

# Feminist Standpoint Epistemology – The role of Women in Climate Change Policy-Making: Are Some People's Experiences More Valuable Than Others' as a Foundation for Knowledge and Generating Social Change?

Julia Seymour

## Introduction

There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that women are more adversely affected by climate change than men. In answer to the above question, this essay will argue that employing pragmatist principles in climate change policy-making can help to further gender equality in developing countries. Encouraging participation and the extension of democracy can minimise the suffering of the world's most disadvantaged populations. Initially, I will examine standpoint epistemology and look at the benefits of this research model in redressing the imbalance of representation for minority groups. Following this, I aim to look at feminist standpoints specifically. Drawing on the work of Sandra Harding, I will present the view that women have developed a double-consciousness which makes them more strongly objective than men, with regards to the climate change problem. The United Nations has identified the need to involve women in climate change policy and planning. After a close examination of the UN Development Programme on gender and policy, I intend to analyse the extent to which these initiatives have been successful in minimising the negative impact of climate change. Through doing this, a major question arises as to whether or not people's experiences can be in some way *more valuable* than those of others. What are the qualitative differences between citizens' participation and experiences? What exactly does it mean for some people's experiences to be better, worse or more insightful than others? I aim to address some of these issues by evaluating that actually, some experiences *are* better than others. Certain people are better placed to participate in politics because they are equipped with the sufficient knowledge and skills to do so. This largely resonates with the work of John Dewey, causing me to consider his pragmatist philosophy in support of my argument. The need to consider women's viewpoints in climate change policy-making is urgent. Using examples, I will show how severe the impact has already been. If remaining inequalities are to be eliminated then gender targeted action needs to be taken.

## Standpoint Epistemology and the Question of Experience

Firstly, I will outline precisely how consideration of others' points-of-view can make policy more widely beneficial and, secondly, how their experiences are different.

Standpoint epistemology claims that focusing on the most underprivileged groups in society will cause issues, which may have escaped attention, to come to light. By envisaging the potential outcomes of decision making from the perspective of the most affected, it may change the consensus on what is the best course of action. Not only should the authorities contemplate what these outcomes might be, but the affected populations should be participants in the discourse. Given the opportunity to voice their opinions, problems can be tackled head-on, paving the way for social reform. Disadvantaged groups are immersed in *multiple realities*, and therefore have an epistemic privilege. In other words: the

disadvantages of individuals (or groups) present a wider base for the evolution of knowledge. Nancy Hartstock writes that standpoints 'posit a duality of levels of reality' in which 'the deeper level [...] included and explains the "surface" or appearance, and indicates the logic by means of which the appearance inverts and distorts the deeper reality' (1998:108). Those who sit at the bottom of the hierarchy— deemed inferior because of their gender, ethnicity, class etc. — have a greater understanding of social order. Their social stature enables the development of a heightened consciousness. Purely for means of survival, it is vital that these groups understand how society is organised, and how order is maintained. Consequently, they become familiar with the clear patterns of subordination and domination (Jaggar and Young 1998:180). Their knowledge is richer because they have experiences of social hierarchy in its entirety; an individual at the bottom of society witnesses how the top functions. The same cannot be said of an individual at the top- thus, their social understanding is likely to be one-dimensional.

## Considering the Case of Women

If one is willing to concede that women are one of society's most underprivileged groups, then one has an appreciation for feminist standpoint epistemology. The asserted universal subordination of women means that there are certain types of strategic knowledge that are only accessible to their gender. Standpoint feminism is more than just a philosophical doctrine; it aims to generate social change by empowering women. It advances contemporary feminist approaches to research and knowledge building. Taken into serious consideration, women's insights could present a valuable contribution to the running of society. Throughout history, most of our knowledge and practices have been informed by the experiences of men. Thought to be of less worth, women's accounts have been disregarded or simply undocumented. As female consciousness began to develop more rapidly in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, feminist movements sought to address the gender imbalance. For a more comprehensive view of what is happening in the world we need to understand where all marginalised groups are coming from.<sup>1</sup>

