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Women have traditionally been the diplomats of their families and communities, from resolving disputes between siblings to weathering food scarcity crises and other emergencies. In the past century, women's traditional diplomatic role has finally begun to push well beyond the barriers of the home and into the international arena. Particularly since 2016, the gender equality movement has raised awareness of girls' and women's rights and restrictions, inspired women to charge past traditional barriers, and forged meaningful, lasting political and social change.

As a result, communities, governments, and international organizations such as the United Nations and the G7 have begun to embrace the positive change the gender equality movement brings with it. Studies from NGOs, the UN, and academia have proven that a healthier, economically and politically stable world begins and ends with women's equal participation.

In the second issue of our 20th volume, the critical diplomatic roles from grassroots advocacy to international negotiations are explored. Nahla Valji and Pablo Castillo open this issue, arguing for the importance, and ultimate necessity, of gender parity for the success of the United Nations' peace and security efforts. This article discusses the great need for gender parity both within the UN system as well as within its advocacy on the ground. Following, Tanya Ansahta Garnett and Kari Øygard offer a case study on women's roles in peacebuilding and civic engagement in post-conflict Liberia. They discuss whether or not women's participation and representation is an effective strategy towards meaningful long-term change. Lina Abirafeh then examines the widespread issue of gender-based violence in the Arab region by outlining several case studies. Abirafeh then considers how it continues to withhold women's political and legal progress in the region. Changing gears, Catherine Tinker and Renata Koch Alvarenga then survey the successes and continued drawbacks to gender equality in climate finance, offering a call to action for quicker implementation of a gender-responsive approach to mitigating the effects of climate change. Rachel Clement and Lyric Thompson conclude this issue by discussing the theory behind a feminist foreign policy and what it will take to move beyond the definition to a comprehensively feminist approach to foreign policy that is engrained in all sectors of diplomacy while also elevating traditionally unheard voices.

The Journal sincerely hopes you enjoy this issue and its amplification of the need for gender equality from grassroots advocacy to the United Nations.

Meagan Torello
Editor-in-Chief

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The Seton Hall

Journal of Diplomacy

and International Relations

Call for Papers

The Journal is pleased to invite articles for the upcoming Fall/Winter 2019 issue.

Diversity in International Relations

In recent years, the theme of diversity has affected International Relations in significant and unexpected ways. The call for an 'Independent Expert on Protection Against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' caused controversy at the UN. The world was shocked to see the Pope kissing the feet of South Sudan's rival leaders as an act of humility to encourage them to call for peace in their nation. This shows the diversity of actors in International Relations. At the UN, reform of hiring practices and attention on Article 101 of the UN Charter (regarding geographic representation) has been a topic of recent discussion. This year was also named the International Year of Indigenous Languages at the UN, demonstrating the importance of linguistic diversity and its preservation.

These examples barely scratch the surface of ways in which the theme of diversity deeply affects the fields of governance, law, and human rights. Yet these issues might take a backseat to more attention-grabbing matters, such as climate change, international security, and the rise of nationalism. Yet, climate change, development, violent conflict, terrorism, human rights violations, reform of global governance, and problems of democratic representation are closely tied to issues of diversity. Increasingly, questions of diversity and inclusion present a pathway of solution to many of these problems as well.

For the first issue of our 22nd edition, the Journal of Diplomacy is accepting articles which address the theme of diversity in International Relations. We are seeking papers on actors frequently overlooked in the field of IR – LGBTQI citizens, religious actors, indigenous people, women and minorities in leadership positions. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the effects of exclusionary practices in multilateral diplomacy, small state representation in international organizations, ethnic power-sharing, economic and cultural implications of inclusive societies, motives for promoting diversity, and the use of legal mechanisms to include or exclude minority groups. We also encourage authors to examine adverse effects of diversity, alongside its multitude of beneficial effects.

We are seeking authors with diverse backgrounds. Examination of relationships across themes is also encouraged. Submissions should be between 3,000 and 6,000 words and are due 1 November 2019.

For more information regarding submission requirements and deadlines, please visit our website: www.journalofdiplomacy.org or forward all inquiries to:

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THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER PARITY IN THE UN'S EFFORTS ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Nahla Valji and Pablo Castillo

"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."

- Arundhati Roy

INTRODUCTION

In January 2017, Antonio Guterres began his tenure as the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. In taking the oath of office, he pledged to achieve gender parity in the world body for the first time in seven decades. In just over a year, gender parity was reached in 2018 in both the Secretary-General's senior management group – his 'cabinet' made of many the heads of various UN departments and agencies in headquarters – and among Resident Coordinators, effectively the heads of the UN at the country level.¹ The road to the ultimate goal of parity at all levels across the Organization will be a longer process, as laid out in the *Secretary-General's System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity*. But the rapid transformation at the top has sent a signal to all, particularly with regards to political will. It has also prompted broader reforms, including efforts to address staffing rules and regulations, introduce greater transparency in staffing numbers, root out unconscious bias in recruitment, enforce temporary special measures, and provide an enabling environment through policies on parental leave and flexible work arrangements.

While it would be a reasonable expectation that the shift in numbers at the top of the world's body would have a cascading impact on the inclusion of more women in all spaces of international diplomacy and peace and security – from the composition of peace negotiations, to peacekeeping missions, or national public institutions –, inclusion in these spaces has remained contested and resisted, often in ways that are neither public nor documented. In our view, this resistance partly explains the gigantic gap between the rhetoric of speeches and statements and the goals of policy documents, on one hand, and the dismal reality of the numbers of the representation of women in 2019 in many aspects of the international community's work. In the main, this resistance comes from actors who either actively object to or do not prioritize feminist goals. However

even among gender equality advocates, some have voiced doubts about emphasizing parity as a goal, and a concern that these efforts may distract from, or come at the expense of, a focus on gender equality and social change more generally.² Sometimes this reflects an underlying skepticism towards the capacity for significant social change of the institutions and processes that are the target of calls for greater gender balance or gender parity. Sometimes it is simply a lack of interest or faith in what is seen as a crudely mechanical and quantitative approach of counting women in specific policy spaces and measuring progress by tracking numbers and percentages.

