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IS THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY FEMINIST?

Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement

Introduction

In 2014, Sweden's Foreign Minister Margot Wallström took the world by storm when she launched the world's first explicitly feminist foreign policy. The new policy would be a way of doing things differently in Sweden's international affairs, organizing its approach to diplomacy, development, and defense under a 3 Rs framework of women's *rights, resources, and representation*, the latter of which this journal issue seeks to explore.

How did this come to be? For Sweden, it was not just the future of diplomacy that was female; it was the past and present as well. Sweden's parliamentary representation has hovered near parity for some time. It has also boasted a long line of female foreign ministers dating back to the 1970s. Thus, there was a strong historical precedent of women's leadership that had normalized female power in such a way as to enable the country to offer something unique to the world: a feminist foreign policy.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy contribution gives us a window into what a female future for diplomacy might look like. Looking back to the Swedish example – and also examining a few subsequent, though not quite as ambitious, case studies from Canada and France – we argue that a female future of diplomacy should not be solely female but should be feminist in name and content. In other words, a feminist foreign policy should not only be produced by women and for women, but it should go beyond; carrying a gendered lens that recognizes and seeks to correct historical and patriarchal, as well as racist and/or colonialist imbalances of power. Irrespective of one's gender, this is an all-inclusive benefit: feminism is an agenda everyone can promote and one that seeks equity for all, not the dominance of one over another. As U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated, "I know many women [who] are not feminists, and I know some men [who] are."[1]

Further, the feminist future we seek should not limit itself simply to the realm of diplomacy but should encompass all auspices of foreign policy and international relations. If done right, the approach will include aid, trade, and defense, in addition to diplomacy, and it will ensure the use of all tools available in the foreign policy toolbox in order to advance a more equitable world.

In the same vein, as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 192 member states have agreed to achieve gender equality by 2030.

The question that arises and which concerns us in this paper is: if this is such a widely-accepted premise, why have so few governments adopted a feminist approach to foreign policy?

Defining Feminist Foreign Policy

Over the past several years, we have been examining the global state of affairs with regard to feminist foreign policy, and we have found a number of explanations for the lack of a widespread uptake of the concept.

Governments may not be embracing the mantle of feminist foreign policy because there is no universal definition. Although this is treacherous ground to trod, we will attempt it here, if only for the sake of trying. Since feminists themselves have difficulty in defining feminist foreign policies how can they expect governments to do so?

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines foreign policy as, "the policy of a sovereign state in its interaction with other sovereign states."[2] The concept of sovereignty is central to this definition, which has been a challenge for the concept of universal human rights – women's, or otherwise – from the very beginning. The United States, for instance, has consistently refused to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the preeminent international treaty on women's rights, citing sovereignty concerns, putting it in an ignominious minority of only six other holdouts, such as Iran, Somalia, and Sudan.[3] This American reticence has also applied to treaties on disability, children, and other key populations.[4] This includes the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the United States is the lone UN member state not to ratify.[5] We will return to CEDAW and the other historical precedents for feminist foreign policy later in this paper.

That is foreign policy. Defining feminist encounters even more difficulty.

Again, consulting Merriam-Webster dictionary, which in 2017 determined its word of the year to be feminism owing to the largest spike in searches of the word following the Women's March on Washington.[6] It defines feminism as "the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes," and "organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests." As such, a composite definition of the two concepts taken together could be:

> *Feminist foreign policy: the policy of a sovereign state in its interaction with other sovereign states based on the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes, delivered to advance women's rights and interests.*

That is a starting point for debate, but hardly responsive to interest in enshrining a focus not just on women, but on gender equality more broadly. Here Sweden's rights, resources, and representation framework can help us. In a July 2018 *New York Times* op-ed, Margot Wallström stated, "…it's as simple as that: feminism, or gender equality, is about making sure that women have the same rights, representation, and resources as men."[7]

Borrowing from Wallström's framework, we propose the following working definition of feminist foreign policy:

> *The policy of a state that 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 groups, allocates significant resources to achieve that vision, undertakes robust and public analysis to document the impacts of its implementation, and seeks through its implementation and reflection, to disrupt 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.*

Having suggested the above working definition, we will now examine historical precedents that shaped feminist foreign policy, and to the extent possible, investigate the nature of their impact.

