THE FORUM

The Past, Present, and Future(s) of Feminist Foreign Policy

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Almost a decade after Sweden first declared that it would follow a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP), a further eleven countries from across Europe, North and South America, and North and West Africa have adopted, or have signalled an interest in potentially adopting, an FFP in the future. These developments have been accompanied by a growing body of feminist scholarship. Although still in its infancy, this literature can generally be divided between more normative accounts and those that are empirically focussed, with particular attention paid to the FFPs of Sweden and Canada. Yet, few studies compare FFPs uptake across different countries and regions, examine its connections to longer histories of ideas around women and gender, or unpack the policy intersections FFP (tentatively) engages. Contributing to these different areas, Part I provides an overview of the history of FFP, interrogates FFP in the context of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), and explores what FFP can achieve in the current (liberal) global system. Part II turns to consider policy intersections in relation to the climate crisis, migration, militarism, and bodies. Thinking through its origins, policy intersections, and potential future(s), the contributors to this Forum explore FFP's multiple and contested future(s). Ultimately, the Forum takes stock of this feminist turn in foreign policy at a critical point in its development and considers what future possibilities it may hold.

Key Words: *Feminist Foreign Policy, Climate Change, Militarism, Migration, Bodies*

Introduction to the Forum

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In 2014, Sweden became the first state to publicly adopt a feminist foreign policy (FFP). Announced by a new coalition government with feminist Foreign Minister Margot Wallström championing the agenda, the proclamation was met with some ridicule and confusion.[1] Nonetheless, almost a decade later, a further eleven countries from across Europe, North and South America, North and West Africa have now adopted, or have signalled an interest in potentially adopting, an FFP,[2] igniting debates within both the European Parliament and the US Senate, with prominent civil society actors advocating its uptake. Now approaching its tenth anniversary, FFP looks increasingly established as a novel state approach to foreign policy, at the same time as cracks have begun to appear – with Sweden just recently deciding to abandon the policy.

Although still in its infancy, the scholarship on FFP can be divided between more normative accounts (e.g., Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond 2016; Achilleos-Sarll 2018; Aggestam and Bergman Rosamond 2019; Robinson 2021) and those that are empirically focussed, with particular attention paid to the FFPs of both Sweden and Canada (e.g., Jezierska 2021; Parisi 2020; Thomson 2020, 2022; Tiessen & Swan 2018; Sundström, Zhukova, and Elgström 2021). However, with Mexico, Libya,[3] Chile, Colombia, and Liberia having now pledged to adopt, or showing an interest in potentially adopting, an FFP in the future, it is clear that this is not the exclusive agenda of Europe and North America. Indeed, the disproportionate focus on Sweden and Canada erases decades of feminist practice in foreign (and domestic) policy in other contexts, or countries where gender equality may be equally stressed but without evoking the FFP descriptor (e.g., Aggestam and True 2020; Haastrup 2020; Skjelsbæk and Tryggestad 2020). Moreover, few studies compare its uptake across different countries,

[1] "I used to quote Gandhi who said, 'First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win,'" Wallstrom says." Quoted in "Toward a More Feminist Foreign Policy" in *Foreign Policy*. Accessed 27 May, 2022.

[2] After Sweden, in 2015, Canada, under the liberal government of Justin Trudeau, declared that it would follow an FFP. Since then, Luxembourg (2018), France (2019), Mexico (2019), Spain (2021), Libya (2021), Germany (2021), Chile (2022), the Netherlands (2022), Colombia (2022), and Liberia (2022) have all adopted or have signalled a possible intention to adopt an FFP in the future.

[3] It is worth noting that FFP was declared in Libya in 2020 by UN-backed government forces, the Government of National Accord (GNA), who are only one authority in an ongoing civil war.

examine its connections to longer histories of ideas around women and gender, or unpack the policy intersections that FFP (tentatively) engages.

While all FFP adoptions and declarations use the feminist moniker, feminism means different things in different contexts and to different actors. For example, in France it is strongly linked to Republican values; in Spain it is connected to recent large-scale social movements and protests; and in Sweden it is part of a decades-long feminist state agenda. Despite these national and institutional variations, there are also cross-cutting disputes between, for example, those that advocate incremental feminist reforms to foreign policy practices versus those that push more radical arguments. Differing feminist understandings thereby shape written policy, in turn, delimiting the terms of FFP and, ultimately, what it might achieve. State articulations of feminism also differ substantially from often more expansive and potentially transformative understandings advocated by individual co/authors as well as civil society advocates. In short, there is room for much more thinking and scholarship that unpacks the origins, meanings, and future(s) of FFP, and it is to these different areas that this Forum contributes. Indeed, it is through this Forum that we engage in theorising and interrogating something without clear form, which is continually unfolding across different contexts.

The Forum is structured in two halves. Part I explores what it means to *practice* and *think* with FFP. It historicises FFP in terms of both state and civil society engagement (Thomson and Färber); examines different FFP communities, in particular the role of civil society (Färber); interrogates FFP in the context of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) (Achilleos-Sarll and Haastrup); and examines what FFP can achieve in the current, (liberal) global system (Kirby). Part II turns to ask what FFP might still achieve, what it has precluded or silenced, and what future policy areas it might address. It examines policy intersections and challenges in relation to the climate crisis (Cohn), migration (Achilleos-Sarll), militarism (Haastrup), and bodies (Thomson). Assessing the limitations and possibilities of FFP, Parts II signals towards FFPs' multiple and contested future(s). Structured in two distinct sections that chart the evolution of FFP and potential challenges, the Forum is both backward- and forward-looking. Ultimately, we take stock of this feminist turn in foreign policy at a critical point in its development and consider what future possibilities it may hold.

Part I

The Emergence and Development of FFP

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What is the history of FFP? The oft-cited origin story of FFP usually begins with Sweden, the first country that explicitly labelled their foreign policy "feminist", after which the various states that followed in its wake are listed. Two aspects of this narrative are particularly noteworthy. Firstly, FFP is presented as a practice emanating from the Global North that has been exported elsewhere. The uptake of FFP by Mexico, Libya, Chile, Colombia, and Liberia is then read as a sign that FFP might now be taking root in the Global South (see Parashar and D'Costa 2017 for a critique of FFP's coloniality). Secondly, FFP is narrated as firmly rooted in state practice, with civil society using the concept only after Sweden adopted an FFP in 2014. While the narrative of Swedish feminist leadership appears to be widespread, it is increasingly challenged for its erasure of centuries of global feminist activism, research, and policymaking.

Uspenskaya and Kozlova (2022) identify five factors central to the development of FFP: (1) Women's intellectual thought that imagined a world free of violence, including work by a wide range of thinkers such as Christine de Pizan, Bertha von Suttner, and Jane Addams; (2) Feminist peace activism that promoted a new vision of the international order at the International Women's Congresses in 1915 and 1919; (3) Feminist International Relations research that examined global systems of power; (4) Norm entrepreneurs like the former Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström; and (5) Pro-gender equality initiatives at the UN, including the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Others have also highlighted how the embeddedness of pro-feminist norms in bureaucratic and state structures provided favourable conditions for the emergence of FFP (Bergman Rosamond 2020). While the history of FFP is not straightforward as Uspenskaya and Kozlova show, we argue that some actors and their traditions of thought remain particularly overlooked by the dominant narrative: namely, feminist peace activists from the Global North and feminist anti-colonial thinkers and peace activists from the Global South.

Perhaps an alternative history to the narrative of Swedish leadership begins in The Hague in 1915. Here, more than 1,100 women delegates from twelve European and North American countries came together to advocate an end to World War I. They not only created the International Congress of Women (ICW), which later became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), but they also discussed mediation strategies to end the war and, ultimately, eradicate its root causes (Confortini 2012). They advocated a demand

for the immediate cessation of all warfare as well as demanding complete disarmament and arms control; highlighted women were especially vulnerable in situations of war; recognised the right of states to self-determination and self-government; recommended the creation of a conference of nations; and called for the equal representation of women (Tickner and True 2018). These can be seen as core principles of 'FFP' broadly defined and are particularly visible in civil society advocacy.

