needs can be changed. According to Rodrigues Elias and Vier Machado (2018), judicialization is a political strategy driven by women and NGOs in Latin America, which allows them to bring their needs and experiences into the public space. This strategy has also influenced some international agreements that countries in Latin America have signed and ratified.

The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 was the international event that led to the commitment of several governments to increase further

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[1] Citizenship as a concept is further elaborated in the work of Sánchez Olvera (2006) in which established that women's citizenship is "constructed constantly by the construction of rights, social practice and the deconstruction of patriarchal roles that will enable women to be subject to rights".

gender equality, which eventually led governments to look for organizations that would support the development of said commitment (Narayanaswamy, 2014). At the same time, as the region was becoming more democratic, there was a "boom" of feminist NGOs and NGOs in general. This boom came due to the lack of participation of the state in many social struggles in the region and not only related to women. It is essential to understand that non-governmental organizations and the feminist movement in the region started before the "boom." This is also linked to the *Encuentros* of women in Latin America that would get together to raise their voices of concerns in their countries and communities.

According to Stoltz Chinchilla (1993), even though NGOs in Latin America were separated from the state and other political parties in their respective countries, economically, these organizations were directly dependent on foreign funding that could enter the region with conditions to be carried out by NGOs. This situation influenced the type of work the NGOs performed (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). Furthermore, some might even consider that the activities and influence of NGOs in public policies might come based on the agendas of donors funding the organizations, and not anymore concerning the advocacy work NGOs do (Tortajada does not specify the type of organization, but it is an assumption worth mentioning) (Tortajada, 2016). It is important to include that if at a certain point in time the foreign funding decreased, the organizations needed to continue following the policies and political agreements they had and needed to pursue activities that were of value and importance to their survival in their local communities (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993).

There has been an increase in critical consciousness regarding the work of NGOs in the Global South. Especially as it comes to show the increased presence of "Northern" NGOs in the Global South, which for some said presence has come with specific interests by northern donors (Narayanaswamy, 2014). Northern NGOs and donors connect directly to Southern NGOs due to their "expertise" in working with grassroots needs (Narayanaswamy, 2014). However, the critical point of view is that it is a way of continuing characterizing the global south as marginalized (Narayanaswamy, 2014). Furthermore, this critically also comes with the fact that women with access to NGOs might not be able to portrait the situation of the more disadvantaged women and might only focus on the elites in said countries (Narayanaswamy, 2014).

The increase of NGOs in Latin America for the fight for women's rights and the increased presence of other organizations and foreign actors in the region has come with an

increased professionalization of the NGOs' work (Narayanaswamy, 2014). The increase of actors in the region has resulted in introducing women's issues in the south to international spaces (Narayanaswamy, 2014). As a result, NGOs of the south started to be part of global development discourses and plans (Narayanaswamy, 2014). However, professionalization might also close the doors to those NGOs or women groups that have not professionalized their work or might not be willing to increase their connection to international donors (Narayanaswamy, 2014).

Even though women and non-governmental organizations have been able to bring to a public space their "private"[2] situations, have fought for power in their respective institutions, and have increased their presence in politics, the legal and policy actions have not ultimately favored all women in the region. The implementation process of policies that would support women's rights has not been accomplished according to their specific needs, context, or policies have not been implemented entirely (Matos & Paradis, 2013). Women and Men in power do not have a holistic overview of the women's situation in their communities and countries (Rodrigues Elias and Vier Machado referred to Brazil, yet it is not the only country with this situation) (Rodrigues Elias & Vier Machado, 2018). Therefore, government institutions and the social-economic structure of the country continue being unequal not only in gender but also in ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, family, religion, among others (Rodrigues Elias & Vier Machado, 2018).

Culture and socially constructed roles in many regions directly influence the role of women in politics, and some cultures believe that women belong "in the home" (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). Therefore, the lack of participation of women in politics is due to said roles as they discourage their participation (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). If they participate, they might be discriminated, not only by political parties and people working for the government but also by constituencies that believe women belong to the public spheres (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). However, in Latin America, what influences women's participation in politics is the culture in relation to democracy, countries' socioeconomic factors, formal representation (political and electoral institutions) (Htun & Piscopo, 2014; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). In most Latin

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[2] Throughout feminist literature, private is usually considered everything in relation to domestic, family, women's body and personal issues and situations present in the lives of women, adding the fact that the private is usually neglected or set aside by the state and public institutions. (Sánchez Olvera, 2006; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010)

American countries, there has been a twenty percent average increase of women in politics from 1980 to 2005 (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010).

In general, women have been the front runner in delivering the necessities of life, with or without the support of other groups in the region (Sternbach et al., 1992). Women have been able to create resistance strategies against patriarchal norms throughout the region, have fought not only for women issues but for situations and concerns in the entire population (rising cost of living, urban services, health care, education, among others), concerns that as part of a community and entire population influences them directly (Sternbach et al., 1992). Governments in the region, to further include women in the decision making passed quotas that would require a minimum percentage of women required in political parties (Barrig, 2001). Quotas were seemed to be a part of becoming modern and it was a need to fully become democratic states (Piscopo, 2016). More recently, some governments in the region have changed from quotas to parities, actors in favor of parities argued the same as they did in the fight for gender quotas: universal human rights, increase representation of constituencies, and equal outcomes (Piscopo, 2016). Women leaders in the region have demanded that parity should be the same percentage as the women's percentage in the population (Piscopo, 2016).

Even though there has been an increase in women's representation in the region (women participating more in politics and being elected to different government positions), they have had difficulties sponsoring and issuing bills (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). Some of these difficulties can be due to the patriarchal culture in the countries, thinking that women should only focus on certain types of bills (family, children, health care, education) and the presence of international actors, i.e., The Catholic Church has prevented women's efforts to legalize abortion or limit even more other reproductive rights (Htun & Piscopo, 2014; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010) (p. 84). Furthermore, women have also been forced to leave their positions for their male counterparts, and parties have changed women for men in electoral lists after the lists have been approved by congress (Htun & Piscopo, 2014). Thus, making it only more difficult for women to actually have a position in the government and therefore issue and pass laws (Htun & Piscopo, 2014).

Women have been able to pass major laws, starting with the quota laws (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010), which have already been introduced in this work. Due to women's representation, many Latin American countries have passed laws to improve women's well-being in the region (Htun & Piscopo, 2014). Even though women politicians have faced

difficulties in being involved in other political topics, they have focused on women's well-being (Htun & Piscopo, 2014). Latin American countries have had significant developments in policies regarding Violence Against Women and gender equality (Htun & Piscopo, 2014). Many Latin American countries have increased their responsiveness towards VAW (Htun & Piscopo, 2014). The VAX Index shows an increase in several countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) from an average of 0.4 in 1975 to 6.3 in 2005, where 10 is the highest government responsiveness and 0 is no government responsiveness (Htun & Piscopo, 2014).

Throughout this section, literature has been introduced regarding both NGOs' work and Latin American women politicians. The intention has been to present what has been written of the topics that will eventually support the author's work. Furthermore, the literature introduced also tackles the main questions introduced for this research, specifically the work of non-governmental organizations. In the next section, the main data gathered for this research will be introduced. This data will further include feminism both as a theory and as part of the women's movement in the region. Finally, NGOs' work and women in politics will also be introduced.

5. Feminism in the eyes of NGOs and their work

Throughout this section, the data gathered will be introduced. This section will first introduce the organizations that were interviewed and the three articles gathered for this work. Primary and secondary data will be presented based on three different topics: feminism, NGOs' work, globalization, and international influence. These topics have been selected to answer better the research questions of this work: *Has the work of non-governmental organizations working in Latin America for women's rights been influenced or pressured due to the increasing international presence of other organizations and foreign policies in the region? Have specific international agreements and actors influenced states to make changes in favor or against women's rights? How has having female politicians and leaders impacted the NGOs?* Feminism will be introduced based on the answers from the interviews and the descriptions and characteristics given by the three articles. Furthermore, the work of the non-governmental organizations will also be introduced mainly as the time between the secondary data and the interviews might have influenced the work of NGOs in the region. Finally, globalization and international influence will be reviewed together, mainly as one might affect the work and presence of the other.

5.1 NGOs and Articles' information

Unión de Mujeres de la Argentina (UMA, Argentina Women's Union) was created in 1947 with the main goal of defending the rights from a gender conception and perspective. In addition, they search for a better life in a participative democracy that includes social justice, without discrimination, in which women and men build a new society with gendered democracy. The interview was with María Inés Brasseco, current president of the UMA.

Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres (CLADEM, Latin America and the Caribbean Committee for the Women's Rights Defense), initiated after the III International Women Conference from the United Nations in Nairobi 1985. It was observed the need to create regional strategies as the needs and constraints women lived were similar. CLADEM is a feminist network that works to contribute to the full validity of women's rights in the region. Furthermore, this network has been recognized for participation in the Organization for American States since 2002. Moreover, CLADEM is located in 15 Latin American countries, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico included. CLADEM has been added as a member of the non-governmental organizations to which the UNESCO consults on issues related to their expertise.