## Strong Objectivity

One reason for believing women's experiences to be more valuable is because they are more objective than men. Sandra Harding refers to the model of research as 'strong objectivity.' Women are epistemically privileged since they possess a double consciousness. Their pursuit of knowledge is more fruitful. Their conclusions— less distorted and self-interested than those of the ruling male classes— will yield a more accurate picture of social reality. Women are expected to be encompassed in societal spheres, both public (indirectly) and private (directly). Alessandra Tanesini describes women as 'outsiders' (in the sense of having no power of control over the current system) yet, at the same time, they are 'insiders' (since they are a crucial element in the continuation of it) (1999:142). Abigail Brooks clarifies how we should think about double consciousness; 'as members of an oppressed group [women] have cultivated a double consciousness—a heightened awareness not only of their own lives but of the lives of the dominant group (men) as well' (in Leavy and Hesse-Biber 2006:63). Such perspicacity makes them capable of evaluating society in a unique way. Familiarising themselves with the interrelations between their own subordinate group and the prevailing male group endows women with an innovative "mode of seeing." This double immersion 'places women in an advantageous position from which to change society for the better [...] the knowledge gleaned from women's double consciousness can be applied to diagnose

---

<sup>1</sup> Having said this, standpoint epistemology cannot be confused with cultural relativism.

social inequalities and injustices and to construct and implement solutions' (Brooks 2006:66).

So, other than asserting the existence of double consciousness, what are the grounds for believing women's interpretations of reality to be less distorted than those of men? Knowledge is largely produced by the dominant classes, so the prevailing interpretation of reality is likely to reflect their interests (Brooks 2006:66). Exploitation is disguised while efforts to perpetuate the existing structure continue. Pseudo-justification for existent power relations is found because they serve the ends of the most powerful. The ruling gender has a material interest in sustaining control- resulting in the calculated deception of the oppressed (Hartstock 1998:107). However, these oppressed groups require an explanation for their suffering. Alison Jaggar notes how marginalised groups eventually reach 'a realization that something is wrong with the social order. Their pain provides them with a motivation for finding out what is wrong, for criticizing accepted interpretations of reality, and for developing new and less distorted ways of understanding the world' (in Leavy and Hesse-Biber 2006:67). With such a situated standpoint as a prerequisite, inquiry incurs objective knowledge, free from bias. Hence, *strong objectivity* has been achieved.

### **Feminist Standpoint Epistemology and the Pragmatist Connection**

Commitment to securing objective knowledge does not come to a foreseeable end. Standpoints are varied and ever-changing. Communication should transcend geographical restrictions. Context is moving and active. The plight for knowledge and an improved social reality is a task for communities at large, not individuals alone; it begins with one's own standpoint but we must be open to the discussion of ideas. Here, the links to pragmatism become apparent. As the founding father of pragmatism Charles Saunders Peirce explained; the communal, on-going nature of inquiry furnishes us with a fuller, richer picture of the world- 'unless we make ourselves hermits, we shall necessarily influence each other's opinions; so that the problem becomes how to fix belief, not in the individual merely, but in the community' (in Talisse and Aikin 2011:43). Peircean pragmatism anticipates no "completion" of inquiry. Knowledge comes ever closer to reflecting the truth of reality and this remains the ultimate goal. By isolating a whole segment of society and ignoring their experiences the project of inquiry is damaged.

Standpoint epistemologists assume a pragmatist philosophy by focusing on the acquisition and sharing of actual knowledge, of beliefs as opposed to emotion or feelings. Knowledge is grounded solely in experience. Giving standpoint epistemology a feminist orientation means identifying the problems that women confront in their daily lives and using these as a starting point for initiating change. Jaggar and Young note that 'Like feminist standpoint theorists, pragmatists argue that the perspectivism of such situated experiences means that those who are marginalised know the limits of the dominant interpretation of reality better than those holding the standard view' (1998:51). Wherever it is required, women become the enabling vehicle for societal analysis and re-construction. Knowledge is secured via our encounters with the world, making it context dependent. Our experiences are inextricably bound up with social and political factors of the time. The advantage that women have is that they can see the true nature of social reality, despite attempts to mask it.