This article makes the case that these numbers matter a great deal. It highlights the continued stark absence of women from key policy spaces and sites of power and restates the case for the importance of gender parity as a fundamental building block of both gender equality and the overall effectiveness of institutions and outcomes. It does so through a focus on the area of international peace and security and the UN's efforts, highlighting the way in which women's inclusion is critical for efforts to secure sustainable peace. At a time when both the movement for gender equality and its backlash are ascendant political forces, and the proliferation of armed conflict is testing the credibility of multilateralism, it is significant that the UN is demanding transformation, starting with its own work force; and essential that this focus also include an emphatic insistence on the question of 'where are the women' in all areas of peace and security, serving as a model for other international and national actors.

GENDER PARITY IN THE UN

Beyond a democratic right to equal participation and representation, the business case for gender parity has already been made in virtually every sector, from the increased bottom line in the private sector³ to better outcomes for society as a whole through women's equal political participation.⁴ Girls equal access to and numbers in education has been called the 'silver bullet,' impacting everything from maternal mortality, to poverty reduction, to climate change.⁵ It is estimated that parity in the labor force would unlock trillions of dollars globally, money that could be invested into greater social protection for populations and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁶

By contrast – women's exclusion from public spaces has had fundamentally distorting effects on almost every part of our lives, from the micro to the macro. When women are absent, the default setting for how we view, define, and set policy for the world is that of a male experience. This gender gap affects every aspect of daily life for women, from the mundane,

like too-cold temperatures in offices, to the potentially fatal, such as the increased likelihood to die in a car accident, or a misdiagnosed heart attack because prototypes are the average male body.⁷ It is not just women who are affected however. Women's exclusion from decision-making has led to a world in which economic and political systems are defined from a single perspective. Feminist theorists have for many years made the case that the worst global challenges we face today, of inequality, militarism, entrenched cycles of conflict, and climate change, are rooted in distorted systems and linked to gender inequality and the absence of women from public spaces.

The United Nations has been championing this view for decades, including in resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Calls for greater representation of women in every aspect of the UN's work are routine and appear to be almost universally recognized as a common goal. Since the early 1970s, the General Assembly has highlighted the need to achieve parity in successive resolutions, including in 1975 when the body stated that '...equitable distribution of the positions between men and women in the Secretariat is a major principle governing the recruitment policy of the United Nations.'⁸ Today, the Group of Friends for Gender Parity in the UN, a group of Member States supporting the agenda, boasts the membership of approximately 150 countries – roughly three-quarters of the membership of the UN.

However, in the staffing of the Secretariat and the representation of Member States on committees and in delegations, the UN continues to be dominated by men. Women are significantly under-represented in the two areas with highest visibility for the organization: in Director-level positions, and in peace operations in conflict-affected countries, where the UN plays a prominent role and where it is most visible to the communities who benefit from its work. The UN had previously committed to reaching gender parity by the year 2000 but did not implement sufficient measures to accomplish it and missed that target altogether. As noted already, with the current Secretary-General came renewed impetus to transform the institution to reflect both gender parity and geographic diversity, and in the past two years the organization has since devoted significant resources and attention to attaining the goal of parity in senior leadership by 2021, and across all levels by 2028. The first goal, of parity in senior leadership, is well ahead of target. Equally important, with appointments to leadership positions many firsts and milestones have followed, as have appointments which have deliberately challenged the 'traditional' roles of women in leadership positions: for example, the first female head of the Department of Political Affairs, the first all-female leadership of a peacekeeping mission

in Iraq, the first time that the civilian, police, and military components of a peacekeeping mission were all led by women, as in the case of the UN mission in Cyprus, and the appointment of women as heads of UN in countries where the role of women in public life have been contested terrain.⁹

Despite the milestones and scaled up efforts, it is still not a given that parity will in fact be reached across the Organization without changes to outdated staff rules and regulations or the adoption of General Assembly decisions needed. Here is where all the talk and support to gender parity meets considerable resistance.¹⁰ This paragraph in the UN's system-wide strategy explains the main argument used against it:

*"Perhaps one of the most concerning elements of the consultations process for this strategy has been an often-repeated claim by staff and management alike that parity must be done in accordance with Article 101 and the criteria of merit and should not weaken the quality of staffing. The assumption that the recruitment and promotion of women would somehow lessen standards rather than raise them is refuted by evidence; as is the assumption that our institutional processes at present are geared towards securing and promoting the most talented staff in an unbiased manner. A recent ImpactPool study of long-term staff compared those who had remained in the system and those who had left – disaggregating by sex and reviewing their career path trajectory. What was found was that women who left the system moved up in their career paths faster than those who remained in the System. For men this experience was the opposite – those that remained accelerated at a higher rate."*¹¹

Needless to say, considerations about merit have coexisted for decades with the UN's care to ensure geographic diversity, common in other international organizations. In fact, preparatory notes from early discussions between Member States on the possible tension between Article 101 and geographic diversity found that States did not feel that there was any contradiction, as greater diversity would ensure an institutional culture that challenged discrimination and served the needs of the communities the global body is intended to represent. It is difficult to believe that these same arguments would not apply to the equal representation of half the world's population.

The gaps to gender parity are starkest in the efforts of the UN on peace and security. On the staffing side, this is particularly the case in peacekeeping missions, where the numbers are the lowest, the rate of change the slowest,

and the challenges the greatest. The reasons for this are multiple and historic. They have origins in the policies and rules that govern recruitment and staffing, where the original conception of the staff that would serve in the field was a man. This affected every aspect of how the Organization has evolved, from the classification of field posts as family or non-family, to accommodation standards, lighting, and recreational and health facilities in missions. It is also deeply ingrained in gendered assumptions in staffing rules. For example, until the 1970s, there was an assumption that only men could be the breadwinner, meaning that a woman who served in the field was not entitled to dependent benefits.¹² The inequalities have been compounded, however, by unconscious and conscious bias in recruitment and selection.