Coletivo Feminista Sexualidade e Saudé (Women's Sexuality and Health Collective) is a Brazilian non-governmental organization created in 1981 with a special focus on women's primary health care with a feminist and humane perspective. Coletivo Feminista is focused on providing medical appointments to women. However, their work has also taken them to develop projects with international and government funding to focus on women's human rights, gender violence, and sexual and reproductive health. Throughout their history, their appointments and consultations have gradually increased with the inclusion of gender relations and the fight against sexism.

Red Nacional de Jóvenes y Adolescentes para la Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (National Youth and Adolescent Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health, RedNac) is a national youth network located in Argentina with the primary objective of promoting rights and sexual and reproductive health with a gender perspective. The organization was created in 1999 under the umbrella of the Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (Foundation for the Study and Investigation of women, FEIM), which was contacted to be part of this research but, due to the current pandemic, was not able to participate.

Advocating feminism: The Latin American feminist NGO "boom" by Sonia E. Alvarez (1999), is the first article used as secondary data in this research. The article focused on the work of NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s and how, due to globalization and State downsizing the work of NGOs, was professionalized. Throughout the work, the author explains three main developments that would directly influence the work of NGOs during said time as advocates for women's rights. States and International Organizations start seeing local and regional NGOs as gender experts, turning to them to promote or drive government women's programs and play the role of intermediaries to the larger social constituencies.

Feminist Flows, Feminist Fault lines: Women's Machineries and Women's Movements in Latin America by Lynne Phillips and Sally Cole (2009) is the second article used as secondary data in this research. This article focuses on the work of feminists in Ecuador and Brazil and their connection with the United Nations, its branches in the region, specifically UNIFEM, and other non-governmental organizations in their respective countries. Throughout their work, both authors are able to establish some of the main constraints feminist organizations have and demonstrate the importance of NGOs to continue working, as the title of the work suggests, in the fault lines of the region to translate women's needs into social and economic policies.

Beyond NGO-ization3? Reflections from Latin America by Sonia E. Alvarez (2009) is the third and last journal article selected for this work. This article gives a reflection on the 1st article selected for this research. After ten years of the first article being published, Alvarez focuses on NGOs' main constraints after the "boom" of the 1980s and 1990s and how their work needed to change due to the results of the NGO-ization. She further explains the primary concept "NGO-ization" and its influence in the "movement work." She further explains that NGOs are moving from the professionalized actions that made the NGO-ization into other forms and practices.

5.2 Feminism

In this section, the data gathered referring to feminism will be introduced. The following table shows the number of codes gathered from both the interviews as primary data and the journal articles as secondary data. The data will be presented in a way that the secondary data can further support the primary data. This way, the author was able to make a more precise connection between both data sources, which also brings the wider context from each source. Even though it can be said that the articles brough more information regarding feminism, the interviews were based on the NGOs perspective, as it can be seen in Table 1. Therefore, the author intends to connect both the interviews with the data gathered from the

Source / Code	Feminsim	Feminism as a movement	Difference in Feminsim	Feminism from NGOs Perspective	Feminism Interviewees Pespective	Total
CLADEM	11	0	1	3	7	**22**
UMA	8	0	2	4	7	**21**
Coletivo Feminista	0	0	0	2	4	**6**
Red Nac	0	0	0	2	2	**4**
Article 1 - Alvarez, 1999	3	6	0	0	0	**9**
Article 2 - Phillips and Cole, 2009	5	11	0	0	0	**16**
Article 3 - Alvarez, 2009	4	8	0	0	0	**12**
Total	**31**	**25**	**3**	**11**	**20**	**90**

articles.

Table 1. Feminism Codes Per Source, compiled by the author

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[3] NGO-ization: "NGO-ization during that decade was not simply about an increase in the numbers of more formally structured feminist organizations with paid, professional staff and funding from government, multilateral and bilateral agencies and foreign donors. Rather, NGO-ization […] entailed national and global neo-liberalism's active promotion and official sanctioning of particular organizational forms and practices among feminist organizations and other sectors of civil society." (Alvarez, 2009, p. 176)

Feminism in Latin America is viewed as a theory and a tool to promote gender agendas. Feminism in Latin America has been highly influenced by many factors in the region and characterized for having different perspectives throughout the region. Therefore, it was essential to understand what the perspective of feminists from the NGOs' side is. One of the main questions asked to the interviewees was, "*How does the organization see feminism in your country/region.*" While reviewing the secondary data, feminism was also included in the articles. The three articles' work focuses specifically on how feminism in the region is used as a tool for the women's movement. Therefore, it is essential to review the information shared in the secondary data regarding feminism in the region. In the three articles, feminism is entangled with the views in the region of feminism as a movement. Through the content analysis, the author focused on how feminism is perceived and described by previous work. Furthermore, focusing on how feminism is used would also support the actions and characteristics of feminist NGOs.

María Inés Brasseco, president of UMA, shares in her interview that there is certain feminism that established that only because of gender a woman is a feminist and is perfect. Brasseco states that it is crucial to understand that some women will have patriarchal traits due to their specific context and culture. Therefore, being categorized as "women" will not entirely define that said woman is a feminist, based on the broader definition of feminism. Phillips and Cole (2009), in a way, support what Brasseco shares, feminism discourse is influenced by different actors, contexts, and situations. Therefore, feminism is also multidirectional (Phillips & Cole, 2009).

In her interview, Julia Escalante de Haro, Regional Coordinator from CLADEM, states that the organization sees feminism "as a friendly coexistence of different points of view inside the network. Respectful of the politics and the action of other networks or other organizations with different feminisms, because we nourish ourselves with different feminisms". Escalante de Haro also adds that CLADEM, specifically, has many feminisms "from community feminism to abolitionist feminism, to regulationist feminism. And well, one thing that characterizes us is that diversity and that plurality of perspectives are not always coincident perspectives or that can complement each other; in many cases they are polarizing". Escalante de Haro's perception of feminism is highly connected to what Phillips and Cole state in their article. Phillips and Cole (2009) state that feminism "in practice is pragmatic, and it is recontextualized as it engages with the conditions and implications of particular issues in particular settings. And feminism has been found to be malleable,

applicable, and useful to women in a diversity of social settings and political conditions around the globe." Therefore, feminism, with time, will continue changing based on modifications in a specific country based on class, race, regional, and rural-urban relations of those women in a particular time (Phillips & Cole, 2009). This brings different points of view to organizations and networks regarding their feminist definition.

Nayla Procopio, Coordinator of Red Nac, shares that the organization sees feminism from a plural perspective, where the youth play an important role in the way feminisms and youth organizations represent their needs to the broader community. They see the new forms as ways of transformation and increase participation in the wider community (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). Furthermore, Procopio establishes that feminism continues changing due to the increased differences among women in the country (Argentina), and therefore the network respects everyone's feminism and activism (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). Alvarez (1999) states that the increase of spaces where women are able to raise their voice and act further acknowledges feminism and, therefore, feminist discourses. According to Alvarez (1999), the feminist movement "is a set of changing, contested aspirations and understandings that provide conscious goals, cognitive backing, and emotional support for each individual's evolving feminist identity." Therefore, NGOs seeing feminism with a plural perspective is connected to said changing aspirations and goals shared by Alvarez. Furthermore, the feminist movement in Latin America started around the 1970s and 1980s, which is now "characterized as an expansive, polycentric, heterogeneous discursive field of action which spans into a vast array of cultural, social and political arenas" (Alvarez, 1999).

Raquel Pereira, a member of Coletivo Feminista, puts it in the following way: "We realized that if we're not talking to men. That's not going to be a solution, so you know that inside feminism, it's a problem because feminists think that we should just help women and we should not help men. But if we do not help men, they will not understand the problem, that they are part of the problem, and then they will not be the part of the solution." Pereira shares the inclusion of the whole population in the changing process for a better future. Phillips and Cole (2009) share that feminism and its goal are directly linked with projects and movements for social transformation. Furthermore, Phillips and Cole add that due to fragile democracies where inequalities increase based on race, ethnicity, religion, and gender, different actions are needed to increase the presence in political spaces and diversify the ideas for social transformation (2009).

María Inés Brasseco, in her interview, also adds that certain feminist views are also related to power. She states that in Argentina, feminism was reasonably related to "hating the power and anything that had to do with it" (men being included in that hate). She states that "power" is needed in a way, not as a personal/individual power, but a power that will allow feminists to pursue changes with and for others. Furthermore, Brasseco also adds that there is a clear difference between feminism and the feminist movement and that the latter is broader. Brasseco states that the feminist movement allows all those women who do not consider themselves feminists to be part of the movement, women who fight for women's rights, advocacy, and the country's liberation. Therefore, embracing more women in the region and their needs and cultural context. Phillips and Cole (2009) share that one of the leading feminist practices in Latin America is the politics of presence. Women have joined different articulations and struggles lived in their respective countries to ensure that their needs are being considered one the social transformation of those democracies (Phillips & Cole, 2009). Alvarez (2009) states that feminism has been spreading through different vertical levels (government institutions, political parties and national and international arenas) and horizontally to different communities with class and racial-ethnic differences to social and cultural spaces. Hence, creating a vast increase in feminist knowledge, discourses and serving as critical points to link multiple political-communicative webs and networks, linking diverse feminist actors (Alvarez, 2009). Furthermore, in her more recent work regarding NGOs, Alvarez (2009) states that new forms of feminism continue to be created and start engaging in more recent anti-globalization and anti-neo-liberal movements.