While this narrative has gained some ground recently, particularly in German foreign policy discourse (Lunz 2022), it excludes feminist international thought from non-Global North locations and traditions.[4] As Parashar and D'Costa (2017, 28) argue, "the language of 'feminist foreign policy' may be a new vocabulary in the context of the West, but both feminist practices and objectives in foreign policy have existed for a long time in the South Asian context" (see also Singh Rathore 2021). Challenging the epistemic violence of narrating FFP as a Global North product, practice, and export, these feminist objectives go beyond the representation of women and extend, more importantly, to commitments to empathetic and ethical foreign policies in support of gender justice and human rights, often rooted in the struggles of marginalised people (Parashar and D'Costa 2017). Black feminist thinkers have similarly centred the lived realities of racialised groups, calling on states to "make foreign policies as if Black and Brown lives mattered" (Bouka 2021, 134). More conventional state-centric understandings and adoptions of FFP show a policy position that is still germinating. So, what does FFP mean for these states?

The countries that have adopted an FFP are at very different stages of developing a fully-fledged policy. Sweden, as described, pioneered the idea of an FFP and then developed an extensive FFP policy portfolio, before abandoning it after the 2022 elections. Conversely, Colombia and Liberia, the most recent countries to announce an FFP, have yet to produce any formal written documentation. In many cases, a formal FFP declaration occurs before any policy or clear definition is produced (Gill-Atkinson et al 2021, 17). This may be due to new Governments or new Ministers eager for an 'announceable' (Ibid, 13), or a desire for administrations to attach themselves to the FFP zeitgeist.

Only four of the countries (and perhaps only three, given that Canada focuses so far only on development) have a fully developed written FFP policy and across these there are some similarities. Sweden's policy hinged on the three Rs – Rights, Representation and Resources – which is now echoed throughout other countries' policies. All emphasise the

[4] The narrative also erases the longstanding history of WILPF activism in the Global South.

importance of multilateralism, international treaties, and coterminous agendas, with FFP documents repeatedly citing, for example, the WPS agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). International work around women's rights is also reiterated, including sexual and reproductive health rights, sexual and gender-based violence, human rights, and women's economic and political participation. FFP documents also tend to encourage internal change around gender equality and greater support for female citizens and staff abroad (see the Spanish and Mexican policies).

State understandings of FFP are therefore novel in their use of the 'f-word' (Aggestam and Bergman Rosamond 2016, 323) and in using feminism and gender equality as a lens to present the entirety of their foreign policy. Yet, their FFPs also rely strongly on established areas of international work around women's rights and already existing international and transnational mechanisms. As other sections reiterate, there may not be much novelty or innovation in FFP (e.g., Thomson this Forum).

Civil society definitions tend to be much broader and more radical in scope. Consider the definitions from the International Council for Research on Women (ICRW) and the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP) (emphasis in bold added):

> ICRW: "Feminist Foreign Policy…defines its interactions with other states and movements in a manner that prioritizes gender equality and enshrines the human rights of women and **other traditionally marginalized group**s, allocates significant resources to achieve that vision and seeks through its implementation to **disrupt patriarchal and male dominated power structures** across **all of its levers of influence** (aid, trade, defense and diplomacy), informed by **the voices of feminist activists, groups and movements**." (Thompson & Clement 2019)

> CFFP: "Feminist Foreign Policy…is a political framework centred around **the wellbeing of marginalised people** and invokes processes of **self-reflection** regarding foreign policy's hierarchical global systems. FFP…[offers] an **alternate and intersectional** rethinking of security **from the viewpoint of the most vulnerable**. It… aims to elevate women's and marginalised groups' experiences and agency to **scrutinise the destructive forces of patriarchy, colonisation, heteronormativity, capitalism, racism, imperialism, and militarism.**" (CFFP, n.d.)

Both emphasise marginalised groups beyond women and suggest an understanding of gender that is not reduced to a simple binary. They also stress the importance of moving beyond the status quo and emphasise a diversity of areas that should be covered. Both also place strong emphasis on the role of civil society and non-state actors in the process of building FFP. It is normal, perhaps, that civil society actors are more innovative and boundary pushing in their understanding of FFP. But FFP, at least when branded as such, is largely a state invention.

Civil society may have been formulating feminist demands to foreign policy for decades, but it is states who first jumped on this bandwagon.

Communities of Actors in the Production of FFP Knowledges

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A range of different actors occupy the field of FFP. They include state actors, such as Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, and diplomats, to non-state actors, such as civil society organisations (CSOs), researchers, academics, think tanks, grassroots activists, activists without an institutional home, and those who work on the peripheries of Ministries for Foreign Affairs (MFAs), including diplomatic partners, secretaries, cooks, and cleaners (Enloe 2014). In this section, I ask what role these different FFP communities play in the reproduction of FFP? What hierarchies and practices of knowledge production characterise their engagement with FFP? And, ultimately, who is taken seriously as an FFP expert?

Different actors engage in different knowledge production practices in the (re)making of FFP. I understand knowledge production as a social practice shaped by unequal power relations as well as legacies of colonialism and imperialism (Quijano 2000). People and their everyday practices bring different forms of knowing and knowledges into being (Smith, 2005) which attributes them agency, but not equally so. While foreign policy practitioners may primarily develop guidelines and reports on FFP (e.g., Government of Sweden 2019), civil society may attend consultations with government officials or monitor state policies. High-level policymakers such as Heads of State and Foreign Ministers may engage in agenda-setting around FFP (e.g., Government of Sweden 2014), whereas grassroots activists may organise collectively to make demands on the government, sometimes challenging state power (e.g., MADRE et al 2020). Additionally, researchers will produce academic analyses, like this Forum, or develop policy recommendations in collaboration with civil society (e.g., Cheung et al 2021). Think tanks may organise policy workshops for practitioners or provide expertise during coffee meetings and lunches. Embassy staff, such as cooks and cleaners, who contribute to the functioning of the state and its international standing (Erlandsson 2021), are also part of these knowledge practices. While this list is not exhaustive, it serves to illustrate how different FFP communities engage in the (re)making of FFP.

However, not all these actors and practices equally influence the making of FFP. Producing knowledge about FFP, which includes determining who is and who is not considered an FFP 'expert', is steeped in racialised, gendered, classed hierarchies of power. I briefly illustrate this below by exploring a key site of FFP knowledge production, state-civil society consultations, and show how these hierarchies are both reproduced and challenged. Most states that adopt an FFP claim to be inclusive of diverse groups of actors – and consulting with civil society is often a mark of that inclusivity. I am interested in how consultations contribute to the reproduction of FFP, including hierarchies of knowledge production. I briefly draw on my diverse experience as an academic, member of a think tank, and CSO representative who has been part of FFP consultations in Germany.

Consultations act as a primary vehicle through which policymakers engage with academics, activists, and CSOs to develop FFPs. They are conducted at both national and international levels and tend to take place several times per year. They are often state-led, with state representatives setting the date, location, and agenda, with civil society giving input when asked to do so. In some cases, civil society presents policy papers, or they provide verbal or written evidence. State representatives take notes regarding the key points, filtering civil society input in terms of what they consider relevant.

In many ways, consultations tend to reproduce hierarchies of knowledge and power embedded in foreign policymaking. National consultations are usually held at the relevant MFA. In the Global North at least, these are often spaces marked by white, gendered, cis-hetero and/or class privilege, meaning that invited civil society, activists, think tanks, and academics can, to differing degrees, be thought of as "space invaders" (Puwar 2004). Consultations require an invitation, which presuppose those invitees are recognised as experts. Being recognised as an expert however is not neutral but often depends on being organised and having resources, leveraging thematic knowledge rather than lived experience and, in the case of academics and members of a think tank, being affiliated with a prestigious institution. Access to FFP consultations is also influenced by who is known in that space, and therefore often depends on personal networks, which can be exclusive.

These hierarchies are further perpetuated by gatekeeping within non-state spaces. Established networks like the German Network 1325, the Coalition for FFP in the United States, or the Australian FFP Coalition are crucial in facilitating access to consultations for select CSOs, think tanks, and academic institutions. However, the criteria for membership often lack transparency. In some cases, membership is dependent on an affiliation with a recognised

CSO or think tank based in the respective country where the network is active, which excludes experts from other countries and those without an institutional home.