The under-representation of women in the most visible areas of the United Nations has negative everyday impacts in the UN's work that go beyond symbolism, credibility, or the importance of representing the population you are supposed to serve. As we will see below, it has real operational implications for the conduct of peacekeeping operations. But it also affects the UN's diplomacy and advocacy efforts, especially behind closed doors. It is difficult to meaningfully push for inclusive processes in conflict-affected countries when this is not modeled by those intended to be the international norms and standard bearers.

This issue goes beyond UN staff and is evident in the diplomatic teams of Member States that make up the UN and other international organizations. In a recent meeting of the Security Council that concluded with the adoption of another resolution on women, peace and security, focused specifically on sexual violence in conflict, many media articles highlighted that the threat of a veto by the United States had resulted in the removal of any mentions of reproductive rights or reproductive health in the text of the resolution. These articles failed to notice one stunning fact: that all fifteen representatives of the Members of the Security Council were men. And while this should be shocking, especially in 2019, it is not unusual. The first and only time that the Security Council has adopted a resolution about the sexual exploitation and abuse committed by the UN's own peacekeepers, resolution 2272 in 2016, Samantha Power of the United States was the only woman out of the 15 ambassadors at the table, delivered the most passionate and eloquent statement on the subject, and was the one that put the resolution up for adoption in the first place. The only previous occasion when the Security Council discussed this subject matter before that day was in 2005, when the Security Council was convened for that purpose by Norwegian Ambassador Ellen Loj, also one of the few women who have held the post of ambassador to the UN for their country.¹³ At present, 87 percent of Ambassadors to the UN

Security Council are men.¹⁴ And the people they hear from – the briefers who are invited to speak to the Council on a specific matter or country situation – are also mainly men, by a ratio that only last year *improved* to 70 to 30.¹⁵

In 2017, Margot Wallström of Sweden, famous for pursuing a feminist foreign policy, was the only female Foreign Minister among the 28 countries of the European Union. As a result, even when feminist issues make it to the top of the agenda of global policymaking, they are typically shaped by male policymakers and their predominantly male advisors, often in ways that feminist advocates take issue with. Few are aware of this missing analysis however, as it rarely makes the narrative of foreign policy analysis and discussion, which is also dominated by men. For example, a recent survey conducted by Women in International Security (WIIS) showed that still in 2018, only two out of the top 20 foreign policy think tanks in Washington, DC have achieved gender parity, that representation of women is below 30 percent in the overwhelming majority of them. This plays out in who speaks and influences policy. There was only one woman for every three men on foreign policy panels in DC that year, and that nearly a third of these panels were “manels,” a term popularized to refer to men-only panels. To make matters worse, in most cases, the woman on the panel was the moderator.¹⁶

To name one last example, every case that provided significant redress for sexual violence at the International Court for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) from 1994 to 2004 had a female judge.¹⁷ Students of gender justice are familiar with a consistent and well-established pattern: that the overwhelming majority of the advances on gender justice, particularly in the international arena, have been linked to the participation of trailblazing female judges, prosecutors and investigators, and courageous female litigants and witnesses. There is nothing coincidental about that. And yet, in November 2018 UN Member States were asked to provide nominees to the General Assembly for judges at the UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Eleven countries provided nominees and every single one of them were men.¹⁸

WOMEN IN PEACEMAKING

There is increasing recognition that the numbers of women at all levels – from the local, to the national and international – affect outcomes and institutional effectiveness. While the examples above demonstrate the impact in the halls of international diplomacy, at the most macro level, the recent World Bank-UN report ‘Pathways to Peace’ quotes extensive quantitative research highlighting that governments of countries with more equitable gender relations – measured by levels of violence against women,

labor market participation, and income disparities – are significantly less likely to engage in conflict. Much of this research directly links numbers of women – in the labor force or public office – to societal level outcomes. In one piece of research, Caprioli finds that countries with ten percent of women in the labor force are nearly 30 times more likely to experience internal conflict compared with countries with 40 percent of women in the labor force. She also finds that a five percent increase in females in the labor force is associated with a five-fold decrease in the probability that a state will use military force to resolve international conflict.¹⁹

One of the best-known tenets of the women, peace and security agenda over the last two decades and feminist advocacy for at least a century is the connection between women’s leadership and peace, and particularly their participation in peace negotiations. Recent studies have confirmed what feminist advocates have said for decades: that when women are able to participate meaningfully, and influence peace talks these are likelier to be successful. In fact, recent studies have quantified the impact of women’s participation on the sustainability of peace.²⁰ This is not because women are inherently more peaceful, but because greater inclusion shifts dynamics of talks, enables new coalitions, and women are more likely to bring the issues that affect communities to the table – broadening the discussion from narrow ceasefires and power sharing to root causes. And yet, perhaps one of the most repeated statistics in this field comes from a study undertaken by UN Women in 2011, which sampled 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011, and revealed that only 4 percent of signatories, 2.4 percent of chief mediators, and nine percent of members of negotiating delegations in peace talks were women. These are strikingly low numbers.²¹

And despite the evidence on operational effectiveness and an almost two-decade agenda in the Security Council focused on increasing women’s participation in peace and security, these numbers have moved little. While data is difficult to verify for current processes, the absence of women from major peace negotiations in recent months is clear. From Afghanistan, to Yemen, to the Central African Republic, and Libya, the news photos of all or almost exclusively men discussing a country’s future shows how far we still are from meaningful progress on this score. And yet, in our experience, questions about ‘where are the women’ or insistence on mechanisms for their inclusion are typically met with empty rhetoric at best or irritation at worst by those involved in the organization of such processes, whether they be closed-door peace talks or large-scale national dialogues. In most cases, women’s participation is dismissed as an unnecessary complication, falsely placed in tension with the ending of conflict, or is

included as an afterthought. In the latter case, a few women may be added at the last minute under pressure by other external actors but are likely to be either observers or marginalized by the nature of their inclusion.