The difficulty in characterising pragmatism lies in the fact that there is so much variation between the main pragmatist notions. There is no 'unified doctrine' that defines pragmatist thought (Talisse and Aikin 2011:1). Maybe we can think about pragmatism in terms of what it is not- it is anti-Cartesian, anti-ideological and anti-metaphysical as a starting point. As opposed to a philosophy shrouded in dogma, pragmatism is fallibilistic and flexible. Classical pragmatism recognised that aligning oneself to definitive principles, or a fixed set of ideas, is

not always conducive to getting results and making society more equitable. If policy is to be expedient then ideology has no place. No idea should be independent from its utility or accepted without evaluation or questioning. It is not logically possible for us to build up our own (correct) system of knowledge *a priori*.

Dewey wrote that social advances depend on the mutual cooperation of men and women; if there is to be progression, men and women need to grasp each other's points-of-view (in Haddock Seigfried 1991:411). Pragmatist roots are closely associated with feminist theory. Jane Addams, for instance, shared with Dewey the desire to revolutionise social policy and improve the lives of women. Certain issues that impacted upon women more than men (such as the provision of childcare) should be addressed from the relevant (or most affected) standpoint. Addams saw that we need to appreciate the burdens and struggles of others if we are to become truly egalitarian (SEP entry "Jane Addams" 2010). Theoretical thinking should not be placed over and above people's experiences. What can guide the development of equality are the current 'perplexities' of life; once we acknowledge the existence of these obstacles we can overcome them and social parity can then be achieved.

### John Dewey on Experience

Dewey contended that human beings are flexible and adaptive creatures who learn to cope with on-going alterations in their environment. His position on the *learning and refinement of meaning* is illustrated thus; 'suppose a busy infant puts his finger in the fire; the doing is random, aimless, without intention or reflection. But something happens in consequence. The child undergoes heat, he suffers pain. The doing and undergoing, he reaching and the burn, are connected. One comes to suggest and mean the other. Then there is experience in a vital and significant sense' (Dewey 1921:86-87). The *outcome* of the act has a *meaning*—so is fundamentally a *learning* experience. The most basic of empirical assumptions is made here: knowledge is located in our physical experiences.

Dewey claims that equal opportunity to develop our capacities is a fundamental human right. He is quick to point out that not everyone's contribution to (or responsibility in) political life can, or should, be the same. Some individuals are more apt than others in specific fields. Society will reap the most benefits if we only contribute to topics that we are adequately informed about. For women in the developing world, this basic right is being routinely undermined. Oppression has no place in a democracy; 'expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience [It] is inherent in the democratic personal way of life' (Dewey in Talisse and Aikin 2011:153). Barriers to communication should be demolished. In the current context, perhaps the best we can hope for is the utilisation of our differences. Restrictions placed upon women have led to double consciousness and, far from being the desired paradigm, we can try to use this to the advantage of society as a whole. Experience such as those had by these women should direct climate change policy and influence the wider democratic process. The gender imbalance clearly needs to be tackled.

Utilitarian in his thinking, Dewey believed that actions should be performed, and beliefs held, only if they increase human happiness. Useful beliefs are those which 'help [to] make human life richer, fuller and happier' (Rorty in Shook and Margolis 2009:258). Dewey and the new empiricists hold that all we need to become moral beings is experience. What we experience can help us decipher right from wrong. Continual challenge means that the current state of affairs is never blindly accepted.