Based on the interviews and the work from the authors, it can be stated that the connection between the views of NGOs and women in the region continue to be connected to previous work. Even though there is a high difference in time between the journal articles and the interviews, the perspectives and different types of feminism continue their flow throughout the region. The interviewees highly point out the importance of the difference between women and men in the region, without taking the latter out of the work of feminists and women's groups. Furthermore, in Latin America, feminism is about supporting women and having discourses of what women need in each country and seeing every individual regarding gender as part of a solution for a better future. Moreover, feminism is highly seen as a "tool" to make changes from their local activities to policies in different countries. Feminists have allied to bigger organizations that could further increase their presence.

5.3 NGOs in Latin America

NGOs have used the feminist idea to generate gender policies and other activities. This research focuses on the work of NGOs in Latin America and how external actors influence them in the region. To gather said data, the main topic of the interviews was their challenges, main concerns, how they perceive that their work has influenced their communities or countries, how the states might or not interfere in the work, and how they have developed. The section will be further divided into three different topics to better develop and demonstrate the results from the interviews and the articles. The subtopics are NGOs' characteristics and work, differences among countries, and state interference. However, it is important to note that data is directly linked between sections. Last but not least, it is important to note that the amount of secondary data in these subsections might be higher than the primary data due to the specialization of the articles (see Table 2).

Source / Code	Difference among countries	NGOs history in Latin America	NGOs political and public agendas	NGOs characteristics	State Interferance	Work	Total
CLADEM	1	0	0	2	3	10	**16**
UMA	0	0	0	2	5	31	**38**
Coletivo Feminista	0	0	0	0	3	8	**11**
Red Nac	0	0	0	5	0	5	**10**
Article 1 – Alvarez 1999	6	10	25	6	28	33	**108**
Article 2 -Phillips and Cole 2009	0	0	3	5	5	31	**44**
Article 3 – Alvarez 2009	0	0	3	6	6	28	**43**
Total	**7**	**10**	**31**	**26**	**50**	**146**	**270**

Table 2. NGOs work Codes per Source, compiled by the author

5.3.1 NGOs characteristics and work

Julia Escalante de Haro explains in the interview that CLADEM was one of the networks created right after the International Conference in Nairobi. The founders decided that there was a need to give a gender perspective to the international legal framework. Furthermore, Escalante de Haro explained that their primary role as an organization is making sure that all the public policies, commitments, international agreements signed by the countries they have presence are included in public policies. This translates into monitoring the work of the governments regarding women's human rights. CLADEM also supports and accompanies cases in the Inter-American system or the Universal Human Rights system to create jurisprudence with a gendered perspective (J. Escalante de Haro, personal

communication, February 2021). On this matter, Alvarez (1999) states that NGOs developed their research and advocacy skills to increase feminist projects and gender policy proposals while continuing their movement-oriented activities. This also came with the fact that many countries in the region started to gain democracy, and NGOs also saw an opportunity to create gender policies (Alvarez, 2009).

Furthermore, Julia Escalante de Haro shared that CLADEM also gives training to women and public officials, whom even though there are laws and treaties, continue thinking, as Julia puts it, "as if we were in the Napoleonic era" (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). Maria Inés Brasseco, president of UMA, shared that they also supported women with literacy programs, which were focused not only on children but also on their mothers (Brasseco, 2020). UMA also focused not only on the double shift payment for women but also on the fight for decriminalizing abortion, shared custody of children, equal pay between men and women, protests on March 8th (International Women's Day) (Brasseco, 2020). Supporting such an idea, Alvarez (1999) claims that NGOs see themselves as organizations that support women's lives. Furthermore, NGOs focused on popular education, women's empowerment, and providing services for the poor and working-class women (Alvarez, 1999). Moreover, Alvarez (2009) states that the knowledge produced by NGOs has the purpose of influencing gender policies, which can be linked to the work CLADEM does with the training of public officials.

Nayla Procopio shares that Red Nac works with different youth groups spread around the country. Diversity is one of the main characteristics of the organization, as groups are scattered around urban areas, peripheries, universities, and all with different needs. Juan Pablo Poli shares that the Red Nac's work clearly promotes sexual and reproductive rights, gender violence, and all the related topics: integral sexual education. Nayla Procopio further expressed the importance of generating spaces for integrating the youth and supporting the creation of new groups in the country, hand in hand with an organization with a history working in the region. However, according to Alvarez (2009), even though there has been an increase in spaces and the creation of networks, their work does not entirely translate into gender policies or women's rights.

María Inés Brasseco, in her interview, shares that the UMA was created in 1947. It was one of the first organizations that initially started to embrace the "gender" theory and started many schools based on popular education (Brasseco, personal communication 2020).

UMA welcomes women issues, including teenage pregnancies, gender violence, and other schools with a more specific focus, for example, the Escuela de Política y Género (School of Politics and Gender) with subjects of citizenship building with a gender perspective (Brasseco, 2020). Going further, Phillips and Cole (2009) state that NGOs that did not work with international organizations did not hire any professionals to "translate"; instead, they did the translation independently. UMA is one of said organizations; they created their school and discussion groups to develop further actions to tackle their needs (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). According to Alvarez (2009), NGOs have become a pillar in the feminist movement in the region, more specifically in the production of knowledge. Even though many NGOs needed to professionalize their work, many remain committed to their origin and previous activities (Alvarez, 2009).

Raquel Pereira shared in her interview that Coletivo Feminista sees themselves as fighting for women's rights. They do have appointments every day, and even with the pandemic, they continue seeing their patients on a daily basis. They see their work as a "militancy" work where they fight for rights while continue giving primary health care to women in Sao Paulo (R. Pereira, personal communication, November 2020). Alvarez (1999) shares that feminists in the region have drawn a very distinct line between the women's movement and NGOs. This since NGOs are described as "intermediary organizations that are typically composed of middle-class, educated and professional people who have opted for political or humanitarian reasons to work with (or on behalf of) the poor and marginalized" (Alvarez, 1999). Even though Coletivo Feminista does not entirely focus on "poor and marginalized" communities, they do have professional staff working in the organization (R. Pereira, personal communication, November 2020), and therefore could fit the description shared by Alvarez (1999).

5.3.2 Differences among countries impacting NGOs work

Regarding the differences among countries, the results in the interviews only bring one interviewee that brought the point into the discussion. This can be highly connected to the fact that CLADEM was the only one among the selected NGOs to have a presence in more than one country. Julia Escalante de Haro shared that the organization faces difficulties depending on the country in question (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). She further gave the example of Mexico, in which she states that there is not such a movement [women's movement] as the one there is in Argentina (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). They have traveled to different states in Mexico to

protests and to be present. She also shares that there has been an increased presence of women in the streets, specifically in Estado de Mexico, and she would expect that the increased presence will continue rising in the region.

5.3.3 State interference

María Inés Brasseco shares that "in the 1980s when the State began to abandon its obligations, we were a women's movement, an organization, they forced us to obtain legal status. If they would have told me that I was going to have to set up Popular daycare (as there was no kindergarten), that I had to provide school support, that I had to put up and ask the UMA friends, specifically doctors, to create a room so that they could implant IUDs and talk to women to avoid pregnancy. That did not correspond to us because the State in the 80s left the responsibility to the NGOs. We are replacing the state, we are the ones receiving the 'slap,' and the truth is that it is bad, and we have another function". On the same wavelength, Alvarez (1999) shares that between 1980 and 1990s, the work of NGOs became more complex compared to the work they did at their beginning. Some NGOs had a technical professionalization specifically in promoting development and generating institutional forms. According to Alvarez (1999), States lacking responsibility in providing welfare services to the population made NGOs become the substitution for the State and seen as "surrogates for civil society."

Julia Escalante de Haro shares that even if the State decreased assuming the responsibility they had regarding the establishment and guarantee of human rights, it is also part of the work of CLADEM to actively participate in the surveillance and monitoring of States' activities and decisions taken regarding women's rights. Julia Escalante de Haro explains that they have done extensive work in being present when laws in the process of being passed in different states. More in-depth, Phillips and Cole (2009) state that feminists in the region started the "politics of presence" in which they focused on translating women's needs into national and international arenas. Due to the specialization and professionalization of NGOs, both State and International donors started seeing these organizations as experts in gender topics (Alvarez, 1999). Therefore, NGOs were chosen to evaluate gender policies further. However, this did not mean that NGOs were considered to formulate said gender policies. Furthermore, by partnering with NGOs, States intended to have a closer connection with larger constituencies (Alvarez, 2009). According to Phillips and Cole (2009), working directly with the State has its consequences and the risk of being "played" for only building support from women voters.