The numbers shown above in fact only scratch the surface and fail to adequately reflect the true extent of women's political marginalization in key processes, and by extension in the rebuilding of their homes and countries. As the Security Council now has an informal experts' group to review much more closely the situation for women in countries on its agenda, we are beginning to have more detailed numbers that illustrate the sidelining of women in decision-making about peace and security issues. What is needed are policies which ensure an even more thorough counting of women in these processes, with minimum targets of representation and the use of special measures to ensure it. Beyond the peace table, the UN and other actors should be dutifully tracking the gender composition of all the key committees and bodies set up to implement these peace agreements or govern a country's transition from conflict.

For example, in Mali in 2018, the committee monitoring implementation of the peace agreement had fourteen men representing the armed movements and no women, while the numbers on the government side vary. The armed movements were represented by 52 members in four different sub-commissions and only one of the listed members is a woman.²² In South Sudan, the Revitalized Agreement signed in September 2018 included a requirement of a minimum of 35 percent of women in the composition of key decision-making bodies, such as the committees set up in the pre-transition period. However, six months later, only one of them had complied with the requirement. In the other committees, dealing with the overall oversight of the transition, amendments to the Constitution, and various security arrangements, women's representation went from seventeen percent to zero percent in several committees.

Parity in numbers, or at least efforts towards parity, should be central to our broader push for gender equality. This does not mean that every woman will represent the interests of women in general or can be relied on or expected to advance gender equality goals. It does not mean that men in positions of power cannot be important allies, or that gender parity is enough by itself to deliver the sweeping changes to our society that feminists seek. What we argue is that it is a necessary first step, and a much more direct route towards those changes, than trying to influence male gatekeepers.

WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING

One of the better-known images of the UN is the blue helmet worn by its peacekeepers, deployed in more than a dozen countries throughout the world. Since 2000, the United Nations Security Council has adopted nine resolutions on the protection and empowerment of women in conflict situations. Increasing the representation of women in peacekeeping, and particularly among uniformed personnel, is repeatedly urged in every single one of these resolutions, from encouraging Member States to deploy "a higher percentage" or "greater numbers" of female military and police personnel, to calling upon the Secretary-General to take measures to achieve this goal and, more explicitly in resolution 2242 (2015), "to initiate a revised strategy, in collaboration with Member States, to double the numbers of women in military and police contingents in peace operations in five years."²³

However, in 25 years, the representation of women in these peacekeeping operations has only inched up three points, from one to four percent. This lack of progress by the United Nations has coincided with an era of significant advances in the integration of women in national armed forces, and it is made worse by the fact that the nature and mandates of modern UN peacekeeping operations, and the normative framework of the organization in general, lead to a reasonable expectation that, on the matter of gender balance, the UN should out-perform other actors involved in military operations, rather than lag behind.²⁴

There is growing recognition that a greater gender balance is a critical factor contributing to the operational effectiveness and credibility of these missions.²⁵ Peacekeeping operations have much more contact with the population than traditional military operations, engage much less in direct combat, and collaborate with civilian partners in multiple tasks, from facilitating humanitarian aid to helping with disarmament and demobilization of armed groups and the reform of the security sector in the host country. UN guidelines for the military and police indicate that women are needed to effectively implement these tasks, from staffing, setting up, or monitoring checkpoints and cantonment sites to guarding correction facilities or participating in investigations, joint protection teams, and cordon-and-search operations.²⁶ Women broaden the range of skills and capacities among all categories of personnel and improve the mission's image, accessibility, and credibility vis-à-vis the local population. Women and girls in particular may prefer to communicate with female officers, especially if they are survivors of gender-based violence or in settings where it is a cultural taboo to communicate with a man in the same function. Targeted outreach to women in host communities is needed for more comprehensive sources of intelligence and early warning. Finally, it is often

noted that a better gender balance has a positive impact and role-modelling effect in the host societies, both as a source of inspiration for local women and girls and as a challenge to more traditional or rigid gender norms.

Without women, missions cannot fulfill their goals of improving their protection of women and girls in their daily operations. For example, to respond to atrocities against civilians, and particularly against women and girls in Eastern DRC, the UN mission developed an intricate system full of innovations and protection and monitoring tools. However, without the involvement of women in these tasks, they could not be effective. In 2013, only ten percent of community liaison advisors, who performed the crucial task of interacting with the community, were women. Less than a third of the hundreds of joint protection teams – meant to have a mixture of military, police and civilians with different skills and functions – deployed since 2009 included at least a woman, typically one woman as part of a large team. And even though the mission was supposed to monitor for early warning signs of conflict-related sexual violence, there were only sixteen female military observers in a country as big as Western Europe that year.²⁷

The presence of women has been correlated with fewer allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. Measuring this correlation with quantitative comparisons is difficult under the current conditions for two main reasons: there are simply too few women in peacekeeping operations and the data on sexual exploitation and abuse, like most data on gender-based violence, is not reliable enough. Practitioners understand that they represent an extreme undercount of real incidences, and very little is known about the factors or conditions that would explain variations in reporting from mission to mission or year to year. And yet, the few studies that have attempted to measure this have come up with significant findings in support of the need for greater representation of women. One of the few studies on this in the 1990's found a correlation between the presence of women – uniformed or civilian staff – and a lower incidence of rape and prostitution.²⁸ A more recent analysis on mission-level information collected from 2009 to 2013, noted that a five percent increase in female representation in the military could reduce incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse by half.²⁹ A qualitative study from Liberia attributed a reduction in sex trafficking and prostitution in certain areas with the presence of all-female police units.³⁰ And finally, in surveying women in all-female units and men and women in mixed units results, Julia Bleckner's study showed important revelations: 90% of respondents from the all-female units, and 55% of women and 35% of men in the mixed units, noted that the local women were more comfortable working with women peacekeepers. Only

30% of men thought that sexual exploitation was a problem in their area of operation, compared with 40% of women in the mixed units and 100% of respondents in the all-female units.³¹ These results are in line with multiple studies that have signaled that, even if lower incidences cannot be proven, there is undeniable – and logical – evidence that a greater presence of women is accompanied by higher levels of reporting and increased levels of comfort and satisfaction by the local population. This is a finding that was already recorded in the 1990's when observed in missions in Rwanda, South Africa, and Namibia.³² Moreover, data from 40 countries shows a clear correlation between policewomen and higher reporting of violence against women.³³ If you ask field practitioners, a majority would expect that a very different gender composition of these operations would make a significant difference in curbing sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, and the public statements by military leaders themselves and UN senior officials in charge of peacekeeping over the last few years show a significant degree of consensus.