Power of Precedent: Historical Influences that Laid the Groundwork for Feminist Foreign Policy

A feminist foreign policy that meets our proposed definition is a tall order. Nonetheless, the concept has antecedents in a number of international agreements and foreign policies that have attempted to bring a gendered lens to the field.

First and foremost, gender equality is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and following the brutal Second World War to articulate a universal, fundamental body of rights held by all people, to form a global alliance to defend those rights and, it was hoped, to prevent another bloody global conflict. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights holds that, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, … birth or other status."[8]

Twenty-five years later came the development and widespread adoption

of a specific international standard on women's human rights: CEDAW, which was adopted by the UN in 1979.[9] Another generation passed before a series of new standards were developed in the early nineties: groundbreaking content on gender-based violence and women's human rights as articulated in the Vienna Declaration and Platform for Action in 1993; new standards the next year with respect to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Cairo Program of Action; and, finally, the pivotal Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, where First Lady Hilary Clinton famously declared that human rights were women's rights. Although these new standards together have advanced progress toward a common understanding of and commitment to women's human rights, they are, sadly, still a topic of enormous debate and there is substantial risk of backsliding.

With the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security in October 2000, feminist foreign policy had a watershed moment. For the first time, the women's rights agenda was positioned solidly within the realms of national and global security.[10] Prior to UNSCR 1325, the scholarly field of international relations received significant critique for supporting a worldview in which all the critical players are men playing typically masculine roles: statesmen, soldiers, despots, and terrorists. In this framework, the role of women was reduced to abstract concepts like "the mother country" and, if women were mentioned at all, it was as potential victims who need protecting.[11] UNSCR 1325 changed that, and, to date, 79 countries have adopted national action plans on women, peace, and security.[12]

On the development side, the rights and roles of women became a topic of interest to the field somewhat earlier than in the realms of diplomacy and national security. As early as the 1960s, there was a recognition that not all approaches benefit all recipients equally or function equally well if gender is not considered. The approach, now called Women in Development (WID), is driven by the idea that women not only face unique challenges compared to male counterparts, simply by virtue of being women, but also that these specific challenges require tailored responses that take gender into account. While well intentioned, these early responses often had unintended consequences, as they implemented interventions with women without fully considering or mitigating the broader societal impact those interventions would have or their gendered implications. For example, women's economic empowerment programs that gave women access to financial capital but ignored social norms, which dictated that men were breadwinners and heads of household, could result in spikes in domestic or intimate partner violence as those power structures were disrupted.[13] Many feminist academics also

argued that in addition to these unintended consequences, a WID theory or approach all-too-often resulted in the instrumentalization of women that prioritized the broad development outcomes of empowering women rather than their individual human rights.[14] A related feminist critique of the WID approach is a disproportionate emphasis on women's role as mothers or homemakers as opposed to investing in the name of equality overall.

In the 1980s, a movement to not only address gender inequality but to also address some of the critiques to a WID theory took shape. This new approach was called Gender and Development (GAD), and began to shape the way that countries give, receive, budget for, and implement foreign assistance.[15] The approach seeks not only to improve outcomes for women, but also to promote broader social equity and inclusion by intervening in ways that respond to gendered roles within households, communities, and societies. GAD approaches place an emphasis on developing individual capacity within a framework of gendered social norms.

This shift was significant and predated the beginning of a similar pivot for approaches in the rest of foreign policy. In the ensuing years, a number of countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands, have published development policies that are grounded in this approach; although few have fully incorporated a non-binary approach to gender and gendered social norms. More work needs to be done to include a focus on LGBTQ people, or the ways in which gender norms can impact men and boys, in this broader approach to gender.

If we are to map the evolution of this discipline as starting with roots in the human rights and women in development movements, evolving gradually to embrace broader concepts of gender equality and inclusion, one could imagine the next frontier as the advent of the feminist foreign policy.

From Words to Action: What do Feminist Foreign Policies Do?