## The Effect of Climate Change on Women

Climate change is defined as the changing of weather patterns across varying periods of time. Causes of such changes can be attributed to natural trends or human activities. Global warming, for instance, has been exhorting by greenhouse gas emissions- a product used largely for human ends. Natural changes include volcanic eruptions or ocean currents. Because we are all, in some way, affected by climate change we all need to be involved in the effort to minimise its negative impact. But those who suffer directly, or have had first-hand experience of the effects, will no doubt provide a more valuable contribution to the discussion. Having witnessed the situations that can arise, they are in an expedient position from which to recommend what precautions need to be taken, as well as what the necessary provisions might be.

Having outlined feminist standpoint epistemology and defined climate change, I will now explain how women's experiences of this phenomenon- particularly in the developing world- make them more objective about what actions should, and realistically can, be taken.

The United Nations Development Programme (2009:III-IV) explicates how climate change exacerbates women's vulnerability:

Poor women's limited access to resources, restricted rights, limited mobility and muted voice in shaping decisions make them highly vulnerable to climate change. [...] Climate change will magnify existing patterns of inequality, including gender inequality.

The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in the number of people living below the poverty line. Such rapid experience of this phenomenon has revealed what Dewey calls 'novel facts and truths,' which calls for new measures to be adopted (1921:93). In developing nations women have limited access to resources, both technological and financial. On a daily basis women are insufficiently equipped to go about their activities. In the wake of a natural disaster this becomes ever more apparent. Women are undereducated with regards to technology, making them less able to assess the likelihood and potential impact of natural disasters. Men are given priority in the distribution of medical aid. There is a shortage of (or apprehension to provide) contraception in some countries, meaning that families are becoming larger, without the provisions to keep all members healthy.

Additionally, women often have limited mobility. Lacking the skill-set that men have acquired, women are less able to move around in search of work elsewhere. Women's household and family responsibilities are overwhelmingly greater than men's. Having a family in tow makes it more difficult for women to relocate to areas which are less affected by climate change- or where work is in more ample supply. For men, in contrast, the ease of migration into less affected areas is enhanced by their pliable skills. Similarly it can be more dangerous for women to move around; either because they are more vulnerable to crime and susceptible to illness.

Worldwide it is evident that women have a muted (or underrepresented) voice in shaping decisions. This tendency is more apparent in the developing world than anywhere else. It is unusual for women to be involved in national or local governing bodies. This is just one example of how women are subjected to restricted rights.

In the aftermath of a natural disaster women are expected to contribute more hours of unpaid labour in efforts to return the community back to a normal working order. This is mainly to do with the fact that women's labour is of less value than men's. Thus women disproportionately suffer from severe loss of income.

As far as physical suffering is concerned, women can also expect to be hit harder than men by climate change. After a disaster, not only do more women suffer from serious injuries, but they are also less likely to recover. As a result of such injuries, women may be unable to return to work as a manual labourer which in turn, makes life for whole families more difficult. Malnutrition is commonplace amongst women in developing countries. Clearly this is enhanced by the ever growing lack of resources as a result of climate change. Women are giving birth to children with more physical disabilities as an implication of this, as well as being less able to cope with pregnancy itself. Statistics prove that crimes against women increase in the period after a natural disaster. There is more sexual violence, which can act as a deterrent for women to make use of shelters.

With these detrimental ramifications being highlighted, we should now appreciate that 80% of the food development workforce in developing countries is constituted by women. Female power is the main source of agricultural labour. Not only this, but in their role as a housekeeper the responsibility of finding firewood and water is bestowed upon women. The UNDP report states that women in sub-Saharan Africa spend 40 billion hours collecting water every year (2009:III). This makes them more dependent than men on natural resources in their day-to-day lives; by way of the continuation of employment and the operation of their homes. Thus it is clear that women's working lives are at a greater risk of being affected by climate change- be it drought or uncertain rainfall. Integral sources are unreliable and ever-diminishing and women are left to deal with the repercussions. They may be forced to go without, or the men of household may become more inclined to look for work elsewhere.