But beyond the academic debate, there is a very simple practical implication. In UN peacekeeping operations, 96% of blue helmets, 90% of police, 80% of the leadership, and 70% of all civilian staff, are men. If a perpetrator is identified and repatriated, his supervisors are likely to be men, as are the people involved in a hypothetical military court back home, if it gets that far. Worryingly, the people investigating these abuses, who are interrogating traumatized women and children, are also likely to be men.³⁴

The potential benefits are so large, and the reputational and operational risks to the UN brought about by these scandals are so damaging, that changing the composition of these operations should be viewed as essential and urgent. However, even among policymakers who understand the logic, share the principle, and believe the evidence, there tends to be a resigned acceptance that the skewed gender balance cannot be altered in the short or medium term, and perhaps not even in the long term. Fortunately, there are signs that this may be changing. In 2018, the Canadian government launched the first-ever initiative that devotes significant resources and financial incentives to increasing the number of women among the uniformed personnel of peacekeeping missions. Announcing the new Elsie Initiative, Prime Minister Trudeau noticed the modest goal set by the UN Security Council in 2015 and that, at the current rate, “it would take us another 37 years to reach the goal we wanted to reach in five.”³⁵ And the implementation of the gender parity strategy in the UN has already been felt in certain categories of personnel, like military observers, where the percentage of women tripled in two years after barely budging for decades prior.

CONCLUSION

When the Security Council adopted its landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace and security at the turn of the century, women's participation in peace and security decision-making and their role as agents for peace were this resolution's driving force, its main pillar, and its key innovation. Ten years later, the slogan used in the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for the tenth anniversary of this agenda was "Women Count For Peace," a wordplay on women being perennially being pushed aside and counted out in spite of their peacemaking potential, and the belief that the UN and other actors needed to start quantifying the extent of this exclusion and generate stronger data on women, peace and security issues. Over the following decade, academics grew an ever-growing body of evidence linking greater gender balance and more women to better outcomes across all the key areas of the UN's work on peace and security.³⁶ An emphasis on quantifying the gender balance in each decision-making body or process, at every turn and in every corner, is part and parcel of this pursuit to unlock the benefits of women's participation and leadership.

As the outcomes in the area of peace and security demonstrate, gender parity is a profoundly transformative and basic building block of equality. The mere inclusion of women in meaningful ways and in decision-making roles leads to institutional change – structurally and culturally – and is directly related to better outcomes in all areas. It is for this reason that numbers and representation are used as key indicators in global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and indicative research on equality, peace and justice such as the Women Peace and Security Index. While insufficient in and of itself, transformation of institutions and the global policy agenda, and success in tackling the current day global challenges, will only be possible with a greater drive and focus on the numbers alongside broader changes.

And yet, despite the clear path from parity to greater equality and effectiveness, the facts on women's leadership remain grim. Only seven percent of the world's Heads of States are women, as are 18 percent of Cabinet Ministers and 24 percent of Members of Parliaments. These numbers mask even more extreme political marginalization of women across peace and security spaces, as shown above. Figures in business, academia, media and leading roles in the labor market in general show similar numbers or even lower, as is the case with the world's 500 largest companies, where only five percent of CEOs are women. It is in this context, and an overall push back on women's rights, that the rapid changes in institutional leadership at the United Nations is a positive and significant

example of progress. It must be matched by concurrent commitments from all relevant actors and translate into equal representation of women in all spaces – from peace talks to courts to parliaments – if we are to truly reap the benefits of parity and the capacities of half of our population.

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WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONALISM IN POST-CONFLICT LIBERIA

Tanya Ansahta Garnett and Kari Øygard

ABSTRACT

Liberia presents a unique case study in the constant evolution of gender roles in post-conflict African States. Seizing upon the social transformation of the post-conflict environment, Liberian women built upon their peacebuilding roles in an attempt to leverage their newly expanded presence in the public sphere into broader professional and political representation. Though women's renewed civic engagement and the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf seemed to solidify women's gains, Liberia remains a largely patriarchal society where women continue to be defined through an essentialist perspective – as wives, mothers, and peacemakers. Instead of fighting against this perception and the patriarchal status quo, women have largely played into this, understanding that it is an entry point by which they can justify their space in the decision-making process. Playing into this essentialism has been fruitful for several women's peacebuilding organizations in the reconstruction era and has afforded them access to financing from international organizations eager to support their own simplified notions of gender mainstreaming. However, the inability of this approach to meaningfully shift the status quo is apparent when analyzing the struggles that professional women continue to face even as they attain an education and attempt to enter political life. This paper argues that while the essentialist approach to increasing women's representation may appear to be an effective strategy initially, it continues to limit meaningful change in gender equality in the long-run. This paper concludes by making recommendations for policymakers and international organizations interested in furthering women's political representation and participation in more meaningful and sustainable ways.

INTRODUCTION

After 25 years of violent conflict and political suppression had finally come to an end, Liberians elected Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president in 2005. In international media, Sirleaf, the first elected female president on the continent of Africa, was described as having broken the glass ceiling, paving the way for a new generation of not only Liberians, but women all over the world.¹ As a result, the conflict-ravaged country experienced a

huge influx in international development organizations working not only with peacekeeping projects, but also women's empowerment organizations and capacity building initiatives. Internationally, as well as nationally, expectations of Sirleaf's influence on women's empowerment were great. After serving two terms of six years as president, Sirleaf has now peacefully transferred power to George Weah in January 2018 and the time seems fit to once again investigate gender dynamics in Liberia.