Who is considered an 'expert' is also linked to the question of which – and whose – feminisms are incorporated in state FFPs (Morton, Muchiri, and Swiss 2020). Civil society must reconcile state interests with their own for their knowledge to be taken seriously by state representatives. This means balancing often state-sceptical positions with appeals to use the state's hierarchical and oft-violent levers for good ends, often tempering down more radical understandings of feminism. Consequently, knowledge that is in line with liberal feminist understandings of the state and foreign policy are more likely to be taken seriously. Linked to this is the privileging of thematic knowledge over lived experiences, which I have observed when participating in FFP consultations. This is reinforced by a knowledge system where select sites of expertise situated in the 'secure' Global North, including our own universities and think tanks, often base their work on the 'insecure' Global South (Haastrup and Hagen 2021, 27). Organisations and actors outside the Global North tend to be viewed as *objects* of FFP, rather than knowledge producers and *agents* (see Henry 2021). Hence, while there are a range of Black and Indigenous folks and People of Colour working on FFP – both in the Global South and Global North – they are almost entirely absent in these consultative forums.

However, consultations can also challenge (or at least momentarily disrupt) hierarchies of knowledge production as they expand what and whose knowledge counts. Some CSOs consciously choose to send a queer and/or BIPoC representative. Others use their contributions to subvert government discourse by mobilising more radical understandings of feminisms that go beyond an add-women-and-stir approach, or by referencing research that positions civil society outside the Global North as agents and subjects of (feminist foreign) policymaking (e.g., Krystalli 2021). Nevertheless, knowledge contributed by civil society is seldom considered equal to state-produced knowledge on FFP. Instead, FFP knowledges produced in and through consultations largely follow established foreign policy practices and structures marked by intersecting hierarchies such as whiteness and coloniality. Certain actors and their ways of knowing such as Indigenous or transfeminist thought hardly appear, both in FFP consultations and FFP policy documents. Instead, it is usually organised civil society or high-profile think tanks and researchers who appear as the legitimate knowledge producers on FFP, which includes myself.

Strange Bedfellows? FFP in the Context of Foreign Policy Analysis

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Traditionally FPA has tended towards positivism. Consequently, it has been resistant to a 'critical turn' experienced in other International Relations (IR) subfields including Security Studies and the International Political Economy (IPE). Notwithstanding this, there have been innumerable critical, including feminist and post/decolonial, readings of foreign policy that have emerged outside the subfield of FPA and published outside the mainstream FPA journals (e.g., Doty 1995; Williams 2000; Enloe 2014). Yet, when considering the majority of FPA scholarship, we follow others in the assessment that it has mostly been "gender blind" (Smith 2020, 130; Hudson 2005).

Given the proliferation of scholarship on FFP, we consider if there is value incorporating feminism as a critical perspective within FPA? And, whether FFP can serve as an entry point to initiate a conversation between FPA and feminist IR? Feminist IR challenges ideas that are inherent in FPA, even if not specifically targeting the subfield for their critique; because what foreign policy is – its making and its effects, often reproduce gendered, racialised, and colonial assumptions, which mostly go unacknowledged. Whereas critical approaches in IR have evolved to acknowledge these shortcomings in scholarship, FPA lags behind. In this short intervention, we outline the implications of these knowledge gaps and how critical feminist engagements (and potentially FFP) might be useful for FPA going forward.

Firstly, FPA generally follows traditional framings of *foreign* policy as 'outward-facing', a strategy for dealing with *other* states. This externalisation reproduces multiple and interrelated binaries of foreign/domestic, inside/outside, us/them, war/peace, and conflict/non-conflict that are predicated on gendered, racialised, and colonial hierarchies within and between states. This orientation, in addition to FPA's gender blindness, has implications, we argue, in terms of both *who, what, and where* FPA studies; indeed, it silences certain voices and actors, seldom engages questions of ethics, and often ignores the effects of foreign policy for those on the receiving end. The question, then, is whether given the move towards FFP, it is still tenable for FPA to ignore feminist research?

Secondly, FPA scholarship largely focuses on foreign policy decision-making that occurs within state institutions and bureaucracies. These are often enacted by an elite group of privileged (male) 'expert' government actors. Because the gendered implications of this reality on both policymaking processes and outcomes are often ignored, FPA typically elides the role

of women leaders, including leadership practices, in the domain of foreign policymaking (for exceptions see Hudson and Leidl 2015; Aggestam and True 2021; Towns and Niklasson 2017). When women are considered, the spotlight is on those that occupy formal decision-making roles. This invariably excludes those outside formal positions of power, including non-state actors, such as feminist and women's groups. In this sense, feminist IR and FFP challenges how traditional FPA directs attention upwards to conventional sites of power, thus focussing on an exclusive group of mostly male actors, whereas feminist IR has had to repeatedly reprise the question: 'Where are the women?' (Enloe 2014).

Thirdly, concerned principally with the decision-making factors that affect actor choice and policy, the effects, especially for those on the receiving end of those policies, particularly women and other vulnerable groups, receive little attention (Bouka 2022, 134). FPA often ignores or side-lines asymmetrical power relations and thus forms of domination and exclusion. This, because FPA generally understands power more conventionally as that which emanates from the material capabilities of states rather than operating in and through relational power structures (Tickner 1988), and thus FPA has tended to ignore how significations of gender and power are co-constructed. Concerned with the mechanisms of *how* foreign policy gets made and focussed on the material capabilities of states obscures *who* foreign policy (disproportionately) effects.

Fourthly, by ignoring the constitutive political effects of foreign policy, FPA mostly overlooks questions of ethics, or treats ethics as epiphenomenal; yet ethics are a constituent part of foreign policy doings (Bulley 2016; Bailes 2008). FFP, it is argued, has an explicit normative and ethical dimension (e.g., Robinson 2021; Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond 2016). This is not to say, however, that this inevitably makes FFP transformative. As Robinson (2021, 21) writes, "a feminist foreign policy can be a critical, alternative to *realpolitik* (including 'hyper-masculine nationalism'), but not if it defines itself as a return to the neo-liberal, interventionist, governmentalities of post-Cold War liberal internationalism". It nevertheless provides an opening to question the practices of foreign policy.

The introduction of feminist principles into foreign policy, including through the WPS agenda, further underlines the need for feminist engagements with scholarship that studies foreign policies. In its creation, the WPS agenda has been successful in introducing concerns about women's experiences and participation in the politics of 'war' and 'peace'. A cursory Google Scholar search of 'Women, Peace and Security' delivers 2.5 million entries![5] This is

[5] Search conducted on 4 July, 2022.

significant for an agenda that is only two decades old. The adoption and implementation of WPS as well as its accompanying scholarship offers lessons for how we might think with this new turn towards feminism as an explicit part of foreign policy practice.

Yet, these moves to include feminism in foreign policy and its study is not without its own set of challenges. For example, National Action Plans (NAPs) have been proposed to facilitate countries' implementation of their WPS commitments, which now constitutes an essential part of many OECD countries' foreign policy engagements towards the majority world. In applying a critical feminist lens to this foreign policy practice however, Shepherd (2016) find that these NAPs, in orienting their approaches externally "reproduce a world in which problems occur 'elsewhere', but solutions can be found 'here'' (325). NAPs – as foreign policy documents – and the state's (but also sometimes civil society's) expression of feminism *in* foreign policy, mostly reinforce binaries that re-entrenches global hierarchies of power (Haastrup and Hagen 2020; Achilleos-Sarll, forthcoming). In reality, of course, foreign policy is made through, and influenced by, domestic policy; "how societies treat racialised citizens at home will often inform their foreign policy towards people of colour abroad" (Bouka 2022, 134). Feminism's engagement in this respect does not materialise its ethical promise. Nevertheless, scholarship with an explicit feminist lens calls our attention to the interaction between feminism, foreign policy, and FPA. Critical feminist via post/decolonial engagements indeed demonstrate the potential for FFP to go beyond being an add-on to foreign policy making, or simply "the latest postcolonial export of northern states" (ICRW 2019, 5).

The Feminist Sovereign

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Feminist foreign policy is a doctrine of ethical statecraft, resonant with liberal and cosmopolitan ideas, and therefore utterly antithetical to realpolitik. Whatever else varies by context, this much is practically tautological (e.g., Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond, and Kronsell 2019; Haastrup 2020; Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy 2021; on variety see Thomson 2020). Yet beneath the consensus lies a more troubled and surprising dialogue, an awkward once and future synthesis.