Raquel Pereira shares that the most common practice in Brazil for NGOs is to be involved in projects with the government. Therefore, funding also came from projects and related activities with the government (R. Pereira, personal communication, November 2020). Alvarez (1999) states that due to the connection of NGOs to State funding, the relationship between both changed. Those NGOs that were critical to the government had fewer possibilities of receiving funding, therefore, "privatizing the relationship" (Alvarez, 1999). Funding from the government pressured NGOs to achieve short-term results and make their work more visible (Alvarez, 1999). Something that Pereira establishes could be difficult depending on the organization's work. Furthermore, due to this connection, many feminists started calling NGOs working with states "institutionalists" and not part of the women's movement, stating that they would change their views and actions (Alvarez, 1999). Something that none of the NGOs interviewed shared, however, worth mentioning.

Furthermore, Alvarez (2009) further states that changes in the political arena in the region brought an increase for the Left (Governments of the 'Pink Tide'), which focused on seeking and rewarding NGOs and not anymore as surrogates of the society. However, María Inés Brasseco states that they continue supporting women and the communities through welfare activities that should be entirely the State's responsibility.

As it has been shared, there has been an increased presence of international organizations in the region. The NGO-ization lived in the region has made these organizations have activities and intentions to be seen in the international arena. Funding also comes from other international actors and countries. Hence, making it highly important to understand how globalization and the international actors have influenced the work of NGOs and whether they possess any challenges to the organizations in the region.

5.4 Globalization and International influence

As States, Non-governmental organizations are also influenced by external factors outside their countries and their regions. Therefore, this section intends to understand how NGOs have felt said influence and how globalization is seen. In the interviews, the representatives of the organizations were asked questions related to this topic, for example: *How has globalization modified their challenges? If they had any connection with organizations outside their country/region? And if said connections have had any influence on the work they currently do?* In the case of the secondary data, the codes were selected based on the mention of "international organizations," "external factors," "funding," and

anything related to the word "global" (see Table 3). This way, the author has been able to review the wider context of the interviews and articles, which the latter have more codes than the former (see Table 3).

Source / Code	Funding	Globalization	International Influence	Total
CLADEM	5	3	5	13
UMA	4	2	2	8
Coletivo Feminista	6	1	1	8
Red Nac	3	3	5	11
Article 1 - Alvarez, 1999	8	1	14	23
Article 2 - Phillips and Cole, 2009	6	3	13	22
Article 3 - Alvarez, 2009	0	10	7	17
Total	**32**	**23**	**47**	**102**

Table 3. International Influence and Globalization codes per Source, compiled by the author

Julia Escalante de Haro, from CLADEM, shared in the interview that in the 1980s and 1990s the international cooperation in Latin America increased. As a result, there was an increase in the creation of many groups (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). In the last 10 or 15 years, there has been a decrease in international cooperation, funding, and changes of interests (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). Many of those groups and organizations have now disappeared (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). According to Alvarez (1999), a new agenda was established to promote and influence different topics in the region. Due to this, northern private donors, multilateral agencies funded NGOs willing to work as a connection between them and the broader society (Alvarez, 1999). Julia Escalante de Haro further explains that most of the decrease in these topics is because the international cooperation is more interested in having a "product" of their investment than generating a higher impact and changes in the long term. Alvarez (1999) also shares that those NGOs that received funding were the ones that had work with the United Nations in the past or the ones that were able to prove that they could maximize their impact, and not anymore whether they have access to larger constituencies. According to Julia Escalante de Haro, the increase of support in Latin America from global forces was because the region represented a risk for the economic powers. Therefore, the effort taken was to finance civil society and to decrease the increase of communism. Now that they do not see Latin America as a risk anymore, their efforts are going to other regions, where their economic interests are at risk.

Furthermore, Julia Escalante de Haro also shares that the decrease in funding was due to different situations in the regional context. She gives the example of Bolivia, stating that when Evo Morales started his presidency, his administration "expelled" many international cooperation and restricted the possibility of access to global resources. Without that international support from Europe and the United States, the women's movement in Bolivia decreased its presence (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). When talking about the influence of the United States, based on the previous administration and the creation of "rules" to fund foreign organizations, Julia shared that even though the U.S. had the Global GAG Rule, which prohibited the funding of organizations that fought for the decriminalization of abortion, there was not a high decrease funding received in CLADEM. According to Alvarez (1999), NGOs and their professionalization are influenced by external factors that can eventually change national, regional, and global economics and politics.

Julia Escalante de Haro states that the international society sees Latin American countries as very similar when each country has its challenges. Panama, according to Julia, has a very small civil society, even though Panama is the home for many intra-regional organizations, creating a challenge for regional NGOs, like CLADEM. In Mexico, the situation is quite different; Julia Escalante de Haro shares that there are certain women's topics that not all organizations can negotiate with the State. Most of these organizations are either well positioned with the State or organizations have a very well-established funding ("godmother" or "godfather") national or international. These organizations are the ones that have increased their presence, the ones being called for enterprises and news networks. She establishes that the difference between NGOs in the country is "huge" and can be seen in their work. Some organizations are looking for a base salary, and others are working on defending a cause and supporting a community or neighborhood.

Juan Pablo Poli, a member of Red Nac, states that even now (2021) has been problematic for organizations that do not have legal status to receive direct funding. Red Nac is under the umbrella of a bigger organization; however, they find it challenging to get funding and projects (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). As a youth organization, the ways to receive funding are more limited. Furthermore, Nayla Procopio, coordinator of Red Nac, states that it is challenging to establish projects. When searching for funding, one needs to consider the organization's actual needs to fully develop a project, including the time spent on it to the number of members the organization has (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). Regarding this topic, Alvarez (1999)

states that there has been increased competitiveness among NGOs to get funding from International Organizations, which negatively impacts NGOs' work for the women's movement, as it can become difficult for them to keep a balance between activities and goals. Furthermore, due to international organizations' influence, NGOs needed to change to a results-based management strategy, which influenced the way NGOs performed their activities (Phillips & Cole, 2009). However, Alvarez (2009) states that organizations might leave that way of working and go back to a process-oriented logic. Yet, for what has been shared by the interviewees, NGOs continue working based on projects (R. Pereira, personal communication, November 2020; N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021).

5.5 Women in Politics

This section will focus only on the data gathered in the interviews, given that the articles used as secondary data are specialized in the work of NGOs and not in the role of women in politics. The author will use background information in the analysis section to further develop this topic in this research. Interviewees were directly asked questions regarding the influence of women in politics. Furthermore, two of the countries selected for this research have had recent female presidents. Hence, the importance to know whether their role in power influenced or not gender policies in the country and their organizations.

Due to the increased presence of women in politics, "there has been a different perspective regarding the "women," however, this does not guarantee that there will be more feminism [in policies or agendas] or everything that we would want" (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021).In more recent years, there has been a new type of violence towards women inside the politics field, "political violence based on gender"(J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). This is directly related to the kind of violence candidates suffer; Escalante de Haro explains that the last elections in Mexico demonstrated that due to the number of murders of candidates, attacks, or threats.

Julia Escalante de Haro (personal communication, February 2021) states that even though laws have passed regarding quotas and then parities in elected parties, there is always a "regressive wave." Furthermore, she establishes that even though women have increased their presence, not all elected women have a feminist mindset and the intention of creating a change; they often become allies of the elites or the patriarchal mandates. "From the NGO side, it is important to continue doing the advocacy work, continue articulating regional

efforts on policies, raising agendas, and generating changes, even in those difficult countries. Even if they are very few accomplishments, they are very worthwhile efforts" (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021).

According to Escalante de Haro (personal communication, February 2021), what has been accomplished is the "recognition of rights in laws, yet those laws are not being translated to institutions that can effectively guarantee said rights and much less that institutions have the right funding." Procopio states that even if the country has a very well-established process of enacting laws and a very good legal framework, the implementation of said policies can have many flaws, as according to Procopio is the case of Argentina. Procopio gives the example of gender violence, and even though the good legal framework, Argentina continues having a high rate of femicides per day (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021).

Furthermore, the presence and influence of women in politics might also influence the "power" other actors have. Pereira states that the power the president has in the country impacts the number of projects and activities that as an organization they could do (personal communication, November 2020). "We could maybe have access to some money or some projects or contribute better with the government or work or contribute better with the public health or even the public system. But we cannot, and we are every day more closed and isolated from what we could do" (R. Pereira, personal communication, November 2020). Procopio states that, in the case of Argentina, even when having a women's ministry, backed by many historical women in activism and feminism, which was also an achievement, women's lives are yet to be valued in the same way as men.