Many argue that women's political participation carries symbolic value for democracy,² but in Liberia, it seems that the changes predicted to occur from the symbolic value of Sirleaf's election have yet to manifest politically. This was apparent in the recent election, where there was only one female contender for the presidency. Currently, only two out of 30 senators and nine out of 73 representatives in the House of Representatives are female.³

In this article, we argue that although women in some ways gained political mobility during and after the conflict, Liberia continues to be a male-dominated society, and women struggle to gain authority in the public sphere and in their professional fields. Thus, we examine how women constantly navigate their social environment in ways that legitimize their aspirations for prosperity and influence, often by mobilizing essentialist notions of gender. Taking the case of Sirleaf as our vantage point, we examine the multiple strategies that Liberian women utilize for attaining and maintaining authority in the public sphere, paying special attention to how women utilize education and professionalism as tools in the post-conflict reconstruction era to access new levels of leadership.

We will begin by discussing Liberian women's political agency in a historical light, including an account of how war changed women's roles in Liberian society. We will then examine how women mobilize femininity in their education and professional lives and are able to maneuver within the patriarchal structure. While this article highlights women's agency in accessing leadership, it also highlights the challenges they face in achieving gender equality in the professional realm and in leadership roles.

GENDER ROLES IN LIBERIA

To understand the complex relations between power, authority, and the female gender in the Liberian context, it is important to investigate gender relations in a historical light. In Liberia, patrimonialism has historically played a huge role in power and politics and decision makers in the communities have often been 'big men'.⁴ Labor is strictly divided and

following this division women have only wielded relative power in certain sectors, such as the domestic sphere, the marketplace, and in agriculture.⁵ Despite these carved out spaces for maneuvering, women in pre-war Liberia have rarely been able to translate the power they held in these sectors into political authority and power.⁶

According to anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo, women's tendency towards subordination to men appears in all societies.⁷ She argues that this can be understood through an investigation of the social organization of society, more specifically gender roles in relation to the public and domestic spheres of society.⁸ She observes that while women in many places do have power, they are struggling to gain authority. Rosaldo defines power in the Weberian sense, as the ability to gain compliance and authority as the legitimate position from which to exercise power.⁹ Women are rarely formally recognized as public authorities as men often dominate the public sphere where the negotiation of authority occurs.¹⁰ In Liberia, this often manifests itself in the way gender as a social category informs and determines specific and limited roles, both in the household and on the labor market.¹¹

Nevertheless, this does not signify that women in pre-war Liberia lacked the power to voice their opinions and influence political decision-making processes in their communities. On the contrary, women did have limited, institutionalized means of voicing their opinions and there were women who defied social norms and attained positions of greater authority.¹² Often this happened through two channels: either through indigenous traditions or through colonial legacies in relation to the American Colonization Society (ACS).

Women in the region have traditionally been able to gain power in communities through women's secret societies and through supernaturalism. Anthropologists Mariane Ferme and Chris Coulter both write of 'big women' in Sierra Leone who have gained social mobility and prestige by being perceived as having special powers rooted in the knowledge of secrets.¹³ They argue that big women occupy an ambiguous space because of their independence and power, which is often related to fear of the occult or the invisible because women's authority is associated with the ability to keep secrets and knowledge of occult practices.¹⁴ Likewise, Mary Moran writes that in Liberia, older women hold political power in communities through secret societies, but also in their positions as mothers where they have more authority than the younger members of the community.¹⁵

Furthermore, when Liberia was established by the ACS in 1822, the settlers based their new political institutions on a hierarchy that placed settlers on top and indigenous Liberians at the bottom of political power.¹⁶

The settlers, having been in North America, saw themselves as being more knowledgeable than indigenous Liberians, establishing a social hierarchy based on color, religious practices, education, and western-ness.¹⁷ This opened an avenue for some women to gain power from an early age, as the ACS preferred that American-Liberian women hold power over educated indigenous males.¹⁸ However, in the recent past, women of indigenous descent have also been able to benefit from elite education to gain positions of power and prestige.¹⁹

Despite these avenues for gaining political influence and authority, the majority of women were primarily confined to female responsibilities and spheres such as the market and the home, and largely considered inferior to men.²⁰ Although Liberian society remains patriarchal and lacks women in the political sphere, since the war, there has been a dramatic increase in women's political participation at the polls – and of course in Sirleaf's successful campaign to become president. This change in women's possibilities of maneuvering the sociopolitical landscape was augmented during the war.²¹ However, the underlying patterns enabling these transformations were the already paved paths for mobility mentioned above. Anthropologist Veronica Fuest argues that the Liberian civil wars changed the social and economic life of many Liberian families, as well as the roles of women, as many women were left (both during the war and after) with the responsibilities traditionally occupied by men.²²

WOMEN AND RECONSTRUCTION

The public-private distinction contends that women have been confined to the private space as mothers and as wives, and as a result, they have been unable to participate in the public sphere, which remains the man's domain. Inability to participate in the public sphere results in women's inactivity in important public decisions that affect their lives. Although this distinction also contends that women do have a sphere of influence within their realm, this influence often does not permeate public decision-making.²³ Moreover, separate spheres are inherently unequal because accepting gender as a legitimate basis for any role allocation or social life organization validates inequality.²⁴

Women all over the world have been known to participate in conflicts, independence, and peace movements.²⁵ They are often viewed as non-political and non-threatening, which has given them room to mobilize political movements during conflicts.²⁶ This also allowed them greater physical mobility during conflict, as in Liberia where market women

were granted permission to cross enemy lines to sell market goods.²⁷ Empirical evidence gathered in Liberia during the early stages of post-war reconstruction found that during the violent conflict, men seen out of their homes were often conscripted into various factions or killed on suspicion of being a soldier or rebel of a different faction, so men who refused to take up arms became restricted to the private sphere. As a result, women often braved the war zone in search of food and water, often risking sexual violence or becoming 'soldier wives.' Thus, many women were forced into the public sphere out of dire necessity during the violent conflict.²⁸