Absent a universal definition of what a feminist foreign policy is, the question becomes what do the few examples of existing policies actually do? All are relatively new, with Sweden's efforts beginning in 2014, followed by Canada's Feminist Foreign Assistance Policy efforts in 2017, and a rebranding of an existing gender policy in France as feminist foreign policy in 2019.[16] It is worth noting that in both Australia and the United Kingdom, individual political parties have pledged to adopt feminist foreign policies, so depending on the outcome of future elections we may someday have additional policies to examine in our review. For now, these three countries provide a case study through which we can begin to assess current efforts to

define and deliver feminist foreign policies globally.

Sweden

Sweden published the world's first (and by our definition, only) feminist foreign policy in 2014. This policy includes aid, trade, development, and diplomacy within the scope of its framework. In fact, the Swedish feminist approach to policy is broader still, extending to both foreign and domestic policy. According to the Swedish Government, "…gender equality is central to the Government's priorities – in decision-making and resource allocation….The Government's most important tool for implementing feminist policy is gender mainstreaming, of which gender-responsive budgeting is an important component"[17] Here we see the emphasis on resources as paramount for the Swedish model, although unlike Canada and France, the Swedish Government did not commit to earmarking a certain percentage of its aid to gender equality. The decision to extend the focus of the Swedish Government's feminism to policies impacting people both at home and abroad is an important one that is worthy of greater exploration than we have room to accommodate in the scope of this article.

Within its feminist foreign policy framework, the Swedish policy covers three domains: (1) foreign and security policy; (2) development cooperation; and (3) trade and promotion policy. With regard to gender, the policy sees gender equality as both a priority objective and a tool to advance other foreign policy priorities. The FFP seeks to apply "a systematic gender equality perspective throughout foreign policy… gender equality is an objective in itself, but it is also essential for achieving the Government's other overall objectives, such as peace, security, and sustainable development."[18]

The Swedish approach is hence the most comprehensive, extending to all domains of foreign policy and seeking to advance gender equality for its own sake, as well as in service to other foreign policy priorities. It is also the oldest of the policies and, although still relatively new, has at least one publication outlining examples of the policy's accomplishments in the first three years since it was introduced. The document predated elections and as such reads as more propagandistic than independent evaluation, but it is at least an effort to publicly document impact. The precise dollar amount invested in implementing the agenda is unclear, apart from 200 million Krona (approximately $22 million USD)[19] that were committed towards the "She Decides" initiative. While significant, it is unclear what amount of funding beyond "She Decides" and the new gender strategy went to implementing the feminist foreign policy between 2014 and 2018.[20] "She Decides" is a

direct response to the U.S. reinstatement of the so-called Mexico City Policy, which prohibits U.S. foreign assistance from supporting organizations that provide access to safe abortion or even information about abortion, even in countries where the practice is legal and even if they provide those services or information using sources other than U.S. funding, and which some have accused of forcing grassroots organizations to choose between US and Nordic funding to survive.[21]

Financial aspects notwithstanding, there is no overarching mechanism to monitor the implementation of the policy's goals, objectives and activities. While there are specific metrics to track progress against many of the goals in the Feminist Foreign Policy under other strategies, such as Sweden's "National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security or the Strategy for 2016-2020" or Sweden's "Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights for 2018-2022", for example, the policy itself lacks a monitoring and evaluation mechanism and the four year report on progress appears to have been based on voluntary, rather than mandated, reporting. As with the two examples just mentioned, comparison across strategies is made somewhat more difficult due to the periods of reporting. The women, peace and security strategy, for example, will have much richer data after three years of implementation in 2019, whereas the gender equality strategy will have only been in effect for one year, making comparison under different goals unreliable as a metric for the country's commitment to that objective.

Canada

For several years following the Swedish debut, there was not much of an answer to Wallström's radical first step. Indeed, rather than a rush of copycat policies by other progressive governments, quite the opposite was true: in interviews Wallström has recounted that her approach was initially met with giggles.[22] This is perhaps not surprising given that this was the world's first feminist foreign policy and a radical disruption of the status quo.