### Need Some Evidence?

If any doubt remains regarding the suggestion that women are more punitively hit by climate change, the following statistics clearly show that this *is* the case- thus re-affirming my reasons for focusing on the gender-disparity within this area of policy (all taken from the UNDP report 2009:55-6):

- In a study undertaken on 141 countries, it was shown that women and children are 14 times more likely to die during a natural disaster.
- In the 1991 cyclone disasters in Bangladesh, 90% of the 140,000 fatalities were women
- Most of the victims trapped in New Orleans by hurricane Katrina were African-American women with children, the poorest group in that part of the country<sup>2</sup>
- More women than men died during the heave wave that affected Europe in 2003. In France, it was elderly women who suffered the most.<sup>3</sup>
- In rescue treatments, boys are given preferential treatment over girls
- In Sri Lanka it proved easier for the men to survive during the tsunami because mainly boys are taught how to swim and climb trees.

Climate change may be a universal issue but its impact is not homogenous. Individual histories and identities need to be taken into consideration when analysing the potential effects. The means by and extent to which persons participate in policy is, in reality, highly

---

<sup>2</sup> Although I am focusing my assessment on the experiences of women in developing countries, it should be noted that climate change does affect women in Western society often more harshly than men- Hurricane Katrina and the European heat wave demonstrate this point.

<sup>3</sup> As above

variant. Men and women encounter social reality through different methods and with different perspectives. Class, culture and age can further restrict (or enhance) input. But by recognising gender discrepancies, as *one* form of inequality, social reform has been enabled. Aiming for certain measurable targets (in each context, respectively) will address unjust disparities. Focusing solely on the experience of women will not bring this about; 'inequality can be corrected if the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women *and men* are recognised and their interests, needs and priorities are taken into consideration' (UNDP 2009:25 italics added). Both sexes have a set of needs, leaving them open to distinct vulnerabilities. Once women are regarded as active agents in the bringing about of change, there will be a more accurate picture of reality- upon which policy can be based.<sup>4</sup>

### How Does the UNDP Adhere to Pragmatist Principles?

Once the severe, and unequal, impact of climate change upon women has been recognised, measures can be taken to prevent discrimination and promote the furthering of equal rights as well as equitable participation. Social prejudices lead to women having less chance of surviving natural disasters or adapting to climate change, when in fact they possess the necessary knowledge to do so. The opportunity for them to utilise this knowledge is what is lacking. The UN explains how the knowledge that the affected parties have ought to be maximised to warrant damage control (2009):

[Despite their aforementioned vulnerability] women play an important role in supporting households and communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Across the developing world, women's leadership in natural resource management is well recognized. For centuries, women have passed on their skills in water management, forest management and the management of biodiversity, among others. Through these experiences, women have acquired valuable knowledge that will allow them to contribute positively to the identification of appropriate adaptation and mitigation techniques, if only they are given the opportunity [...] Moving forward, UNDP will continue to support gender equality and women's empowerment: one important aspect of this work will be facilitating women's equal participation in the on-going climate change negotiations process, to ensure that their needs, perspectives, and expertise are equally taken into account. [...] women's contributions can strengthen the effectiveness of climate change measures. [...] it is critical that women contribute to the effort and that their perspectives are equally represented in the debate.

From reading the excerpt above it becomes clear that the UNDP have pragmatist intentions and an appreciation for feminist standpoints at their core, but it is all very introductory so far. An examination of the initiatives, and whether or not they are effective, needs to be undertaken before we can truly assess the qualitative differences between experiences of climate change. The UN outlines these gender-sensitive climate change initiatives in their bid to further equality (UNDP 2009:59):

- i. *Think big*: gender equality and the principles of risk reduction must guide all disaster mitigation aspects, responses to disasters and reconstruction. The window of opportunity is quick to close.
- ii. *Know the facts*: gender analysis is imperative to directly helping victims and planning an equitable recovery.