Women's experiences of the war, including their active roles in peacebuilding, can be seen as leading to a sort of wartime empowerment. Although women are often portrayed as victims of war and crisis,²⁹ the complex reality of war often entails much more for women. War is a violent rupture with the existing social order. According to Christian Lund, ruptures "are 'open moments' when opportunities and risks multiply, when the scope of outcomes widens, and when new structural scaffolding is erected."³⁰ In Liberia, the wars did represent open moments for some women, whose roles in the public sphere were radically changed. In this way, war was a transformative factor in changing women's perspectives about their abilities. Many scholars argue that this form of engagement outside the domestic sphere has allowed for women to enter slowly into the political and public spheres.³¹ Women who find their social roles changed are often unable or unwilling to return to the social structures that existed prior to the conflict. Women, who become pushed into the public sphere, often have little desire to become less vocal in the political and social discourses that affect their lives. As a result, the societal transformations that take place during violent conflict can have lasting effects on post-conflict gender roles.³²

Despite their ability to social gain mobility during conflicts, in post-conflict societies women's political agendas are often neglected.³³ According to Historian Christine Doran, women are often not given a public voice after the end of conflict, they are left out of the decision-making processes as soon as the fighting is over, as was the case in India and Pakistan.³⁴ Likewise, Nadine Puechguirbal argues that in many cases it takes the pressure of the international community to secure women's participation in peace talks, and the inclusion of their concerns and priorities.³⁵

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY: THE ESSENTIALIST APPROACH

In Liberia, the women's peace movement very actively rallied for peace through various means; protests, sit-ins, appealing to the wives of

warring factions, and even a sex strike. In these efforts, women actively positioned themselves as mothers, daughters, and wives who were tired of war, insecurity, and wanted to protect their families – especially by appealing to the young male fighters as their sons.³⁶ When these efforts proved fruitful and peace came to Liberia in 2003, women then refocused their peace work on civic education, rallying women to register to vote.³⁷ Once the war was over, women shifted their attention to politics because it was intrinsically related to sustaining the peace.

The election of Sirleaf in Liberia is, therefore, an interesting vantage point for exploring how women's social mobility changes during conflict because it represents a shift in the political gender balance.³⁸ The rupture of war enabled some women to gain authority in different spheres from which they had traditionally been excluded and with the election of Sirleaf as president, women transcended the private sphere and gained more authority in the public spheres.³⁹ The election of a female president reflected perceptions that women were more effective actors for peace than men, as men were seen as more violent than women in the aftermath of the conflict and women were widely involved in the peace movement.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Sirleaf's victory seems to be the result of increased female turnout at the polls; an estimated 48.5% of the voters were women in the 2011 elections.⁴¹ Overwhelmingly, they voted for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf because they believed that female leadership was necessary for sustainable peace. The ability of women to translate wartime empowerment into a peace movement and consequently into voter and civic engagement has established the Liberian women's peace movement as a unique case study for transferring the momentum of women's peace work into the post-conflict reconstruction agenda.⁴²

The proliferation of women's organizations reveals the spectrum of women's agency in the peace process and contradicts the essentialist perspective that women are helpless victims when faced with violence or conflict. Furthermore, these organizations serve a crucial purpose in channeling the post-conflict influx of international funding to women leaders for the purpose of grassroots peacebuilding activities. Such case studies of women's experiences demonstrate the gains that some women make during post-conflict restructuring. Women's organizations also demonstrate the tactics that Liberian women employed to ensure that their cause was visible and well-funded.⁴³ In this sense, the war increased economic and social mobility and independence for some women. However, while women's increased mobility might have been enabled by the rupture of conflict, Liberia continues to be a male-dominated society, and women

struggle to gain authority in the public sphere and in the professional field. Consequently, women must constantly maneuver their social environment in a way that legitimizes their aspirations for prosperity and influence.

Throughout the Liberian peace movement, Liberian women played into an essentialist understanding of their roles because they understood its effectiveness in opening spaces for them in the public sphere. These essentialist perspectives of gender roles were also echoed in Sirleaf's presidential campaign. By stressing her motherhood, she appeared as a peacemaker, negotiator and as the loving, caring person the country needed for a sustainable reconstruction process. As anthropologist Conerly Casey found, mothers in the public sphere are often portrayed as bearers of all morality, which resonates with the portrayal of Sirleaf as the antithesis to war and conflict.⁴⁴ In Liberia, Sirleaf is still called 'Ma Ellen,' indicating her representation as the embodiment of the country's mother. However, these perceived 'soft' characteristics were balanced with masculine notions of strength and determination, and Sirleaf was portrayed as an 'iron lady,' for example, a common slogan was "Ellen is our man."⁴⁵ Through the balancing of these essentialist characteristics, Sirleaf and the women leading her government gained space in the public sphere. Similarly, Liberian women have utilized essentialist notions of their gender to gain space.

This is one of the ways in which Liberian women have been able to maneuver within a largely patriarchal system. Although this essentialist approach has opened some limited space for women in leadership positions, it also leads to the continued restriction of how women are defined in public discourse. Furthermore, it attempts to create space for women in leadership within the patriarchal system, without challenging the inherent inequalities within that very system that make it even necessary to justify women's participation.⁴⁶ This is important because patriarchy and structural inequalities hamper women's broader peacebuilding contributions and hence, the effectiveness and sustainability of the peacebuilding process.⁴⁷

ASPIRING FOR INFLUENCE: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EDUCATED

There was a common phrase that became popular after the 2005 election referring to women "being up." This slogan gave the impression that Sirleaf's election and the increasing role of women in politics and government had improved women's status in society. Sirleaf's election was seen as an opportunity for women as a whole to lead the country. Parallels arose frequently between Sirleaf and other successful women, which equated her success with the success of all Liberian women, revealing that women's

participation in politics carries enormous symbolic value.⁴⁸ However, as Moola reminds us, a few women with political power doesn't necessarily translate into positive change for women's overall socio-political status.⁴⁹

This was apparent when women's rights advocate, Maryeadeh,⁵⁰ ran for a seat in the House of Representatives in the 2017 election. During the campaign, she depended on the presence of either her husband or her father to campaign in the rural district where she was running. She explained that without their explicit endorsement, she would not have the authority to speak in the villages she visited. This endorsement, however, had been difficult to gain, as her father, who is a known pastor in Liberia strongly opposed women contending in politics, because women, in his opinion ought to stay at home. Fortunately for Maryeadeh, after years of negotiating with her father, and finally convincing him that running without his endorsement would be an embarrassment to him, she succeeded in gaining his acceptance and his participation in the campaign. In return, she had to attend more of his church meetings and promise to stay married to her husband whom she wished to separate from. However, on election night the voters in her district elected the sitting male representative.