At last, Canada responded with the June 2017 launch of a Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP).[23] Like the Swedish policy before it, the policy couched itself in a commitment to rights, and espoused its launch with a budget proposal that put new resources on the table for Official Development Assistance (ODA), passing the "resources" test by bringing overall aid levels up from a 50-year low – albeit not significantly – and embracing a benchmark of 95 percent of its foreign assistance budget for gender equality as a primary or secondary goal. Canadian Prime

Minister Justin Trudeau, a self-proclaimed feminist, has also modeled the representation piece, with a female foreign minister, a female development minister, and the most diverse cabinet in Canadian history.[24] Unlike Sweden, Canada fell short of embracing the full scope of foreign policy within its feminist approach, limiting its focus exclusively to its foreign assistance. This is an issue we will take up again later in the piece.

The Canadian model is much more limited, tackling solely international assistance and couching its prioritization of gender equality primarily in the service of broader economic and security goals. According to the Government of Canada, "Canada is adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy that seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal."[25] Canada does prioritize resourcing, perhaps even more so than Sweden. The accompanying budget Canada unveiled with the FIAP ensures that 15 percent of all bilateral and development assistance specifically target gender equality, and an additional 80 percent of ODA will include gender equality as a secondary goal by 2022. This is a significant hike from just 2.4 percent from 2015 to 2016 and 6.5 percent from 2016 to 2017 on the gender principle marker, and 68 percent and 75 percent on gender secondary marker for the same years.[26]

The Feminist International Assistance Policy is organized thematically and includes six priority areas: (1) gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment; (2) human dignity, which is an umbrella term that includes access to health care, education, nutrition, and the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance; (3) women's economic empowerment, including access and control over resources and services; (4) climate action; (5) women's political participation; and (6) women, peace, and security. Canada is the only country of the three to have a focus on the environment, and this focus is not only as a stand-alone goal but included throughout in discussions and examples of Canada's work in other areas – for example food and nutrition or child marriage – which are a result of the destabilizing impacts and natural disasters due to climate change.

While Canada's policy is more limited in scope than Sweden's, dealing only with foreign assistance, it is more ambitious in the scale of resourcing it has committed to the topic, with its pledge to commit 95 percent of ODA to gender equality. Canada does not have an accountability framework or a mandate to evaluate progress annually, although their Minister of International Development promises in the strategy that she will "continue to engage with Canadians and our stakeholders, because the launch of this

policy is not the end of the process but rather a first step in a longer journey to achieving the best international assistance results."[27] It also includes a more detailed series of thematic priorities under its feminist approach. We will explore commonalities and critiques in the following section.

France

France recently updated a gender in foreign assistance policy that it launched at the Commission on the Status of Women in 2018, declaring that "France is back and so is feminism" and pledging half of its foreign assistance be devoted to achieving gender equality by 2022.[28] A year later, on International Women's Day of March 2019, France went a step further and declared that gender policy to be France's Feminist Foreign Policy.[29] A little over a month later, the government announced that it would champion feminist foreign policy as a core focus of its G7 presidency in 2019 as well, signaling evangelical intent with regard to the model.

For France, feminist foreign policy – and feminist diplomacy before it – is meant to cover all externally-facing action, including diplomacy with all countries France engages with, not just emerging economies or aid recipients. The stated aim is to include gender "in all French diplomatic priorities and all political, economic, soft diplomacy, cultural, educational and development cooperation actions," an approach that French had previously referred to as "feminist diplomacy."[30] There is, however, a heavy focus on aid in the practical application of France's FFP, and much of the thematic priorities that we can identify are elucidated in their International Strategy on Gender Equality (first promulgated in 2007, the version that was updated and launched last year covers 2018-2022). According to the strategy, "gender equality is a top priority of the president's mandate. It will be a principal and cross-cutting theme; it will underpin all of France's external action and specific measures will be undertaken to promote it."[31] Unlike the Swedish and Canadian strategies, France's strategy is accompanied by an accountability framework against which progress is to be tracked. Not only does it have stated objectives and metrics, but France goes one step further and mandates annual evaluation of progress against the strategy. For example, the strategy sets out to increase bilateral and programmable ODA that contributes to gender equality from a baseline of 30 percent in 2018 to a total of 50 percent in 2022, with benchmark targets for each year.[32] While it could be argued that some of the French goals and metrics for measurement could be more ambitious, it is notable that they are alone in their transparency.