The antagonism of feminism and realism hardly needs explaining. The feminist project is emancipatory, egalitarian, internationalist, and anti-hegemonic, in some of its version's

reformist, in others revolutionary, but everywhere committed to a transformation of patriarchal society. Political realism is by contrast commonly seen as amoral, conservative, or reactionary, and defensive of a sovereign status quo that divides persons according to national-territorial units. Feminism offers a horizon of liberation; realism is more taken with cyclical and tragic views of history. Most practitioners of statecraft have been male, the high politics of war and peace largely remains the domain of men, and statecraft is a quintessentially masculine performance.[6] In IR, feminist approaches originally gained traction as a challenge to the hegemony of realism (Sisson Runyan and Peterson 1991), and the major feminist figures of the last decades are associated with anti-militarist, anti-statist, post-modern, and post-colonial positions that reject power political reasoning (e.g., Tickner 1993; Sylvester 1994; Agathangelou and Ling 2004).

The distrust is mutual. Feminism is mentioned barely at all in surveys of realism. Jonathan Haslam, identifying an organic connection between raison d'etat, realpolitik, and the realist tradition, is typical in seeing them in combination as the negative of liberal or moralistic thinking, in which feminism is typically included (Haslam 2002). Realist scholars continue to cast normative theorists as advocates of an unsustainable "pious moralism" (Jones and Smith 2015, 934). Appeals for a feminist approach to foreign policy are liable to appear to realists as just another variant on liberal interventionism or human security discourse, and therefore indelibly at odds with the hard calculus of anarchy.

But the incompatibility was not always so absolute. In one of the first and most influential texts of feminist IR, Ann Tickner (1988) proposed not an outright rejection but a *reformulation* of political realism. Tickner argued not that Hans Morgenthau was irredeemably mistaken about international politics, only that his principles were "partial" (Tickner 1988, 431). While some aspects of feminist thinking - such as the emphasis on mutually beneficial outcomes and conflict resolution - set it apart from the general realist account, Tickner nevertheless recognised the existence of a "multidimensional and contextually contingent" national interest, requiring "morality *as well as realpolitik*" (Tickner 1988, 438, 437, emphasis added). Another foundational figure of feminist IR, Jean Bethke Elshtain, warned against theoretical absolutism and the "total inversions" that would situate feminism and realism as mutually exclusive (Elshtain 1988, 448).[7] A closer reading was likely to yield surprising

[6] There is much to say about the degree of essence at play. See especially Ashley (1989) and Weber (2016) on mancraft and statecraft.

[7] This piece was republished in Elshtain's subsequent defence of the war on terror (Elshtain 2003), after heavy revision to make Islamism the primary foil. Despite the title of the book, Elshtain had previously recommended a 'Christian realism' as a middle point between just war sentimentalism and the 'realpolitikers' taking their cue

affinities, such as a shared caution against the 'armed peace', and even a form of "modified realism" with which feminists might co-habit (Elshtain 1985, 43). Tellingly, Tickner and Elshtain's views were contained in the same break-out special issue of *Millennium* credited with launching feminist IR as a disciplinary project.

Realism is in turn a less straightforward foil for feminism than commonly supposed. Over the last decade, a vibrant current of research has re-examined canonical realist thinkers and revealed a complex set of attitudes within realism towards 'progress', ranging from endorsements of world government to deeply pessimistic readings of a brute human nature (see Molloy 2006; Scheuerman 2012; Freyberg-Inan 2006). Now increasingly associated in western policy debates with 'restraint' and humility, realism has also been treated as synonymous with bellicosity, self-interest, and imperialism, a legacy that yields multiple points of encounter with an internally-diverse feminism that can just as often support women's inclusion in militaries as offer a critique of militarism. The continual reincarnation of realist themes, the proliferation of its family tree, has led some to diagnose it as "protean in form, eclectic in style" (Der Derian 1995, 1), better understood as nomadic, rather than a canonical epic, even primarily a question of pessimistic temperament. John Herz had proposed a synthesis of liberal and realism; in the consolidation of American political science against the backdrop of the Cold War realists championed sovereign power as guardian of a practical liberalism from the radical wing of the enlightenment (Guilhot 2017, 3-4; 68). If realism is not the mere opposite of idealism, if realism may indeed share occasionally in utopian currents, if feminist normative commitments must inevitably confront the question of organised violence and its uses, and if feminists are already thinkers and practitioners of statecraft, then the implications for a feminist foreign policy are profound.

Controversies that could be dismissed as merely academic while women were excluded from the highest offices take on a new significance as feminism becomes institutionalised (if not yet unquestionably hegemonic). Hillary Clinton, arguably the most powerful feminist of all time, was also as Secretary of State hugely influential in the formulation of American grand strategy. Clinton's widely-referenced 'hawkishness' need not imply a singularly realist disposition. Her alignment of feminist values, an expansive security apparatus and the American national interest recalls a common motif of ethical foreign policy before it, in which power politics and humanitarianism were said to be overlapping and mutually reinforcing. As

from Machiavelli (Elshtain 2001). The complex reading of war and ethics these distinctions entail had been signalled years earlier in a description of just war as a "modified realism" (Elshtain 1985, 43). See more recently the Christian feminist realism of Caron Gentry (2018).

Secretary of State, she codified the link: “The subjugation of women is a threat to the common security of our world and national security of our country” (Howard 2010). In this foreign policy vision, women’s empowerment, encouraged under the umbrella of US hyper-power, would spread peace, entrench democracy, promote growth, and advance the rule of law, each development in its turn perpetuating American primacy. But despite the liberal undercurrents, Clinton also sought rapprochement with realism in the figure of Henry Kissinger, describing him as a friend and confidante and arguing in a prominent review of Kissinger’s *World Order* that his realism was compatible, a few policy differences aside, with her idealism (Clinton 2014). As advocates of ‘the Hillary Doctrine’ have put it, “Fempolitik is no ‘pet rock’: *it is a pillar of Realpolitik*” (Hudson and Leidl 2015, 281, emphasis added).

For there to be feminists in the apparatus of the state requires that there be a feminist reckoning with realpolitik. While it has been argued that feminism must, by definition, be anti-militarist, it is less clear how ‘state feminists’ (Lovenduski 2005) should repurpose force in the short or medium term, not least if security policy can paradoxically create conditions for empowerment in the same moment that it safeguards national interests. Feminist foreign policy does not automatically challenge such corollaries of militarism as the arms trade (Vucetic 2017), and gender may weigh as a reason to send weapons as well as humanitarian aid to radical statelets like Kurdish Rojava, with its egalitarian constitution and dedicated feminist guerrillas. Even in more conventional geopolitical terms, external pressures may produce major policy shifts. At the time of writing, Ann Linde, Sweden’s foreign minister and a champion of feminist foreign policy, had just overseen the admission of Sweden to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in response to the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine, a significant reversal of her country’s historical non-alignment consensus (compare Linde 2022a and Linde 2022b). Even this reluctant entry into the alliance reopens a major fault-line within feminism over military blocs: civil society activists for a feminist foreign policy, such as the WILPF, remain officially committed to the abolition of NATO (Kirby and Shepherd 2023, chapter 6).

For advocates, feminist foreign policy remains ethical at its core, despite occasional necessary ‘deviations’ (Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond, and Kronsell 2019, 24). Yet the emerging forms of feminist statecraft can instead be read not as a clash between incommensurable theoretical paradigms or another “operator’s manual posing as [a theory]” (Rosenberg 1990, 285) but as the seed of a new composite. For the moment, these encounters are sporadic, partial, and contradictory. But as more governments take up the mantle, the confrontation will become more pitched, the merger more contentious for every aspect of the

doctrine: from disputes over what constitutes feminism to the designation of the 'foreign' outside to the criteria of grand strategy.

Part II

What Does the "Feminist" in FFP Mean, and How Does that Constrain FFP's Approach to the Climate Crisis?

Carol Cohn, Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights

Feminist Foreign Policy's ability to meet any of its goals will be deeply undercut, if not entirely thwarted, by the conjoined climate and ecological crises the world now faces. Given this, it is striking how peripherally these crises appear, and how shallowly they are treated, in governmental articulations of FFP.

I use the term "governmental FFPs" to flag that this intervention engages with the articulations of FFP that have come from the countries that have adopted or announced intentions to adopt something that has been labelled FFP. As such, it does not engage with any FFP articulations emanating from civil society,[8] nor does it engage with the question of what FFP might look like if it fully took on the range of thought, practice, and activism related to foreign policy that has come from feminists in both the Global South and North (Parashar and D'Costa 2017, 29; see also Thomson and Färber this Forum). Instead, in this piece I focus on what states have communicated about how they understand the role of climate and environment in their FFPs, and on analyzing why and how their engagement is so limited.