---

<sup>4</sup> I am not making the claim that men should be disregarded on the subject but their influence should be less significant than women's

- iii. *Work with women in base organizations*: in communities, the women's organizations have information, knowledge, experiences, networks and resources that are vital to increasing resilience in the face of disasters.
- iv. *Work with and build the capacities of already existing women's groups*.
- v. *Resist stereotypes*: base all initiatives on knowledge of the specific contexts and differences of each culture, economic situation, as well as politics and gender, and not on generalizations.
- vi. *Use a human rights approach*: democratic and participatory initiatives help women and girls more. Both men and women have a right to the conditions they need to enjoy their fundamental human rights, as well as simply to survive.
- vii. *Respect and build women's capacities*. Avoid overburdening women, who already have a very heavy workload and many family responsibilities.

The obvious question remains as to whether these initiatives have been (or are likely to be) successful. If this is case, then we can clearly see *why* feminist standpoint epistemology should be taken into consideration when targeting the problem of climate change, specifically in developing countries. Later, the question of exactly *how* and *to what extent*, will be addressed.

### **Pragmatism and Social Change: How Successful Have the Initiatives Been?**

So can these initiatives be seen as effective, having had a positive impact? I argue that they have, by alluding to further examples from the UNDP. One account that caught my attention was that of Sahena, a woman residing in the Gaibandha district of Bangladesh. Having witnessed first-hand the devastating floods of 2004 (where 240 people lost their lives, four million were evacuated and thousands went without food or shelter) and anticipating the likelihood of further floods, Sahena sought to minimise future damages by utilising the skills she already possessed, and imparting her knowledge to others. She educated other women in her community about adaptive techniques. These included simple measures such as how to make portable clay ovens, how to raise homes and use radios to hear about possible flood threats. Obstacles that Sahena faced throughout her experience of the floods gave her multiple ideas of how to reduce the risk to her and her family. Since making others in the community aware of these precautions, she has become president of the committee and is widely respected. Initially people were hostile towards her active participation but this highlights the exact point that I want to make: Women can, and should be, active agents of change. Not only do they have the necessary knowledge, but they have knowledge that is lacking in dominant male groups. Arguably, Sahena's abilities, and insight, are of greater significance because of her gender. The positive impact she has had upon the community are unlikely to be matched by the actions of her husband. Sahena's is just one example of how serious consideration of women's standpoints 'saves lives and empowers women' (UNDP 2009:58). If the projects of democracy and equality are to be extended then the exclusion of any segment of society is unacceptable. In the case of women, it is an even greater risk because they embody at least half of the world's population.

### **The Value of Experience**

Dewey tells us that '[Pragmatic] philosophy should develop ideas relevant to the actual crises of life, ideas influential in dealing with them and tested by the assistance they afford' (in Shook and Margolis 2009:60). Dealing with crises based on our previous encounters is what affords social change. We can justify the statement that some standpoints (and therefore experiences) have increased valued over (or are qualitatively different than) others because

the processes that they give rise to have relative reliability (Kitcher in Tanesini 1999:47). Some methods of acquiring knowledge are more reliable. Undergoing experiences is what enhances our agency.

Dewey's political agenda has been described as progressive. He wished to extend 'the use of intelligence to liberate and liberalise action' (in Shook and Margolis 2009:60). But how should action and participation be regulated? If one is more objective about climate change because their degree of suffering is worse, who will measure this information? He avers (in SEP entry "Dewey's Political Philosophy" 2009):

'From the standpoint of the individual, it consists in having a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups in which one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups sustain. From the standpoint of the groups, it demands liberation of the potentialities of members of a group in harmony with the interests and goods which are common.'