It is in the International Strategy on Gender Equality that the French articulate a number of their thematic priorities with regard to gender;

it contains five thematic pillars and three priority actions. Thematically, the pillars are similar to Canada's, with a special emphasis on sexual and reproductive health. They include: (1) healthcare for women and girls, including comprehensive family planning, access to sexual and reproductive health, and reduced maternal mortality rates; (2) access to education, including access to and improvement of comprehensive sexuality education; (3) raising the legal age of marriage to age 18; (4) vocational training and employment opportunities; and (5) improvements to infrastructure that enable access to remote rural areas. The stated aim is to mainstream gender in all external actions and to place women's empowerment and gender equality at the heart of their international agenda.[33]

The three priority actions are of particular interest. According to the strategy, France will prioritize approaches that are (1) comprehensive, (2) rights-based, and (3) gender-based. The comprehensive approach extends the scope of its focus on gender to apply beyond development, explicitly stating that gender should be included in diplomatic priorities, including a commitment to gender parity within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development – a feminist diplomacy if you will. The rights-based approach ensures that human rights principles, norms, and rules are integrated into humanitarian and development policies and processes on policies regarding violence against women. And the gender-based approach, or gender mainstreaming, attempts to ensure that "a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making"[34]

Common Threads

Although none of the policies are exactly alike, there are a number of commonalities among the three approaches. First, all contain a core focus on structuring development assistance to advance more gender-equitable societies, seeking to do this both as a goal in and of itself, and also as a means to advance other development priorities.

Second, all share a commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. All three countries have National Action Plans outlining their efforts to implement UNSCR 1325, and all four policies cite Resolution 1325 as foundational to their approach to feminist foreign policy or assistance.

All three of the strategies include an emphasis on healthcare and various levels of reproductive health and/or sexual, reproductive health and rights. Given that this is a body of human rights that is perhaps most under attack, this is of particular importance. Sweden notes that they will ensure that LGBTQ individuals are equally able to enjoy their sexual reproductive

health and rights. Sweden was one of the first donors to "She Decides," demonstrating its commitment to meeting the global need for commodities and services related to sexual reproductive health and rights Launched in February 2017 as a response to the reinstatement of the so-called Mexico City Policy by the President of the United States, "She Decides" is a multi-stakeholder partnership, which Canada and France also joined. The Swedish commitment articulates support for access to safe abortion, comprehensive sexuality education, contraceptives, and STI screenings; Canada promised to double its commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights in three years' time. France's strategy includes an emphasis on encouraging universal access to quality healthcare and for sexual and reproductive health and rights but makes no financial commitments in the strategy itself to this end. Instead, they will monitor progress against increased partnerships with civil society and the private sector and "encourage sectoral dialogue on gender."[35]

All three countries also include a focus on women's economic empowerment. Sweden France, and Canada all have areas of focus on preventing and responding to gender-based violence Canada alone focuses on the environment and climate action. Each of these areas of emphasis are articulated with clear justifications and ample evidence as to why these thematic priorities are essential to a feminist approach.

Critiques of Existing Policies

As we have begun to consider the substance of feminist foreign policy in our research and expert consultations, at least three key elements have emerged that form a basis upon which we can evaluate the strength of feminist foreign policies: (1) resourcing, (2) comprehensiveness, and (3) coherence.