I argue that the locus of the problem is in the overall definitional boundaries and goals of governmental FFPs and the specific, limited ways in which FFPs conceptualize what it means to bring a 'feminist' perspective to the climate and eco-crises. For FFP's goals to not die under the crushing weight of the conditions that will be caused by these crises, it must actively address and seek to intervene in them far more broadly than in current FFP framings. And that requires taking on a version of 'feminist' that goes beyond the goal of gender equality, beyond even the goal of transforming the world's other intersecting inequalities and systems for structuring power. It means taking on feminist analyses and values that can be the basis for

[8] https://www.madre.org/feminist-foreign-policy-jumpstart. Accessed 20 July, 2022.

a fundamental paradigm shift in how we understand the right relation between humans and the rest of nature, and a shift in how we understand the purpose of economic life.

While the countries that have announced a commitment to or intention to adopt a FFP have, at this point, widely varying degrees of policy development and documentation, it is notable that none of them, in their policies or announcements, directly engage with the definitional question of what, exactly, they mean by 'feminist'' (see Thomson and Färber this Forum). But surveying the extant policy documents and speeches, it seems that, on the whole, making a foreign policy 'feminist' is taken to mean that foreign policy can and should be used to foster gender equality and women's and girls' rights—both because those are seen as values in and of themselves, and also because they are seen to advance other foreign policy goals. There are some variations on this theme: for example, Canada and France often use the language of women's and girls' *empowerment* rather than *rights* (Government of Canada 2017, iii; Directorate-General for Global Affairs, C.E. 2018, 7); and Luxembourg and the Netherlands include not only women's rights, but also LGBTI rights (Government of Luxembourg 2018, 210-11; Government of the Netherlands 2022, 3). Nonetheless, it seems fair to say that the 'feminist' in FFPs is most often broadly understood to mean the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. At a practical level, the methods most frequently mentioned to achieve these goals are gender mainstreaming in policy responses, and women's representation and participation in decision-making.

To the extent, then, that climate or environmental issues are referenced in FFPs, they tend to fit within this frame. First, they are found typically in lists of policy areas in which a gender equality and women's rights perspective should be applied. Spain, for example, lists climate change, trade relations and the fight against human trafficking (Government of Spain 2021, 9); for Canada, the list includes growth that "works for everyone," environmental and climate action, inclusive governance, and peace and security (Government of Canada 2017, iii).

Beyond simply listing climate as a relevant policy area, if there is any further elaboration of what FFP in climate might mean, the approach to climate aligns with the way in which many other policy issues integrate a gender equality and women's rights frame. That is, the dominant emphasis is on *impacts,* with analysis and argument stressing the ways in which the impact of climate change (like wars, poverty, pandemics, etc.) is both gender-specific and disproportionately burdensome for women and girls. The 'vulnerable victims' image that often arises from this analysis of impacts is then frequently offset with the countervailing emphasis on women as potential agents of change and sources of solutions.

In these FFPs, the climate crisis' disproportionate adverse impacts on women are understood to both stem from and exacerbate gender inequality. That is, gender inequality, in the form of women's lack of access to political, economic, and material resources, leaves them among the most vulnerable to climate effects, and among the least able to adapt; and this is seen to be particularly acute because of women's roles in food and water security, agriculture and forestry. In turn, climate effects are seen to deepen gender inequality, with climate frequently appearing in FFPs nestled within lists of 'challenges' – such as wars, humanitarian crises, shrinking democratic space, greater pressure on land use, competition for natural resources, poverty, and migration – that increase the discrimination, marginalization, and vulnerability of women and girls.

At the same time, and again parallel to those other 'challenges', women are seen as potential agents of change and contributors to solutions – because of the knowledge they have developed through their roles in agricultural work and in the use and management of forest and water resources. Sweden's FFP references these roles and argues that "Women are thereby important agents for change who can contribute relevant perspectives and solutions for dealing with climate change" (Government of Sweden 2019, 84). France's FFP asserts that "Greater gender equality and women's empowerment are key elements in curbing climate change," although it does not explain why or how (Directorate-General for Global Affairs, C.E. 2018, 18).

With FFP taking gender equality and women's rights as its core goals, then, the climate and environmental crises appear fundamentally as one more problem that women and girls are more vulnerable to *because* of gender inequality, and as presenting a set of challenges that are likely to *deepen* gender inequality, unless gender-sensitive policy responses are put in place to forestall this likelihood. That is, when 'feminist' is taken to mean a gender equality/women's rights perspective, it allows and lends itself to focusing on the climate crisis' *impacts*: how to address the gendered aspects of the impacts, and how to try to assure that responses to the impacts will ameliorate, rather than deepen, gender inequality. Thus, the policy recommendations focus on pushing for "gender equality work" or "gender equality strategies" in climate agreements, adaptation plans, and finance mechanisms. But what this understanding of 'feminist' does *not* lend itself to is addressing the climate and eco-crises in their own right, and to addressing the *root causes* of the crises. Or, to put it more baldly, FFP's approach to climate is largely policy *about* gender equality, as it is impacted by climate, rather than policy *about* the climate crisis, and how feminist analysis, methodologies, and values can be used to understand and transform it.

But that, I think, is exactly what is needed. Feminisms do not stop at the fight for intersectional gender equality; they open our imaginations to alternative ways of relating to the natural world and to each other. We know that the climate and ecological crises we face are the product of over five centuries of colonialism based on extraction and exploitation of the planet's natural resources and its people, in the service of profit-making for the few.[9] And we know that that dynamic continues to this day, unabated, in the activities of the extractive industries and agro-industrial corporations whose practices control the ecological fate of a vast proportion of the world's land, as well as the quality of its air and water and the amount of greenhouse gases are emitted into the atmosphere.[10] Feminisms can, and must, help us problematize the assumptions underlying this way of structuring human's relations to each other and the planet. Should economic life be organized around using things up (humans, nature's resources) for short-term gain, or might feminist values such as care, nurturance, preservative love,[11] respect for and reciprocity with nature, the flourishing of humans and of ecosystems become the basis on which economic life might be reorganized (Cohn and Duncanson 2021, 184-85).

And if this sounds 'unrealistic' – what, exactly, is 'realistic' about using up the world's resources and destroying the ecological systems on which all life depends? One of feminist analysis' most potent epistemological gifts is the way it enables us to take dominant taken-for-granted constructions of knowledge about the world (e.g., 'the economy,' or security, or men's proper relation to women or to nature) and to expose those "universal truths" for what they are – partial, situated forms of knowledge which represent and reinforce the interests and power of those who created them. If FFP's approach to climate is to be any more than re-arranging deck chairs on the Titanic, and if FFP is to have a prayer of addressing the crises that will make a mockery of its aspirations, the 'feminist' in FFP must go beyond a focus on ameliorating gender equality impacts, or even intersectional equality impacts. It must be amplified to draw on the full range of feminist values, methodologies, and epistemologies in order to analyze, intervene in, and transform the underlying dynamics and worldviews which have put the planet on a pathway to ecocidal catastrophe.

[9] The most recent IPCC report makes this link with colonialism explicit: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf. Accessed 17 December, 2022.

[10] See, for example, https://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook, date accessed 20 July 22.

[11] The concept is developed by Sara Ruddick in *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989, 65–81).

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Making Borders Safer for Women?

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This intervention examines the extent to which FFPs have addressed migration, particularly around refugees, and briefly considers the role of civil society. Using FFP to call for *better* or more humane bordering practices via 'improvements' to detention centres, facilities, and refugee camps I argue risks instrumentalizing FFP in service of making borders safer for women.[12] Therefore, while further alignment between FFP and migration policy could help rethink migration from a feminist perspective, such efforts also risk reproducing the carceral state (Bernstein 2010; Whalley and Hackett 2017; Terwiel 2020). This is a vision of migrant justice that entails the partial alleviation of gender harms, but which extends the power and resources of border police/authorities. In other words, making borders and bordering practices (appear) less violent and violating by offsetting their most deleterious effects in the short-term, but which simultaneously strengthens the border and its associated systems of militarism, patriarchy, and imperialism that facilitate state violence.