5.6 Overall results

Even though the results were separated in this section, the connection among them is mainly through the work of the non-governmental organizations. One of the interviewees explained how their work has changed over time. This is highly connected to the work of Alvarez 1999, stating how NGOs work changed due to the increased presence of the State. In the feminism section, all interviewees point out the differences in feminism in their organization and how it continues changing over time and based on each individual context inside their organizations without influencing the NGO work entirely but bringing different perspectives. This can be connected to the work of Phillips and Cole (2009) and how they describe feminism as malleable and heterogeneous.
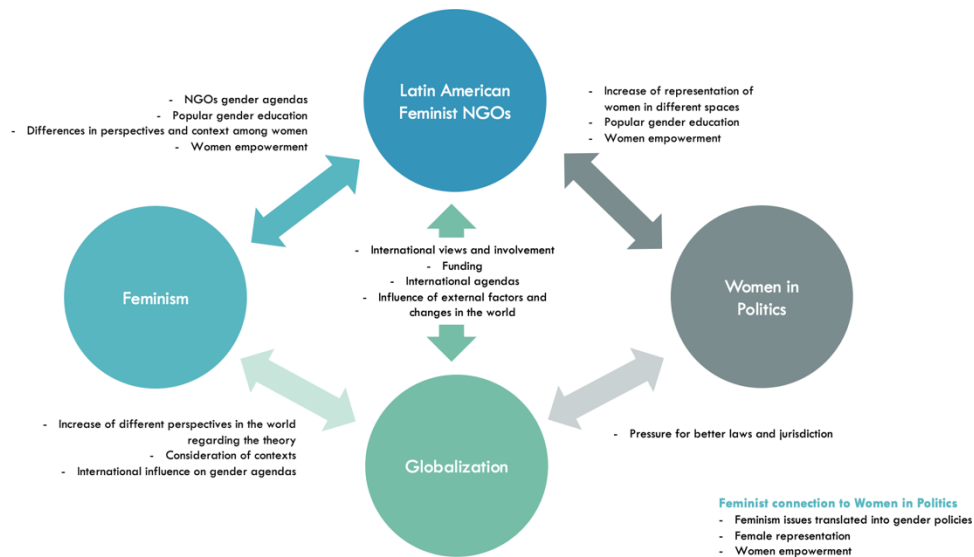
Figure 1. The connection between main topics

The results also showed the connection between the different topics shared in this section (see Figure 1). Feminism is highly intertwined with the NGOs' work. NGOs have been able to push for gender policies and women's representation. The increase of perspectives in the region regarding feminism goes in hand with globalization. Furthermore, in the presentation of the results, some results were presented in a topic without explaining the result in the second topic. According to the author, this was intending to give the information based on the context of each data.

6. NGOs, Globalization and the work of Feminists in Latin America

Due to the Encuentros, many feminists were able to create organizations that would follow their ideals and needs into consideration. These organizations' main intentions were to create discourses and actions that would improve the living conditions in their communities. However, different actors and situations in the region influence the ability of NGOs to further reach their goals. The research questions of this work are *has the work of non-governmental organizations working in Latin America for women's rights been influenced or pressured due to the increasing international presence of other organizations and foreign policies in the region? Have specific international agreements and actors influenced states to make changes in favor or against women's rights? How has having female politicians and leaders impacted the NGOs?* This section aims to further explain those actors (international, regional, or national) and how they influence NGOs. This section also has the intention to further reach the results and understand the answers to these questions. The last subsection will introduce the discussion of feminism as a social movement and influence in women's politics. The author is introducing it in a separate section due to the connection between globalization and women in politics, intending to further discuss how they are intertwined.

6.1 Feminism as a social movement and influence in women's politics

Postcolonial Feminism has been introduced as the main theory that will support this research. As it has been established before, this theory analyzes in a more profound way the struggles of women in the global south by taking into consideration their historical and cultural context, including race, gender, ethnicity, and social-economic class. It is established that due to the historical past of the countries and region selected, that postcolonial feminism would apply for this research. Therefore, this section will further analyze postcolonial feminism in this specific topic. Furthermore, the women's movement in Latin America is highly connected to feminism, not only because of women but the fact that NGOs and women have used this theory to further develop their activities and advocacy for women's rights. The author has decided that as feminism is connected to both the women's movement, including NGOs, and women's increase in the political field in Latin America, it is important to separate the topic that is the "umbrella" for both of them.

As stated in the background of this research, feminism in the region is used as a movement. However, they do use or see the main points of the postcolonial feminist theory: the problem of categorization, which connects to the universality of women, the fight towards

new forms of colonization, which includes international organizations and globalization, and the fight against patriarchal and constructed forms of power. Therefore, it is important to analyze how feminism is seen by women and NGOs in the region and how it connects to the theory.

As stated before, feminists in Latin America have raised their concern about the global definition of feminism (Franco, 1998). This can be linked to the fact that global feminism categorizes women, which is one of the main challenges that postcolonial feminism does (Mohanty, 1984). Different feminists share the main concern of being all women put together as a homogeneous group (Maung Maung, 2018; Mohanty, 1984). María Inés Brasseco (personal communication, 2020) shared the same concern, stating that feminism separates women, as there are women that even though they fight and advocate for women's rights, they do not think that feminism can actually define them. Feminism, according to Brasseco, states that because of gender, a woman is feminist and is perfect (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). Therefore, the women's movement, whether linked or not to feminism, gives the opportunity for women with different historical and cultural context be part of it (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). Hence the importance of understanding that women in the region might have patriarchal traits due to their specific context. Something that has also been shared by Maung Maung (2018) in her TedX conference, where she states that women in her country might not be considered feminists due to their context. The women's movement has been able to bring into the discussion different types of feminism that have been developed in the region (Sternbach et al., 1992).

The creation of the discourse "women's rights are human rights" has also been able to be developed in the region (Friedman, 2014). However, it has been contested as some might think that it only increases the perception of universality (Grewal, 1999). Even though international organizations and conferences increase the discussion of human rights for those oppressed, they tend to categorize women as a homogeneous group, therefore, creating the universality of women (Grewal, 1999; Tyagi, 2014). The main example being countries in Latin America, the fact that most of them have a similar historical context does not entirely mean that their societies are the same. According to Escalante de Haro (personal communication, 2021), the international community sees the countries as similar or even the same regarding women's situations and concerns, which in fact they have their own challenges. Julia Escalante de Haro (personal communication, 2021) shares that even if the women's movement is a regional movement where actions might be replicated by feminist

groups, it does not entirely mean that women are the same, they all have different situations in their own communities, Panama being the example of difference regarding civil society. Therefore, organizations in the region see and embrace different types of feminism and plurality to all kinds of feminism and points of view inside the different networks they operate (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021; N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). The difference among feminisms is what complements the women's movement, even if sometimes their points of view can be polarizing (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020; J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021; N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). Nayla Procopio and Juan Pablo Poli accentuated the plurality of the views of feminism in Red Nac, stating that young generations bring something new to the feminist discourse in the country, discourses, and actions that have not been developed from past generations and therefore, increase the perceptions and contexts (personal communication, 2021).

The women's movement has further increased the spaces where the feminist discourse is being developed, creating a cycle among them in which more women and men can interact to further develop their communities based on a gender perspective. Therefore, challenging the universality in which they are being categorized. The increased creation of NGOs in the region allowed feminism to be spread throughout the region. Feminism was spread in different communities with class and racial-ethnic differences while also including social and cultural spaces (Alvarez, 1999). According to Phillips and Cole (2009), feminism's goals are linked to the work of movements for social transformation. Therefore, being connected to the work of NGOs to further develop public education on gender and women's empowerment (Alvarez, 1999). As Brasseco shares, UMA being one of the first organizations in embracing the "gender theory" and creating many schools to provide education for the community (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). These schools dealt with women's issues from teenage pregnancies and gender violence to building citizenship with a gender perspective (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020).

Feminists were, and somehow still are, resentful of power and everything related to it (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). Therefore, creating a distinct line describing the difference between feminist NGOs and those independent feminists (Alvarez, 1999). This can also be highly connected to the increased engagement of women against anti-globalization and anti-neo-liberal movements (Alvarez, 1999), which basically fight against

colonial and patriarchal forms of power that have been changing due to external forces. This has also been explained by Wright (2018) in relation to postcolonial feminist challenging postcolonialism and how they continue being left aside. Feminist NGOs were described as being specialized, having a professional staff with volunteers, composed of middle-class educated women that have chosen to work on political and humanitarian arenas that focused on poor and marginalized communities (Alvarez, 1999). Coletivo Feminista could be added in this description and added to the fact that their creation is directly linked to a foreign NGO, as has been explained above. This causes polarization among feminist groups in the region as they consider the work with the government connected to both patriarchal forms of power and the connection to global institutions that only bring into the region new forms of colonization, specifically from Europe and the United States (Alvarez, 2009). Included in these forms of power could be the Catholic Church, which has influenced the region in local policies and created pejorative descriptions of feminists in the region (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993).

Even though women refer to feminism as a whole in the region, they do specify the need for different types of feminism. Therefore, it cannot be stated that there is only one feminism but, in fact, several that would depend on the context of each woman's situation. Hence, postcolonial feminism could indeed fit the feminist needs in the region. A theory that takes into consideration race, ethnicity, gender, social class, social and cultural context of women in the region. Furthermore, it is important to further state that postcolonial feminism as a theory can indeed describe the region. However, feminism is also a movement of women fighting for fundamental human rights and increase of representation. A movement that uses the basis of the feminist theory while applying and changing their meaning depending on their own specific context.

6.2 Globalization and International Influence

This section intends to introduce the main findings and background that will support the answer for the first two research questions. This because they are intertwined, and, according to the author, one influences the other. Throughout this research, the author has found that external factors influence both the countries and NGOs, hence, influencing directly how NGOs behave and react to changes happening in the world and the regional arena. Furthermore, the influence could bring bigger constraints to the NGOs. Moreover, this influence is highly connected to globalization and how it has changed the region and the world. Globalization, as shared in the previous section, influences the region in different

ways. It affects feminism by bringing together different perspectives and a connection to different actors, which has already been explained above. Due to globalization and the connection among countries, there have been increased changes in the world, directly affecting the actors on it. Therefore, throughout this section, it will be reviewed the main influence on NGOs and how their work has been modified by international actors, their main concerns and challenges. The subsections are divided into the following: NGOs creation and work, state interference and international influence.