The first is straightforward and based one of the only quantitative indicators we have: level of investment. As has been said by Sweden from the very beginning, resourcing is core to this agenda. Conversely, when such an ambitious agenda is accompanied by insufficient funds, it rings hollow. Here both Sweden and Canada score well; both are among the nine Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries whose spending on gender equality has reached or exceeded 50 percent of ODA (joined by Ireland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Belgium, and Italy, perhaps prime candidates to consider the penning of feminist foreign assistance policies moving forward). Whether or not Sweden has embraced a precise benchmark, it is in the top spot, with nearly 90 percent of its ODA dedicated to gender

equality as of the latest available data (2016-17). Canada is fourth in this ranking, beaten out by Ireland and Iceland.[36]

Far behind the pack, France hovers around 30 percent (below the DAC average of about 40 percent), although with the adoption of its gender and international assistance policy, France has committed to reach the 50 percent threshold by 2022.[37]

OECD analysis of spending on gender equality is an imperfect metric for the resourcing element of feminist foreign policy, but the most readily available. Most analysis focuses on the overall spending for gender equality as either a principal or significant objective; we propose that moving forward, it should focus more on countries' spending on gender equality as *a principle* objective, which, at only four percent on average, is the area where progress is most lacking.

Second, comprehensiveness. Even when policies focus on gender equality, much of the literature critiquing existing feminist foreign policies points to a lack of attention to intersectional forms of discrimination and marginalization such as race, ethnicity, disability, class, or refugee status, among others. Taken with historical issues such as the legacy of military intervention and colonization, the intersectional lens becomes more important. Sweden and France were both colonizers, each with brutal legacies across the globe, which continue to play a role in how and where they leverage diplomacy and foreign assistance abroad. France, for example, continues to focus most of their foreign assistance in Africa in the areas which were former colonies, and has a large military presence and many business interests in the region. France ranks second in European Union country exports to Africa (totaling 5.6 billion euros, or approximately 6.3 billion US dollars in the most recent year available).[38] The French military presence in Africa has mixed reviews; including the 2017 accusation by the Rwandan government that French military was complicit in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.[39] Still, in recent years, it has been reported that Francophone Africa remits more money to France than France contributes to the region through foreign assistance.[40] President Macron has directly acknowledged France's colonial past: when campaigning for President of France in February of 2017, he visited Algeria and stated that colonialism was a part of French history, a crime against humanity and truly barbaric. He said: "We must face up to this part of our history and apologize to those who were at the receiving end," but this was not well-received back in France and the then-nominee changed his proposal to align more closely with traditional policies with the continent.[41] Since taking office, however, he appointed a panel of experts to investigate France's role in the Rwandan

genocide,[42] and pledged $ 2.8 billion US dollars in business investments on the continent by 2022, benefitting an estimated 10,000 enterprises.[43]

Sweden has similarly faced criticism. The decision of 11 female Swedish foreign ministers to wear headscarves in Iran in 2017 was fraught back home. Of the 15 ministers present on the trip, 11 were women, and faced a tough choice: Iranian women are required to wear loose-fitting clothing and cover their hair in public, and international visitors to Iran are required by law to dress modestly while in the country.[44] The decision to interpret this law in the form of a headscarf was critiqued both by those in Sweden and by human rights activists in Iran. Sweden has also faced backlash for their arms sales to countries with records of human rights abuses, including Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and the disconnect between promoting human rights and providing human rights abusers with weapons of war.[45]

Canada, on the other hand, is haunted less by colonialism and more by a domestic legacy of abuse – and recently, officially declared genocide– waged against some indigenous populations.[46] In June of 2019, Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau acknowledged the findings of The Canadian National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and that the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls across Canada in recent decades amount to an act of "genocide."[47] The report highlighted that "Colonialist structures and violence, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia" that led to this genocide.[48] He stopped short, however, of acknowledging the full history of Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples as a cultural genocide. This history includes forcibly removing children from their families to place them in remote schools from which they could not escape and where they were often denied medical treatment – in an attempt to destroy their cultures and over the course of decades.[49] Canada has also come under fire for its support for Canadian extractives industries that have decimated local ecosystems and indigenous populations, including reports of targeting women's rights defenders. According to watchdog groups, Canada supported over $24 billion Canadian dollars in the extractive business sector in 2017 via Export Development Canada, their export credit agency, which seeks to reduce risks for Canadian businesses looking to grow globally.[50]