Migration policies as well as the causes, consequences, and experiences of migration are underpinned by and often reproduce gendered, racialised, and colonial logics (among others, Holvikivi and Reeves 2020; Kirby 2020; Sachseder, Stachowitsch, and Binder 2022). The starkest example demonstrating the racial-colonial underpinnings of the so-called 'migration crisis' for example is that the risk of death from border-crossing is disproportionately the fate of migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa (Danewid 2021, 148). Additionally, border checks, detentions, returns, profiling, interceptions, surveillance, and search and rescue operations have been shown to increase the risk of sexual and gender-based violence as well as other forms of abuse, especially against women and other vulnerable groups (Sachseder, Stachowitsch, and Binder 2022) including older women, minors, those with disabilities, as well those from LGBTQ+, indigenous, and racialized communities. This is

[12] This is an adaptation of Cora Weiss's (2011) call that 'we must not make war safe for women' through the WPS agenda. This means accepting war as an inevitable by-product of conflict and therefore working to reduce its most harmful effects whilst leaving the war system intact.

exemplified by Ukraine's refugee crisis.[13] For example, it has been reported that Ukrainians of Roma origin, who have long-suffered discrimination in Ukraine, lacked the identity and citizenship documentation to seek refuge.[14] Furthermore, LGBTQ+ people fleeing to Poland and Hungary, the two largest receiving countries from Ukraine, have faced homophobic and transphobic legislation. While trans women have been forbidden to leave Ukraine if their documents identify them as men.[15]

How, then, have various FFPs addressed migration? And to what extent does FFP draw attention to and challenge these underlying gendered and racialized logics? For those states that have developed written policy or made explicit FFP declarations, little attention is paid to migration and, for the most part, these documents/declarations are refugee-blind. Notwithstanding textual mentions which begin to challenge established notions of *where* foreign policy takes place and *who* constitutes a subject of (feminist) foreign policy, as I demonstrate below attention to migration in FFPs remains mostly tokenistic and limited in scope.

Sweden's FFP Handbook (2014), and attendant Action Plan (2019-22), is the most comprehensive in its discussion of migration to date, which perhaps makes it even more lamentable that Sweden has now turned its back on FFP. The Handbook (2014, 20) flags migration and gender equality as a policy intersection (83). It also states that "gender discrimination is […] reinforced by discrimination and vulnerability linked to [...] factors such as […] migration", acknowledging in its Action Plan that migration increases the risk of "human trafficking, prostitution, and sexual and gender-based violence" (16). Projecting itself as an ethical gender- and refugee- friendly country, Sweden applauds its treatment of refugees by, for example, describing how it has increased the number of support officers along its main migration routes; prioritised safe workplace migration, particularly for women; and provided access to education and sexual and reproductive health services. Like Sweden, Canada's Feminist International Assistant Policy (although focussed on development) acknowledges that the citizenship status of an individual compounds gender discrimination and inequality (pp. ii;

[13] International Crisis Group, Simon Schlegel, 'Mitigating the Gendered Effects of Ukraine's Refugee Crisis', https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/eastern-europe/ukraine/mitigating-gendered-effects-ukraines-refugee-crisis. Accessed July 6, 2022.

[14] Andrei Popoviciu, 'Ukraine's Roma Refugees Recount Discrimination en Route to Safety', https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/7/ukraines-roma-refugees-recount-discrimination-on-route-to-safety, accessed July 2022.

[15] LGBTQ Refugees Fleeing Ukraine Face Discrimination in Countries with Anti-Gay Laws, https://www.npr.org/2022/03/04/1084321690/lgbtq-refugees-fleeing-ukraine-face-discrimination-in-countries-with-anti-gay-la?t=1646808973133&t=1658242901924. Accessed July 12, 2022.

2; 49). However, there is no mention of migration in either France's or Mexico's FFP statements, while Spain's FFP makes only passing reference to migration as a cross-cutting gender equality issue. Finally, while there is limited literature on Luxemburg's FFP; from what is available, there is no information on its approach to migration, despite claiming that its FFP is implemented across the entirety of its defence, diplomacy, and development workstreams.

Across these textual mentions, gender (which is mostly a synonym for women) is singled-out as the primary social marker affecting experiences of migration. While there are sporadic references to intersectionality, with some FFPs even highlighting an intention to apply an 'intersectional perspective to gender analyses' (a phrase occasionally used), mentions of intersectionality end up reinforcing single-axis analysis of migration that focuses on gender alone. In this context, a migrant's gender identity, mostly understood in binary man/women terms, is said to increase levels of insecurity. Gender thereby becomes synonymous with 'women' (universally understood) and thus an add-on marker that increases vulnerability, rather than positing that gender is but one central cog within a wider system of power. Indeed, similar to Cohn's assessment of the climate crisis in this Forum, the overarching emphasis is on the *impact* of migration. Ergo, that migration is both gender-specific *and* disproportionately impacts women and girls.

Resultantly, migration simply becomes another policy area added to lists to which a gender perspective (meaning a 'woman's perspective') should be applied. The (re)production of the migrant subject (notably a women) is then abstracted from interconnected histories of colonialism, slavery, and empire. This myopic interpretation of migration 'crises', as well as the limited conceptualization and application of intersectionality, limits these FFPs approaches to focussing on the symptoms of migration and migration policies rather than contextualising migration as the product of social conditions, societal structures, and gendered-racial-colonial hierarchies. Consequently, I argue that they focus on making borders safer for women by partially alleviating gender harms without questioning the very nature of the border as a gendered, racial, and colonial construct that delineates who is (and who is not) considered worthy of asylum and protection.

Proposing 'migrant status' as an identity marker that compounds (gender) discrimination results in certain policy 'solutions' around rescue and hospitality (Danewid 2021) being advocated, especially for those deemed particularly vulnerable, such as women and children. Yet, as Danewid (2021) writes, ideas of hospitality reproduce "liberal, state-centric framings, of migrant justice" (Danewid 2021, 188) that legitimises the statist (and foreign policy) logics that deem 'immigration' a 'crisis' in the first place, and which

uncritically accepts the status of the border as the limit of the sovereign state. This itself is a reformist approach to bordering practices which, alongside proposals for resettlement, could include improving the conditions for women and girls at detention centres; gender sensitivity training for border police and detention guards; or hiring more female border guards/police officers. While in the short-term these 'progressive' reforms might mitigate the (most) harmful effects of the border and border policing, in the long-term they simply shore-up its legitimacy making it harder to abolish in the long-term.

As previous sections highlight, civil society advocates a more expansive understanding of FFP (see, for example, CFFP website; IRCW 2020) including encouraging those who have declared or adopted an FFP to apply a feminist approach to different foreign policy areas such as migration policy (ICRW 2021, 23). Although there remains limited civil society research and advocacy around the intersection between FFP and migration, there are some noteworthy examples. In advance of the Swedish election in 2018, members of CONCORD, Sweden's Gender Working Group, which is a network of European development NGOs, published a document that summarised several challenges to women's and girl's rights, and which offered recommendations for Sweden's FFP. It highlighted migration and asylum policies as a particular FFP 'challenge', spotlighting two areas: 1) the lack of safe routes for migrants and refugees and; 2) that women and children should be able to establish their own grounds for asylum, irrespective of their relationship with male associates. While both areas require attention, these articulations implicitly accept rather than problematize the border, with the result being those improvements to bordering practices and policies are also advocated.

Feminist academics, advocates, and activists must resist FFP becoming yet another vehicle for migration to be governed and managed but in ways that appear more palatable. In other words, to manage migration *better* through FFP: to make borders safer for women without rethinking the border itself. Instead, we must interrogate who the border serves, the power it wields, and the systems of violence it is bound to and reproduces. This shift would require reorienting the (tentative) intersection beginning to emerge between FFP and migration away from hospitality, rescue, and incremental reforms towards abolition: a radical transformation of the structures of violence which make possible, even desirable, the governance and management of migration in the first place. Still in its infancy, I would question whether there is any possibility for such a radical reimagining.

Militarism in the Wake of Feminist Foreign Policy

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Over the last decade or so, the optimism brought about by post-Cold War multipolarity has given way to the return of power politics or the return of a geopolitical turn in global politics. This period has seen a resurgence of armed conflicts but also violence that is often excluded from 'international' consideration, yet which has transnational resonance such as domestic mass shootings. At the same time, this period has also opened a space for innovations via feminist interventions, particularly through the implementation of the global normative framework, the WPS agenda and the emergence of FFPs in Europe and beyond. In a sense, these feminist policy interventions are also responses to the violence, and the common response to that violence – increased militarization. This contribution explores militarization within a global political context in which violence remains integral to ordering society. Importantly, it interrogates how 'doing something' (Wibben 2015) in the face of this violence, complicates contemporary feminist aspirations of new foreign policy praxes.

