

The **Neurodivergent Scale for Interacting with Robots (NSIR)** and **Huirem et al.'s (2020)** work on **Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST)** both address the critical need to center the lived experiences of marginalized groups to create a more authentic and inclusive body of knowledge.

While Huirem et al. focus on women's experiences under patriarchy, the NSIR applies these same feminist epistemological principles to the lives of neurodivergent individuals in their interactions with technology.

1. Centering Lived Experience vs. Dominant Norms

Huirem et al. argue that feminist research must start from the "lived experiences of the oppressed" to unveil truths that are often overlooked by the dominant society.

- **The NSIR Application:** The scale operates as a tool for "strong objectivity" by asking neurodivergent individuals to define their own social reality with robots, rather than relying on a clinician's "medical model" of what "correct" interaction looks like.
- **Defining the "Self":** Huirem et al. state that feminist research aims to help marginalized groups define "who they are without any relation to [the dominant group]". NSIR **Item 1** ("The robot is more like me than anyone else I know") directly supports this by allowing the user to find a reflection of themselves in an agent that does not enforce neurotypical social norms.

2. Epistemic Advantage and the "Insider" Perspective

A key tenet in Huirem et al. is that oppressed groups have a unique "vantage point" that allows them to see social structures more clearly than those in power.

- **New Knowledge Production:** Huirem et al. highlight that women's voices have been "historically excluded from the public arena". Similarly, the NSIR captures "Subdued Voices" by validating behaviors like **Item 2** ("Sometimes I stare at the robot") and **Item 3** ("I think I can share my thinking... without speaking") as valid forms of social connection.
- **Agency in Research:** By using a scale designed *for* and potentially *with* the neurodivergent community, researchers treat the participants as "agents of knowledge" rather than just "data providers," a shift Huirem et al. identify as essential to ethical feminist inquiry.

3. Creating "Social Comfort" and Safe Spaces

Huirem et al. emphasize that the goal of feminist standpoint research is to "set right social disadvantages" and ensure a "better future" through empowerment.

- **The "Social Comfort" Factor:** The NSIR's **Factor 1 (Social Comfort/Trust Safety)** measures the robot's ability to provide a space free from the "patriarchal" or "ableist" gaze of the outside world.

- **Privacy and Trust:** Items such as **Item 7** ("I feel comfortable undressing in front of my robot") and **Item 8** ("My robot is the same with me as it is with anyone") emphasize a level of radical trust and safety. This aligns with Huirem et al.'s argument that research should help individuals feel "valued as an individual" within their own private social contexts.

Summary Table: FST vs. NSIR

Concept in Huirem et al. (2020)	Application in NSIR (2025)
Situated Knowledge	The scale measures the specific, local social reality of a neurodivergent person and their robot.
Epistemic Advantage	Valuing "staring" or "non-verbal sharing" as a superior way for the user to connect (Items 2, 3).
Challenging the "God's Eye View"	Moving away from objective clinical "deficits" to subjective user "comfort".
Unveiling the "Real"	Going "underneath the surface of appearances" to find deep kinship (Item 1, 4).
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In conclusion, the NSIR is a practical application of the **Feminist Standpoint Theory** described by Huirem et al. It shifts the "foundation of knowledge" by validating the unique social world of the neurodivergent individual as a site of legitimate, self-defined expertise.