6.2.1 Increase of NGOs and their work

Throughout the history of the women's movement in Latin America, there have been specific events that have influenced the movement directly. Women have played an important role in fighting for democracy by allying to the opposing population (Alvarez, 1999). However, once the opposition took power, it did not make bigger changes to human rights, and specifically women's rights (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). Even though women were a crucial part of gaining democracy, women needed new strategies to make a difference in their communities. One of the main connections among feminist women in the region is the *Encuentros*. These gatherings support women's role in raising their voices in a request for change, from domestic relations to economic and social roles (Friedman, 2014). *Encuentros* mean a space where women would be able to show their main concerns, share their actions in their communities, and learn from the actions of other women in their countries. The *Encuentros* were able to bring the attention of women from all over the region, women of different racial, ethnic and social classes. *Encuentros* raise the need to further expand the feminist field, and the meetings gave the opportunity for the creation of new organizations in the region (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). Encuentros can be the example of how women have been able to raise the diversity in their situation and fight against the universality pushed by women in the West, as seen in Grewal (1999) and Tyagi (2014). Therefore, connecting the women's movement to postcolonial feminism.

Around the 1970s, the *Encuentros* gave the opportunity for the creation of many NGOs (Barrig, 2001), which would bring into small communities the feminist discourse. The *Encuentros* is one of the main examples of globalization. These meetings started as small gatherings of women in the region, and, due to their success, many international organizations and women from other regions became interested in the women's movement in Latin America (Friedman, 2014). This interest meant that more foreign actors would come to the region and try to assess the women's situation, come up with ideas and development plans that would

"support" the women's movement. According to Franco (1998), globalization served as an umbrella for the creation of NGOs. Some NGOs are created under the umbrella of bigger organizations, as is the case of the Red Nacional de Jóvenes y Adolescentes para la Salud Sexual y Reproductiva (Red Nac). Red Nac was also created under the umbrella of the Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM) (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). Red Nac is also created due to the number of members FEIM had that are considered "youth" and, therefore, saw the need of creating an organization that would tackle youth topics, concerns, and situations (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). This is also part of some of the aspects of globalization; organizations can increase their membership and influence due to the creation of different spaces either created by the organization or due to the influence of other national, regional or international actors.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, NGOs became advocacy groups for women's rights, the knowledge created would increase their presence politically (Alvarez, 1999). Therefore, NGOs and other women's groups started to push further for the State to take into consideration their rights and needs (Alvarez, 1999). Through this, women were able to increase their presence in the public sphere, translating gender needs into the political field. Furthermore, the increase of organizations in the region led to further mobilization of women, which brought the attention of foreign actors (Sánchez Olvera, 2006). Furthermore, feminist NGOs were able to make a presence in the international arena. NGOs started to further participate in international conferences and came to the realization of the rights they should have in their own countries (Sánchez Olvera, 2006). One can understand that through the increased participation in international conferences, NGOs were able to increase the knowledge in the international community regarding women's issues and concerns in their local communities. Therefore, it could be established as a way in which women in Latin America are fighting against the categorization and universality made by women from the West, an example of postcolonial feminism brought by Mohanty (1984).

Some of their women's movement-related activities was the creation of knowledge that would further support their women's rights advocacy. On one side is UMA, who has created their own school that supports grassroots situations and concerns of their own community, yet still having direct contact with other international NGOs in creating programs for Argentinian youth in other countries, specifically France (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). On the other side is CLADEM, created after the international

conference in Nairobi with the main goal of making sure international agreements and commitments were translated into public policies, while at the same time developing local training programs for women and public officials that continue "lacking" knowledge in women's situations and main concerns (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). This, according to Alvarez (1999), can influence the creation of gender policies. CLADEM compared to UMA can indeed have a higher impact on gender policies in the region, making CLADEM an international organization.

It is important to note that organizations working closer to grassroots concerns do have an influence in their communities that can positively impact those bigger organizations. The case of Red Nac can also shed some light on this topic as their work is highly connected to other youth groups (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021), they continue having a connection with FEIM, and knowledge is transferred through that connection. Even though their women's movement activities, including advocacy, might not entirely influence public policies in their own countries (Alvarez, 2009), judicialization is a strategy used by NGOs to further translate their needs in the international arena and has indeed influence countries to sign and ratify international agreements (Rodrigues Elias & Vier Machado, 2018). Hence, even if the work of grassroots NGOs work is not directly connected to the international community and agendas, they do have a role to play in creating knowledge and influencing larger organizations and push them to take further consideration in the main situations and concerns of women in their countries, regions, and communities. This contextualize work is key to postcolonial feminism (Tyagi, 2014; Mohanty, 1984; Tickner & Sjoberg, 2013; Grewal, 1999; Rayan & Park, 2005).

Another important factor regarding the influence of globalization in the creation of NGOs is the fact that some local NGOs were created based on organizations located outside Latin America. The main example is Coletivo Feminist Sexualidade e Saude which is directly linked to Our Bodies, Our Selves, an organization located in the United States (R. Pereira, personal communication, November 2020). Yet, Coletivo Feminista needed to further focus on the local needs and understand exactly what their goals and objectives would be (R. Pereira, personal communication, November 2020). Therefore, international influence and globalization are also linked to the creation of NGOs in the region, even if it was not directly done through the *Encuentros* or international conferences.

6.2.2 State Interference

NGOs focused on their women's movement activities and ways in which they could further influence their States. After the Fourth World Conference held in Beijing in 1995, many countries started to further increase their gender equality agenda. This comes as well due to the increased pressure of international actors (Narayanaswamy, 2014). Furthermore, the world was also going through rapid economic changes, influencing the governments to focus on certain aspects of their economic development, leaving aside their main responsibilities towards their population (Latin American Association of Development Promotion Organizations et al., 2007; Matos & Paradis, 2013). Due to this and the relative success of the women's movement and how they advocate for women's rights, States started to rely on NGOs as "gender experts" (Alvarez, 1999). Therefore, international conferences, global economic developments, and pressure to increase gender equality in the region are part of another globalization and international influence aspect that influences the role and work of NGOs fighting for women's rights through their governments.

NGOs had to further develop their advocacy and lobbying skills while getting legal status to increase the support to States (Alvarez, 1999). CLADEM is one of the organizations that works directly with regional and international organizations that further support the development of human rights globally, the United Nations and the Inter-American system being some of them (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). Furthermore, the increase of their advocacy skills was with the main intention of increasing feminist projects and gender policy proposals, some in the local and national level and others in the regional level (Alvarez, 2009). This opportunity was also due to the increased democratic processes the region was going through and women's groups being part of the actions to achieve it (Alvarez, 2009; Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). Legal status was mostly imposed by the state for said NGOs to receive funding for the work performed on its behalf (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). Furthermore, states left many welfare activities to NGOs, without training or without those activities being the main focus and goals of NGOs (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). Even though NGOs already focused on the welfare of the population, states leaving that responsibility to NGOs complicated their goals and projects and the role they had in fighting for democracy (Matos & Paradis, 2013).

Therefore, NGOs had to add to their activities the work of being gender experts, without leaving aside the movement-oriented activities (Alvarez, 1999). NGOs had to become

more professionalized in promoting the development of social subjects and generating new institutional forms (Alvarez, 2009). Some NGOs were created with that intention, making sure that States create public policies that follow the international conventions and agreements the country has signed, the main example of CLADEM (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). Even if NGOs were not created with the intention of "keeping an eye" on states' actions, some NGOs had to perform other activities to take responsibility for what the States were lacking. UMA is one of the organizations that had to further increase their welfare activities towards its community. According to Brasseco, president of UMA, they had another role in society, they focused on creating knowledge and increasing the gender perspective. However, they had to create popular daycares and rooms for IUDs and gynecological appointments (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). NGOs were seen as "surrogates for civil society" (Alvarez, 1999). Even though Alvarez in a later work states that due to the Pink Tide many governments started to take responsibility for welfare activities (2009), in reality some NGOs continue performing said activities, even more now due to the current global pandemic (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020).

Furthermore, NGOs were also hired to analyze and do assessments in relation to gender policies (Alvarez, 1999). Some organizations already had said assessments as main activities, as shared above. Yet NGOs also started to do "politics of presence", in which they focused on translating women's needs to international and national arenas (Phillips & Cole, 2009). The space and attention they received made states, international organizations and donors more interested in the work of NGOs. NGOs were perceived to have a connection with larger constituencies. Something that some considered a risk due to the States' need for political support from women (Phillips & Cole, 2009). Concern was connected to the power the State had over NGOs, which could be considered part of patriarchy as well. Linking the fragmentation lived by feminists and feminist NGOs with the fight against patriarchal forms of power. Another way in which Latin America feminism can be linked to postcolonial feminism.