Militarization is an outcome of militarism. Militarism is an ideology that supports security governance and has war as its constant point of reference. Eide and Thee (1980) define militarism as 'the inclination to rely on military means of coercion for the handling of conflicts' (Eide and Thee 1980, 9). Militarization, then, refers to the practical process through which militarism becomes embedded within society: the doing of militarism. Militarization can be measured by increases in defence spending; apportioning more resources to military means of conflict resolution; increased purchase of lethal weapons; and converting military assets for use in civilian contexts (Topak and Vives 2020). As an approach to 'securing' society, militarization for many feminists reproduces masculine domination by the state over its citizenry (Acheson 2010). Consequently, for many feminists, where military values are seen as essential to security (ideology), the military (tool) is seen as essential in securing society (Reardon 1996; Horn 2010; Enloe 1983). Often the assertion of militarism through militarization is anti-democratic and can manifest in authoritarian practices. Unsurprisingly, many feminists are antipathic towards states' tendency towards militarism (e.g., Acheson 2021; Elshtain, 1987; Enloe 2007).

In the classic article *Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals*, Cohn (1987) demonstrates convincingly the concrete harms wrought by militarism. Focusing on the gendered language used within military establishments, Cohn illustrates how the embrace of militarism reinforces patriarchal attitudes and normalises war-making. Indeed, and as hooks

(1995, 59) notes, feminists have historically seen the struggle against militarism as a struggle against patriarchy. For both Cohn and hooks, feminism cannot be reconcilable with militarism and its attendant militarization. Importantly, hooks challenges militarization outside the theatre of war due to the insidiousness with which militarism takes hold in the everyday. She argues: "To fight militarism, we must resist the socialization and brainwashing in our culture that teaches passive acceptance of violence in daily life, that teaches us we can eliminate violence with violence" (hooks 1995, 63). Thus, as more states adopt feminism within their foreign policy, it is a reasonable expectation they would shun militarization, based on existing feminist critiques. This expectation is borne out in feminist critiques that have extended to the security practices of international organisations like the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) (e.g., Haastrup 2021; Van der Pijl 2021).

In the case of the AU, the embeddedness of militarism is evident even as security responses ostensibly aim to achieve peace. In the 2000s, the AU launched the campaign *Silencing the Guns* to prevent conflict, atrocity, and gender-based violence. The programme was supported by feminists and WROs (UNDP 2021). Meeting this goal, however, has privileged military responses to violent conflict, as evidenced by the AU budget towards military missions. Indeed, what is read as increased militarization is the triumph of what Howell (2018) terms 'martial politics' whereby "the exception (war) encroaches on the norm (peace)" (118); militarism is thus fully embedded within the AU's peace and security apparatus (Haastrup 2021; Mackenzie et al 2019). The implication is that although feminist principles are increasingly centred in Africa's international relations, what peace and security means still reifies masculine norms privileging armies and combat as the means to ending violence.

For the EU as a political actor, militarization is a relatively recent phenomenon. Since 2016 especially, the EU has sought to "toughen up" (Junker 2016) its image. While many in the EU defence and security orbit have welcomed this 'muscular' EU, feminists have responded cautiously. The recent reorganisation of defence and security has allowed for the EU to militarize explicitly and rapidly under the guise of becoming a 'real' security actor. But this has also meant an EU foreign policy that "reduces resources for other public investments at home and abroad" (Hoijtink and Muehlenhoff, 2020). Furthermore, in the EU's practices abroad, increased militarization undermines local- and peace-focused solutions to insecurity which "produces new insecurities, particularly of already marginalised groups" (Hoijtink and Muehlenhoff, 2020). Consequently, the calls for FFP at the supranational level (Green Party 2021) seems premature since the mainstream discourses of the EU as a security actor at present

reinforces the idea that embedding militarism within the EU's practices is evidence of institutional maturity.

Within the AU and the EU, militarism holds sway despite resource mobilisations to implement a key bedrock of FFP, the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In the case of the EU, calls for FFP appear to tacitly accept the necessity of militarization, including across member states. What explains this seeming acquiescence of militarism as part of some vision of FFP?

Whereas many feminist activists and scholars have often taken for granted an overarching feminist preference for peaceable means over militarization (hooks 1995), this assumption sometimes fails to consider the implications of different feminisms and specific contexts. For instance, Sweden who pioneered FFP has not only abandoned the label (despite claiming no noticeable change in foreign policy) wants to join NATO, a military alliance. Of course, the decision to join is directly linked to Russia's invasion of Ukraine as well as Sweden's own position as a smaller state with proximity to Russia. Similarly, while France has positioned itself as an FFP leader and peace champion, it also recently committed to modernising its nuclear programme in order to act as guarantor of (West) European security (Haastrup 2020). Nuclear modernisation demonstrates an escalation of militarization and a triumph of militarism. In Africa especially, France has relied on militarization to perpetuate racist and colonial foreign policies even when sustained military engagement in places like Chad or Mali have not brought about peace. Recent conflicts in places like Cameroon reinforce the harms of militarization. Thus, while activists have argued that FFP has the potential to be emancipatory due to its ability to "scrutinise the destructive forces of patriarchy, colonisation, heteronormativity, capitalism, racism, imperialism, and militarism" (CFFP, n.d) in practice, it is also possible that FFP adapts and reacts to these oppressive hierarchical systems. As such, the recent embrace of militarization in the European sphere appears not to conform to prior feminist reticence towards militarization.

I argue that the tensions we see between FFP and militarization is actually about disagreements amongst competing feminisms, and especially how feminist understandings inform foreign policy practice. Furthermore, in Europe, the fears of Sweden or Finland, indeed of Ukraine, cannot be dismissed based on the reality of Russia's actions. Experience from those places on the margins of global politics nevertheless suggest that increasing militarization reinforces martial politics and does not necessarily change the material conditions of the citizenry. Whereas there is perhaps a case to be made for why alternatives could exist especially within the framework of FFP, overall, the unwavering and deepening commitment to

militarization limits the possibilities of an emancipatory FFP. While FPP cannot challenge global power hierarchies in the ways that feminists may aspire, it is worth making allowances, at least for the reasons why this entanglement occurs and why now. In any case, a commitment to democratic norms and democratic cultures requires us to pay attention to tensions brought about by the partiality towards increased militarization and its implications for how different actors are located and wield power within a particular polity.

Bodies

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It is impossible to imagine a foreign policy which describes itself as feminist which does not centre gendered bodily difference. In 2017, approximately 810 women died per day of preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.[16] Globally, around 45% of abortions performed are unsafe, with 4.7–13.2% of maternal deaths attributed to unsafe abortions[17] (Pierson, Bloomer, Estrada-Claudio, 2018). In 2016, women constituted 52% of people living with HIV globally. 79% of human trafficking is for sexual exploitation, disproportionately affecting women and girls.[18] Almost 1 in 3 women globally have been victims of physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner (True 2012).[19] Women make up 70% of the global health and social care workforce but are segregated to areas that are lower paid with a lower social status.[20] They are disproportionately impacted by disease outbreaks because of their social roles (particularly as caregivers), which often accompanies the suspension of routine healthcare (Harman 2016; Wenham, Smith, and Morgan 2020; Wenham 2021). Female bodies perceived to not fit into the dominant gender binary or heternormative model are subject to increasing levels of violence,[21] with transgender women particularly vulnerable.[22] Although these inequalities cut across geography, economic status, and race, this snapshot shows the

[16] https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality. Accessed 21 February, 2022.
[17] https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion. Accessed 21 February, 2022.
[18] https://www.unodc.org/documents/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf. Accessed 21 February, 2022.
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[20] https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/health-workforce/en-exec-summ-delivered-by-women-led-by-men.pdf?sfvrsn=d47ede84_6. Accessed 21 February, 2022.
[21] https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/gender-based-violence-lesbian-and-transgender-women-face-highest-risk-get-least-attention. Accessed 26 May, 2022.
[22] https://www.hrc.org/resources/fatal-violence-against-the-transgender-and-gender-non-conforming-community-in-2021. Accessed 26 May, 2022.