It is with mutual interests in mind that we should consider alternative standpoints. However harmonious the outcomes of policy are is the extent to which they are democratic. And it is with this in mind that we should undertake a programme of social change. Initially the input of women at a local level needs to be encouraged, with a view to changing their representation on a global scale. Despite the latter being a quicker, more effective route of change I think it is unrealistic to expect mainstream politics to adopt these kinds of policies straight away. Of course integration- in all forms- should be encouraged but, for the sake of directly reducing the harms of climate change, it is gender-based initiatives that will prove most successful. What is vitally important is that women's accounts are proportionately represented. Admittedly my ideas about how this should be enacted are quite inchoate, but I think that progress is possible now that the importance of standpoint epistemology has been recognised.

Shook and Margolis summarise Dewey's position on public participation as follows; 'Without [public participation] in the formation of policy [...] it could not reflect the common needs and interests of the society because these needs were only known to the public' (2009:294). Even if alone possesses is knowledge of the situation and not the skill to act upon it, then their contribution is still a valid one. Decisions should be made collectively purely because these problems are collective by nature. Such theory marks the pragmatist desire for a more democratic system of self-governing. Pragmatism is said to have ontological advantages because it places a 'realistic emphasis on the growth in participants' understanding of issues and of one another's lives within diverse global contexts' as well as 'educating individuals and publics capable of [...] shaping public goods and public policies' (Green in Shook and Margolis 2009:314). Striving to achieve mutually beneficial, common goals attests a united approach. From the outset, it would seem that there are no disadvantages to adopting a pragmatist approach in the case of climate change policy-making.

## Conclusion

I have maintained that women's contribution to climate change policy-making is more valuable than men's as their experiences furnish them with more accurate beliefs about how best to minimise any damaging effects. I do not mean to say that women are necessarily worst affected by all issues- and therefore more objective on every account- but I hope I have shown that this is the case with regards to climate change. Clearly it is not the case that every developing country is affected by climate change, or gender-inequality, to the same

degree. Each case should be treated in isolation; with a view to extending human freedom and improving quality of life. As far as other demographical characteristics are concerned, I think that more research needs to be carried out. When dealing with any social issue, people's differentiating qualities (religion, ethnicity or age etc.) need to be analysed. Undoubtedly, gender is just one part of it, but it is a significant one and, in the case of climate change, I remain adamant that it is *the most* significant. We have seen how much can be achieved when women are involved in generating social change, and are given a forum to raise awareness about women's issues. The pragmatist commitment to mutual participation and a common good is clear, and I hope to have left no doubt that this will be more effectively achieved by a growth in women's participation internationally. The good work that has already begun should be continued, with more certified efforts, to enable the betterment of everyone's lives.

## Bibliography

- Dewey, J. (1921) *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, University of London Press: London
- Festenstein, M. "Dewey's Political Philosophy", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2009 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/dewey-political/>
- Haddock Seigfried, C. (Autumn 1991), 'The Missing Perspective: Feminist Pragmatism,' *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 405-416
- Hamington, M. "Jane Addams", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/addams-jane/>
- Harding, S. & Hintikka, M. B. (eds.) (2003), *Discovering Reality- Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*, Kluwer Academic Publishers: Oxford
- Hartstock, N.C.M (1998), *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited & Other Essays*, Westview Press: Oxford
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. & Yaiser, M. (2004), *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, Oxford University Press: Oxford
- Jaggar, A. M. & Young, I. M. (1998), *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, Blackwell Publishers: Oxford
- Leavy, P. & Hesse-Biber, S. N. (eds.) (2006), *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, Sage Publications: New York
- Shook, J. R. & Margolis, J. (eds.) (2009), *A Companion to Pragmatism*, Blackwell Publishing: Oxford
- Talisse, R. B. & Aikin, S. F. (eds.) (2011), *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce through the Present*, Princeton University Press: New Jersey
- Tanesini, A (1999), *An Introduction To Feminist Epistemologies*, Blackwell Publishers: Oxford
- Resource Guide on Gender and Climate Change* (2009), United Nations Development Programme  
URL: [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/downloads/Resource\\_Guide\\_English\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/downloads/Resource_Guide_English_FINAL.pdf)