6.2.3 International Influence and main concerns

Even though international influence has been briefly introduced in the previous subsections, this subjection intends to go deeper into the topic. The international influence on states to further support the changes in policies in the region made States create a New Policy Agenda. The connection to NGOs is that the agenda had the intention of bringing poor women

into the economic market, hence the need of having NGOs that would support the training programs created for these women (Alvarez, 1999). Therefore, NGOs' identities changed to one that would both connect their work to the needs of the States and the international donors and requests and their activities related to the women's movement, being a "hybrid-identity" (Alvarez, 1999). One cannot ignore the fact that NGOs' work changed due to international actors' influence through their governments. Moreover, NGOs' connection to the State would also harm the activities they had performed as a woman's movement organizations, setting aside main activities like the educational programs (Alvarez, 2009). Due to this international presence, there was an increased perception that policies and influences from either the State and international organizations decreased the participation of women in social spaces (Matos & Paradis, 2013).

NGOs modifying their way of work due to the connection between international actors and States would make independent feminists consider them as part of the institutional and patriarchal background that the region lived during that time (Alvarez, 1999). As established in the prior section, NGOs had to professionalize their work, yet this was also due to the increased presence of international actors in the region (Alvarez, 1999). Furthermore, the international influence, NGOs professionalization and focus on the fight for women's rights, and the connection to the international community, have allowed these NGOs to become part of global development discourses and plans (Narayanaswamy, 2014). However, this also opens the gap between professionalized feminist NGOs, and women's groups that did not have a legal framework or were unwilling to fully collaborate with the international community (Narayanaswamy, 2014). These NGOs were either not willing to modify their activities and scope, one of them being UMA, or do not have a legal framework to receive funding either, Red Nac being an example (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020; N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). This example leads to other main point that can also be linked to postcolonial feminism. The fact that women and feminist NGOs have been negatively influenced by globalization might be the reason for groups of feminist women to be against globalization. Therefore, joining to groups that fight against this new form of colonization as pointed by Rajan & Park (2005).

Another main connection between local and regional NGOs to international influence is funding. The success of feminist NGOs in the women's movement increased the funding they received from international donors. According to Julia Escalante de Haro, between the 1980s and 1990s, international cooperation in the region increased (J. Escalante de Haro,

personal communication, February 2021). NGOs received funding from the State and international organizations and donors for policy assessments and other gender-related actions (Alvarez, 1999). However, according to Stoltz Chinchilla (1993), NGOs were (and still are (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020; J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021; N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021)) directly dependent on foreign funding. However, one of the main concerns is that said funding comes with conditions (Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). Therefore, NGOs projects and work in the region are based on an agenda created by foreign donors and not related to the advocacy work for the women's movement (Tortajada, 2016). NGOs would receive projects and funding only if they presented the capabilities needed based on International Organizations settings (Phillips & Cole, 2009). NGOs had to change their work to a project center logic, basing themselves on projects created either by the state or by international organizations and donors (Phillips & Cole, 2009).

Furthermore, the results of the projects needed to be visible by producing measurable results, making NGOs change the way they work to result-oriented procedures (Phillips & Cole, 2009). However, smaller organizations that do not count on the necessary tools and staff to receive projects from the State and International organizations have other difficulties. Nayla Procopio shares that not having a legal status keeps them from getting projects, FEIM needs to support them with a legal team, and the funds come through them as well (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021). By changing to projects, international organizations and donors started to be more interested in having a tangible result from their investment than generating a higher impact and change in the long term (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). According to Alvarez (1999), this only increased the competitiveness among NGOs and negatively impacted the women's movement in the region, as it becomes more difficult for NGOs to make a balance between their international funded projects and their advocacy activities.

Currently, according to Escalante de Haro (personal communication, 2021), international cooperation has decreased in the region as the international society no longer sees Latin America as an economic risk. Their cooperation and influence focus on other regions where their economic interests are at risk (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). This has impacted many NGOs as they stopped receiving funding, and many NGOs have disappeared (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021), which is what Stoltz Chinchilla (1993) had shared almost thirty years ago,

NGOs having to perform activities that would secure their survival, which for some did not happen.

Other main concerns also challenge the work of NGOs in the region. Global and political situations in the region influence how the international community further sees the region. This is due to regional and national situations that influence the entry of international funding to a country, e.g., when Evo Morales started his presidency term. Morales closed the country to all funding coming from foreign countries and made it difficult for NGOs to access other funding (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). Furthermore, international foreign policies also directly influence NGOs, for example, the Global GAG Rule introduced by President Trump. Even though for CLADEM this policy did not affect them directly (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021), other organizations might indeed be negatively impacted by it.

Throughout this section, it can be concluded that globalization and international influence have and continue influencing the work of NGOs and have indeed created challenges and concerns that are directly linked to their survival. Furthermore, the closer link of NGOs to the international arena is either through the governments in their respective countries or through international and regional organizations, like the United Nations or the Organization of the American States. However, this does come to bigger discussions of which exact actions, policies, and agendas influence directly an organization. Furthermore, this research is broad regarding the countries and NGOs selected. Therefore, agendas and actors might influence differently in each country.

6.3 Women in Politics

Women have had an essential role in fighting for democracy in Latin America. From being militants in the Sandinista activism to the increased pressure for quotas and parities in local parties and governments. Due to globalization and the NGOs pressure, different states in Latin America have passed laws intending to increase women's presence in the political field. In the 1950s, states passed women's right to vote (Barrig, 2001). Between 1991 and 1997, at least twelve states have passed the establishment of quotas in the region (Barrig, 2001). To better answer the third research question, "how has having female politicians impacted the work for NGOs?" The author has found that the answer depends on the NGO's perspective.

It could be said that due to the women's movement and the increased pressure of NGOs and feminists, there has been an increase of women in public spaces, including in politics, based on what has been introduced in previous sections. The increase of women in public spaces has had a decrease in gender bias, increasing human capital, and influenced the socioeconomic sector (Buvinic & Roza, 2004; J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). This is of high importance as there has been culture and socially constructed roles influencing the role of women in politics (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010), which can also be linked to Latin American feminists using postcolonial feminism challenges in the region. According to Alvarez (1999) the feminist movements in the region were a strategic response for women to go back to policies. The push and advocacy for quotas were with the main intention of further increasing the presence of women in politics (Alvarez, 1999). Moreover, there has also been an increase of women constituencies, enabling feminist NGOs to influence political parties (Alvarez, 1999). The increased presence of women and NGOs in the region has influence countries in signing international agreements, like the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Elimination of Violence against Women (Friedman, 2014). In the early 1990s, many countries in the region passed the law of quotas, which "ensure" a minimum percentage of women in parties and electoral lists to be included (Barrig, 2001). However, this did not entirely mean an increase in gender agendas and public policies based on gender (Barrig, 2001). This could be because politics continued to be a male-dominated field (Sternbach et al., 1992).

The implementation of quotas in the countries had a high importance to the women's movement and the perception of development in the region. Having quotas would signify a closer path to modernity and to fully become a democracy (Piscopo, 2016), which had a high interest due to the dictatorship past the countries have. The women's movement and other actors pressured for quotas to become parities based on universal human rights, increase the representation of constituencies, and equal outcomes (Piscopo, 2016). Moreover, women leaders in the region have raised their voices for the parities to further represent society, meaning being the same percentage as the women's percentage in the population (Piscopo, 2016), which can have a high positive impact on the women's movement as the female population in the region represent the 50 percent (The World Bank, 2021a). However, having women in the highest position in the government might not secure changes in policies, as shared by Juan Pablo Poli in regards to the president Argentina had in the 1970s, which did not have a gender agenda (N. Procopio & J. P. Poli, personal communication, February 2021).

Therefore, women in politics and positions in which they can facilitate changes in laws might not always mean that laws and structural changes will come to be. Furthermore, even though they might create actions and policies, they might not be completely implemented according to the needs of larger constituencies and overall population as women and men in power do not have a holistic (Matos & Paradis, 2013; Rodrigues Elias & Vier Machado, 2018). Therefore, government institutions and the socioeconomic structure continues to be unequal by gender, also including ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, family, region, etc. (Rodrigues Elias & Vier Machado, 2018). Something that has also been shared by Tyagi (2014), stating that Western feminist solutions might not be able to apply to women from the region. Therefore, women and men in power can contribute as oppressors of women.

Even though it is a fact that larger women's representation might not entirely bring new gender policies, the Encuentros and international conferences have shed light on the rights women deserve and empower women to increase the representation in their communities (Sánchez Olvera, 2006; Stoltz Chinchilla, 1993). Due to women's increase in politics, new laws have been passed, and a clear example is Brazil in passing the federal law Maria da Penha, 2009 changed in the Criminal Code regarding sexual crimes and the criminalization of femicides in 2015 (Rodrigues Elias & Vier Machado, 2018). Nayla Procopio (personal communication, 2021) shares that the creation of women ministries, where women have positions of power with the ability to create policies or programs with a gender perspective, also influences the work of NGOs. In Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner passed into laws that even though they were not targeted towards women's rights, they did influence the lives of women in the country (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). Her administration had many positions filled by women, and during Fernández de Kirchner administration the country supported and helped the culture and investigation (M. I. Brasseco, personal communication, October 2020). Even if laws are not linked to women directly, laws do influence their fight as throughout history women have also been concerned regarding situations that influence the entire population (Sternbach et al., 1992). Women fighting for the welfare of all the population can also be looked at as a way in which feminists in the region take into the women's movement some of the main postcolonial feminist challenges, as explained by Tickner & Sjoberg (2013).