systemic insecurity of female bodies around the globe. Across continents, states, and communities, female bodies are regularly abused and neglected; they are medically misunderstood, with their biology often taboo and their needs overlooked. Considering this bleak picture, any FFP which claims to centre women and girls must take bodies and their needs seriously.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are stressed within various countries' FFPs. It is one of the six key areas for Sweden's FFP[23] with the Swedish Handbook emphasising its importance: 'Sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights and are necessary for women's and girls' enjoyment of other rights, and for gender equality and development' (Government Offices of Sweden, n.d., 29). It goes on to highlight the importance of maternal health, safe abortion, contraception, sex education, and preventing and treating HIV. Spain also highlights SRHR within the section on human rights (Gobierno de Espana, n.d.), and France discusses SRHR in terms of women's access to services.[24]

Combatting sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is also a strong central plank of many FFP positions. It is one of the five thematic priorities of the Spanish FFP (Gobierno de Espana, n.d.). Similarly, one of Sweden's six priority areas to focus on from 2019-2022 is women and girls' "freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence" (Government Offices of Sweden 2019, 4). Mexico highlights violence against women and girls as one of its five guidelines for FFP, although focuses more on the internal machinations of the Mexican government (Delgado 2020, 36).

Yet, these state promises are hardly boundary pushing. Although they remain one of the more controversial areas of gendered health policy, these are areas that the international community has coalesced around for decades. SRHR has broadly been accepted within mainstream international policy since the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 (García-Moreno and Türmen 1995), and SGBV is understood as one of the key areas for Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality to tackle. That said, the language and framing around them has often been watered down to be politically palatable.[25]

[23] Including Speech by Isabella Lövin at SRHR seminar on Resources for women and girls, https://www.government.se/speeches/2016/04/srhr-seminar-on-resources-for-women-and-girls-realizing-the-vision-of-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-for-all-through-agenda-2030/. Accessed 27 May, 2022.

[24] France's international strategy for gender equality (2018-2022) - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (diplomatie.gouv.fr). Accessed 12 January, 2023.

[25] For example, the move from reproductive rights to 'maternal health' is how SRHR came to be adopted within the UN's MDGs (Yamin 2019).

The US' Global Gag Rule remains a key threat to funding and provision of services[26] and the rise of populist and right-wing forces has also been a key challenge.[27] There is no great reimagining or new vision around either in the context of FFP; instead, we see a restated commitment to already existent, long-term principles.

It is possible, however, to imagine bolder language and action around both issues. The She Decides campaign, for example, provides more decisive and diverse language around the importance of SRHR. Founded in 2017 by the Dutch Government in response to President Trump's reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule, the global campaign works on a wide range of areas related to bodily autonomy. It envisions a world where:

> 'She is free.
>
> To feel pleasure.
>
> To use contraception.
>
> To access abortion safely.
>
> To decide.
>
> Free from pressure.
>
> Free from harm.
>
> Free from judgement and fear.'[28]

This envisions a broader range of SRHR beyond the traditional remit of contraception, abortion, and maternal healthcare, and appears radical in contrast to what is currently on offer in FFP. Equally, academic frameworks have argued for a move beyond understanding SRHR

[26] https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/online-articles/global-gag-rule-closing-civil-society-space. Accessed 21 February, 2022.

[27] Most notably in relation to access to abortion (Król and Pustułka 2018).

[28] https://www.shedecides.com/manifesto/. Accessed 21 February, 2022.

as a rights issue, to seeing them as fundamentally linked to human security (Harman and Davies 2020).

Additionally, much of the discrimination and violence faced by gendered bodies globally is missing in FFP. Women's role, labour, and social context in global health and social care is largely overlooked (Harman 2016; Wenham 2019), despite its exacerbation in the context of COVID-19 (Wenham, Smith, and Morgan 2020). There is also an absence of thinking about sexuality, and the specific experiences of sexual minority women (Aylward and Brown 2020; Morton, Muchiri, and Swiss 2020). An understanding of gender as a binary, and the almost exclusive focus on women/girls, is notably strong throughout all FFP documents, with no sense of bodies that do not fit the male/female binary (Aylward and Brown 2020; Hagen 2016; Morton, Muchiri, and Swiss 2020). This has implications for the physical safety and security of gender minorities, let alone their health needs. There is also an absence of thinking around behavioural change and female bodies. Female bodies continue to face very strong taboos in many parts of the world, often in relation to menstruation, breastfeeding, and childbirth. These taboos increase physical insecurities, for example, the impact of *chhaupadi* in Nepal (Thomson et al 2019). Can FFP challenge behavioural practices around these areas in a way that is neither neo-colonialist nor gender reductive? This is fundamental to female bodily security, but, as discussed, is excluded in current FFP formulations.

Sweden's model on sex work stands out within existing FFPs for being one of the few to discuss this issue. In 2017, Sweden produced a document citing successful examples of their FFP in practice, noting that their dialogue on human rights "has led, for example, to Northern Ireland, France, and Ireland adopting the same kind of legislation on prohibiting the purchase of sexual services as Sweden…and the *Swedish view* of prostitution as violence and exploitation of vulnerable people" (5, emphasis added). Similarly, their 2018 Handbook notes proudly that Sweden was "the first country in the world to criminalise the purchasing – but not selling – of sex" (71) Both texts take great care to brand this policy as being directly related to Sweden and its values. Yet the so-called Nordic model is not without its critics, particularly in relation to its punitive impact on migrant women (Vuolajärvi 2019). Who gets to decide what bodily autonomy looks like, and whose bodies are ignored or silenced? Despite critiques, and especially considering Sweden's aim to be a feminist leader for other states to emulate, it could mean that this model of sex work comes to dominate FFP.

In sum, bodies matter to foreign policy. In the area of human rights, when seeking protection from violence or reproductive freedoms; when crossing borders or being freely or forcibly transported across borders; and in the differing gendered roles that they play in the

provision of and need for healthcare - bodies are fundamental to foreign policy. Whilst there is some consideration of this in various FFPs to date, this largely reiterates previous policy, and encompasses multiple silences around difference in relation to gendered bodies. There is much more scope for development in these areas, and for a deeper consideration of bodily needs to be more clearly integrated into FFP as it develops.

Conclusion to the Forum

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As each contribution has shown, FFP is at a critical juncture. At once increasingly established as a national and international agenda, it is also still open to interpretation and change. Thinking through its origins, policy intersections, and potential future(s) is therefore key in understanding this point in its evolution. As multiple contributions show, FFP is not as boundary pushing as the feminist moniker might suggest and suffers from silences and erasures on critical issues such as the climate crisis, migration, militarism, and sexual and reproductive health rights and services.

Several other research agendas standout for future work on FFP. This includes its relationship to the WPS agenda. Arguably, WPS is the most significant feminist international political framework, and FFP would do well to take stock of how WPS has evolved and developed, and the points at which it has been contested or seen to be lacking, as a critical point of learning. Indeed, much feminist ink has been spilt on charting the co-option of the WPS agenda, alongside the fatigue and frustration many scholars and activists feel due to a sense that the agenda has done little more than 'make war safe for women' (Weiss 2011; Shepherd 2016). As this Forum has pointed out, there is a possibility that FFP faces the same future. That said, FFP has not emerged in the same way as WPS, from civil society to state institutionalisation, but rather the other way round: announced by states, and often to the surprise of civil society actors (Gill-Atkinson et al 2020). Civil society has largely reacted to this policy move rather than feeding into it from its inception. It therefore remains to be seen whether civil society will be able to inject more criticality into FFP.

Moreover, while feminism appears to be becoming increasingly institutionalised in certain contexts, it is also increasingly vilified in others, and actors involved in FFP need to be conscious of this Janus-faced context. FFP emerged in the context of a global rise in right-

wing, populist, and misogynist forces, many of which strongly contest feminism and the notion of 'gender ideology'. Therefore, while we hope this Forum has opened new avenues for thinking with FFP, there is certainly much more to say. But, perhaps most importantly, this Forum collectively points out that how feminism is defined and interpreted by states and civil society profoundly shapes what it can and cannot achieve. This, we believe, is where academia and civil society needs to push alternative and radical understandings of feminism, whether that emphasises intersectionality, inclusivity, abolition or, maintains some link to feminist social movements, so to edge FFP forward in more transformative ways.

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