To put it more directly: some question whether feminist foreign policies are just the latest postcolonial export of northern countries – well intentioned perhaps, but ultimately equally uninformed by the voices and perspectives of those on the receiving end. This is particularly true for development assistance. Annika Bergman Rosamond, a docent at Lund University in Sweden, observes that "postcolonial feminists are also cautious in their

interpretation of feminist universalisms because they argue that such accounts of moral duty undermine the distinct experiences and stories told by non-western women."[51] "Nothing about us, without us," as the adage holds. Even in progressive human rights discussions, women and particularly women of multiply-marginalized identities are often not included in the discourse that developed and shaped policies about them. While well-intentioned, such approaches can perpetuate, rather than dismantle, inequalities and systems of oppression. Sweden in particular has been critiqued for being anti-immigrant and Islamophobic, at least according to some critics.

Finally, coherence. One of the loudest critiques of both Sweden's and Canada's efforts to promulgate feminist foreign policies has been their simultaneous arms trade with non-democratic countries notorious for women's human rights abuses. In 2018, Sweden's military exports rose by 2 percent, with many of these exports going to non-democratic counties accused of extensive human rights abuses,[52] including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and Brazil. Following its publication of its Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada was the recipient of similar accusations of hypocrisy due to its arms deals with Saudi Arabia.[53]

Conclusion: Toward an Intersectional Feminism in Foreign Policy

Although its roots are deep, with historical precedents dating as far back as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, feminist foreign policy is still an emerging discipline. As a result, it is difficult to fully measure its impact. A considerable step forward will be defining feminist foreign policy consistently, and, if we can add another "r" to Sweden's rights, resources, and representation frame – research – investing in and publishing progress evaluations to document that impact will be critical.

This will also help feminist foreign policies to weather the inevitable ebbs and flows of political cycles. In September 2018, Sweden held general elections and the party of Margot Wallström, the Social Democratic Party, lost. The Sweden Democrats, a party described as anti-immigration and in whom critics see echoes of Nazism, made significant gains, spelling trouble for the continued implementation of Sweden's feminist approach.[54] The new coalition government is still forming, but the vote effectively reduced the power of the more centrist and left-leaning parties and boosted far-right and populist ideology.[55]

Similarly, Canada will hold elections later this year (2019), and Canadian officials are already moderating the use of feminist language in public appearances. The linguistic and branding issues associated with this

work are another topic for another paper but suffice it to say, the question of interrogating and documenting impact of these policies is urgently needed, for this and a host of other reasons. Australia was one candidate for feminist foreign policy – at least one political party was assembling a vision for what an Australian FFP might look like – but recent elections favoring more conservative government leave the fate of an Australian FFP unlikely in the near term.

However, 2020 may well be a banner year for the refinement, improvement and expansion of feminist foreign policy. Next year will play host to a number of important women's rights anniversaries – the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the twentieth anniversary of UNSCR 1325, most importantly – and champion governments are likely to embrace this growing trend, particularly with the global celebrations of the former being held in France. A growing number of feminist academics and activists are pushing for progressive visions of feminist foreign policy, and their recommendations include going beyond gender parity in government or in peace negotiations, but including intersections with climate, conflict, and greater levels of funding and accountability.[56]

This means foreign policy that is not only by women or for women, but goes further, taking a nonbinary, gendered lens that recognizes and seeks to correct for historical, patriarchal, and often racist, and/or neocolonialist imbalances of power as they play out on the world stage. Further, our vision of feminist foreign policy is not limited to a single lever of international relations – "feminist diplomacy" or "feminist international assistance" or the like, nor, certainly, is any single assistance program or initiative a feminist foreign policy. Rather, for us feminist foreign policy is a complete, consistent and coherent approach to a body of work encompassing all auspices of foreign policy and international relations. If done right, the approach will include aid, trade and defense, in addition to diplomacy, using all the tools in the foreign policy tool box to advance a more equitable world. And most importantly, it will be informed by and amplifying the voices of the rights-holders it seeks to celebrate and support. This is good news for people of all genders: feminism is an agenda everyone can promote, an agenda that seeks equity for all, not the dominance of one over another.

Lyric Thompson is the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the International Center for Research on Women.

Rachel Clement is a Policy Advocate for U.S. foreign policy at the International Center for Research on Women.

Notes

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