According to Escalante de Haro (personal communication, 2021), the fight for women's rights has not progressed in the region (apart from Argentina, which recently decriminalized abortion). There is a recognition of rights in laws, but laws are not being

translated in institutions that can guarantee women's rights and, therefore, the funding for said institutions in those specific laws are not granted (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). As it has been established above, in the region the cultural and social roles of women are deeply intertwined within the society. Even if women have been able to increase their presence, some might be discriminated, not only by the political parties but also by larger constituencies, making it more difficult for them to pass laws and sponsor bills (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). Furthermore, this culture influences the bills in which women are invited to participate, most of them being based on family, children, health care, and educational bills (Htun & Piscopo, 2014; Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). Moreover, Escalante de Haro (personal communication, 2021) states that the current pandemic has only "exacerbated the situation for women in the region, rights are not being guaranteed, there is a precariousness of life, there is a feminization of poverty and an increase in violence."

Latin American countries have increased their responsiveness towards the Violence Against Women (Htun & Piscopo, 2014). However, Escalante de Haro (personal communication, 2021) states that even though women have increased their presence in politics and (in Mexico) women have had a more public presence, rights for women might continue not being passed into laws (Escalante de Haro was referring to the decriminalization of abortion in Mexico). Furthermore, Mexico is one of the highest countries in the region in femicides per day, even so, women in politics continue defending aggressors publicly (referring to Olga Sanchez Cordero, Secretary of the Interior of Mexico, defending the candidate for state government in Guerrero, being an alleged rapist who was facing charges (Méndez, 2021)) (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021).

Apart from that, women that have achieved a political position might also be forced to leave their positions to their male counterparts (Htun & Piscopo, 2014). This being another main challenge for the women's movement and NGOs. A challenge that can also be linked to postcolonial feminism, fighting against patriarchal forms of power in communities, countries and regions (Wright, 2018). For women, it has been difficult to arrive at political positions, "not all of those who have arrived at those positions have arrived with the awareness of making a change. They ally with the elites and the patriarchal mandates. But some are doing things that were not done before, and well, from our advocacy work, we try to articulate those regional efforts of the policies that we are seeing that are raising agendas and generating changes, even in countries where it is more difficult. So, I mean, I think there are few [efforts made by women in politics], but they are very valuable efforts." (J. Escalante de Haro,

personal communication, February 2021). Another perspective is the fact that the president's agenda does influence directly the work NGOs do. According to Ribeiro (personal communication, 2020), having a male president with an agenda that can negatively impact the NGOs work, makes it more difficult for NGOs to work closely and have projects with the government. Even women presidents without a gender agenda can negatively influence the fight for women's rights (Htun & Piscopo, 2014).

Furthermore, every time there has been a law passed or an improvement in the region, women and NGOs have felt a "regressive wave" (J. Escalante de Haro, personal communication, February 2021). This regressive wave is mostly directed at how women are being seen by the population and the patriarchal structures, which can be linked to what has been developed in the previous paragraph. Moreover, and according to Escalante de Haro (personal communication, 2021), in the political field, there has also been increased violence to women in politics, candidates being threatened, attacked, or even murdered. This can directly influence feminist NGOs in the country and their possibility to make future changes, mainly as women in politics are the main ones fighting for women's rights compared to their male counterparts.

This research does not entirely answer how women in politics influence the work of feminists NGOs in the region but does answer and further updates their influence. The author was able to gather the perspectives of different NGOs; however, these are only perspectives that could be indeed backed by previous literature written regarding this topic. The importance of understanding this is that countries in the region are very different among themselves and one another. Yet, they go through the same concerns and, somehow, the same influence from foreign actors. As in the previous subsection, this research also broadens the topic and the possibility of further analyzing specific countries and NGOs and the influence they specifically have from foreign countries and international organizations.

7. Conclusion

This research aims to understand further the work of feminist NGOs in Latin America and how it has changed due to globalization. Therefore, in this research, the main questions were how NGOs' work changes due to globalization and women in politics. Furthermore, Latin America was selected due to its very unique characteristics of using a theory as a way of raising their voices and concerns about the women's situations in the region. Therefore, and due to the historical context of the region and not only of the women involved, postcolonial feminism was also selected to explain better and analyze this research.

Latin America has been selected for this research due to the increased organized movement of women in the region. To further develop this research, a sample of three Latin American countries was selected. These countries were chosen because they are both the biggest in territory and population. NGOs working in the region for women's rights or related to the women's movement were contacted to be interviewed, being this the first way of gathering data. Semi-structured interviews were performed to collect information, and it was a way in which the author was able to add questions concerning the topic. The articles selected as secondary data further supported the information gathered. Context analysis as a data analysis method was able to connect both primary and secondary data further while also getting the broader context of the interviews and texts. This additionally supports the empirical analysis of this research. Like any other research, this thesis also found limitations. These limitations include the fact that even though the region has a similar historical and cultural context, each country is different, including the women's situations and concerns. The second limitation, the number of NGOs interviewed and the fact that the selected ones are indeed in different countries with different goals, can certainly influence the research results. Therefore, for future research, more NGOs and with the same cultural context should be selected for results to be more specific and connected to their situations.

Postcolonial feminism, as the leading theory of this research, was selected due to the specific situations in which women in the region are involved. Furthermore, feminism does not entirely describe women outside the West, which has been one of the main concerns for feminists and NGOs in Latin America. Postcolonial feminism challenges the general assumption of women as a homogeneous group that does not take into consideration the lives and struggles of women in the Global South, which is something that in Latin America simply cannot be overlooked. Women in the region have gone through specific situations in which

they are oppressed by different factors and actors, both inside and outside the region. Moreover, they live in a region that has also been colonized, which brought specific forms of power that oppressed the whole population. Those forms are still present in the region and have gotten deeply intertwined in society. Even though national discourses have emerged to contest said colonial forms, women and their concerns continue not to be included. Therefore, women being also oppressed by their male counterparts in the fight against new forms of colonial powers. Furthermore, it has also been established that NGOs in the region also perceive the universality that feminism brings. Therefore, NGOs have tried to include different types of feminism in their work. Women who do not feel connected to general feminism can also be part of their work and the women's movement. Thus, feminism is contested in the region by women and NGOs, increasing the importance of different contexts and situations and using them to advance their agendas.

Throughout the empirical analysis, four main topics were selected mainly due to the subjects reviewed in the interviews and the information gathered from the articles. These topics connect directly with the research topic of this thesis. Feminism, as it has been established earlier, is highly related to the women's movement and is used as a tool to develop their agendas. Furthermore, it is connected to NGOs work with the same goal. Furthermore, postcolonial feminism also empowers women and the fight for female representation in the region, brings broader perspectives and context among women, and creates women spaces. The data presented regarding Latin American feminist NGOs explains the work these organizations have done in the region, the differences among them in the perceptions and actions towards their communities.

There are several organizations that work towards actions in the whole region. Regional organizations are linked with smaller organizations, and they, at some point, do work together as a network to lend support to the women's movement. Globalization and international influence increase their presence in the region, leading regional and smaller organizations to have a closer relationship with the international community. It has, however, also raised concerns for both feminists in the women's movement and NGOs working with them. Their presence has brought international agendas and funding. The first one is creating a division among the women's movement and NGOs, as it is highly connected to how the State interacts with one another. Furthermore, the international presence does not only mean the global gender agenda but economic and political policies that have influenced the whole population, directly impacting women's lives. The second one, funding, has made NGOs

dependent on international organizations and donors with interests in the region. Without those interests, NGOs' advocacy and women's movement activities are negatively impacted, making NGOs disappear due to funding. The empirical data gathered was able to further set the grounds into what was discussed in the main analysis of this research.

The final section of this analysis was able to answer the research questions of this thesis. Even though the questions are tackling a broad topic, when analyzing three different countries in which NGOs are different among themselves, the specificity of how their work has changed due to globalization can be difficult to tackle. Overall, the research was able to specify how globalization and international actors influence the NGOs' work in the region. It was able to further state that funding and agendas created from international donors are the most critical concerns of NGOs in the region. Mainly as the four NGOs interviewed have raised the concern of the same topics throughout their interviews. The women's movement comes and goes depending on the country's situation. Women have indeed increased their presence in the political field. Yet, more work needs to be done to fully include women's concerns and situations into the gender agenda of many countries.

It can also be stated that the women's movement and NGOs have influenced more the increase of women's representation in politics and women's than the other way. However, further research should be done to increase the literature and the reality of the impact of the women's movement and women in politics. Another significant result of this research is that the State is the actor that influences the work of organizations in the region the most. However, it is also important to note that the state is being impacted by external forces in many different ways and situations. The current global pandemic is an example where States need to take measures and NGOs need to continue working on their welfare activities due to the government's lack of responsibility. Hence, even if NGOs are not, at some point, directly influenced by globalization or international actors, they continue being indirectly impacted by global situations.

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