The Sirleaf case is a spectacular example of factors that affect the everyday lives of aspiring professional women in Liberia. The education system and job market are loaded with examples of women who are constantly bargaining with the patriarchy to ameliorate their positions within their desired fields. The struggle of professional women exemplifies how women must act within patriarchal structures and limitations in order to gain authority in the public sphere. Instead of challenging the patriarchal structure they, to a large degree, reproduce the structural status quo – also seen in the political landscape today. Upon becoming the first elected female president on the continent of Africa, enhancing girls' opportunities for similar success was on the Sirleaf agenda.⁵¹ She therefore, targeted the educational system as one avenue that could enable more girls to aspire for and achieve social mobility. This increased focus on education, combined with the massive effort by INGOs on bridging the educational gap in Liberia, made available a new avenue for women to realize their aspirations for mobility.

Since the arrival of the settlers to Liberia in the 19th Century, getting a Western education has been a primary channel for both women and men to advance their social and economic status in society.⁵² While initially the preserve of the settlers, in the recent past, receiving an elite education became a way for women of indigenous descent to gain positions of power,⁵³ and thus economic independence. In Sirleaf's case, her Harvard education

was highlighted throughout her election campaigns as her educational background made her appear as not only knowledgeable and wise but also as part of the modern elite and an international-oriented politician.

Globally, education is often seen as a path to gaining a skill set to advance one's social status and economic condition, and in development, education is regarded as a pathway to combating poverty.⁵⁴ In post-conflict countries, education is furthermore seen as a stabilizing factor that is important in demobilization and disarmament processes.⁵⁵ In Liberia, rebuilding the education sector was seen by the post-war government as one of the most important initiatives, and education was, and remains, a hotly debated topic in the political discussions, especially around elections.⁵⁶ This is related to an understanding that unemployed youth pose a threat to society, as this demographic was perceived to have played a crucial role during the conflict.⁵⁷ Though intensified in post-conflict periods, seeing education as a method of nation-building and improving the individuals' social status is not new, and it has become a part of a larger global discourse on modernity.⁵⁸ However, in Liberia, it was made even more relevant in the post-war climate, which was highlighted by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's political focus on the importance of education.⁵⁹

Although education can be a channel for upward social mobility, it is not an isolated guarantee for social mobility, but must be seen in relation to other factors such as family structures, socio-economic status and social positioning.⁶⁰ For many women in Liberia, this is very much the challenge. Although the education system in Liberia has become more accessible, the expense of school uniforms is prohibitive, and there remains a problematic education gender gap among the youth in terms of literacy and school enrollment.⁶¹ However, the ability to enter and pay for an education is not a guarantee that a woman will experience increased political authority and social mobility, and women constantly must maneuver within patriarchal constraints. These constraints become manifest as women's schooling at university is not only about learning their subjects but also are about learning how to behave and dress correctly.⁶² Women are expected to look professional, but not intimidating, beautiful and well-groomed, but not sexy. Discussing power-dressing, sociologist Joanna Entwistle argues that dressing as a 'career woman' is a way for women entering into male-dominated jobs to manage their bodies to create an image of authority.⁶³ She illustrates how women have to balance being seen as sexy with being seen as feminine in order to be respected by their colleagues.⁶⁴

Empirical material from fieldwork at the University of Liberia revealed that the female students regulate each other to ensure they all keep

the proper front, one that will induce authority and one that is neither too feminine nor too sexy. Rhinestones, colorful hair, and blue dress suits do not compose this dress code and threatens the consensus of the women and the impression they as a collective want to portray, so they keep each other in check.⁶⁵ This underscores that their bodies represent the socio-sexual power relations in which they are embedded.⁶⁶

Furthermore, some women's choices are constrained by their families who expect to influence women's choice of education and careers. Enrolling in university is a decision that will affect the family's economics, both due to school-related expenses and due to the opportunity cost of not working full-time. Additionally, educated women have been perceived as posing a threat to male authority in both familial relations and in the public sphere.⁶⁷ Therefore, some women experience difficulty convincing their husbands and fathers to allow them to pursue an education.

In general, many professional women seek acceptance from their communities when enrolling at the university. For example, they would frame their decision to become lawyers in relation to 'saving' the country, restoring law and order and helping the community to achieve justice, instead of articulating raw ambition.⁶⁸ By stressing their aspirations to rebuild Liberia and care for their communities, professional women draw on the same gender stereotypes that Sirleaf utilized during her campaign, when underscoring the peaceful and caring characteristics of women, as opposed to the violent and brutal stereotypes of men. In these ways, women maneuver the constraints of patriarchy to not appear as threatening to the social order. They position themselves within essentialist notions of women as caretakers and not in the pursuit of power and influence to maneuver within the patriarchal system. These bargains with patriarchy reveal an ability to seek out potential avenues and pools of possibility, while these narrow paths for realizing their aspirations ultimately serve to reproduce gender stereotypes rather than challenge them.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

While civil conflict created openings for social transformation in Liberia, women's entry into the public sphere, both within the professional and political realms remains difficult due to the patriarchal nature of Liberian society. Women's participation and political representation are still contingent upon their adherence to the essentialist paradigm that restricts them to being seen primarily as wives, mothers and caretakers. While this may have been an effective strategy in the initial phases of

the peacebuilding process, as seen by the relative success of women's organizations, women continue to face many challenges, as exemplified by the professional women discussed in this paper.

This paper has highlighted the important role that the international community can play in advancing gender equality in post-conflict contexts like Liberia. The power of the international community in determining which peacebuilding approaches and economic models are employed can have a huge impact on sustainable peace.⁶⁹ Particularly in the support, financial and otherwise, provided to women's organizations attempting to participate in peacebuilding and decision-making processes. This analysis has demonstrated how women's participation is limited by their inability to challenge the patriarchal status quo, wherein women are still perceived primarily as mothers and wives and have to constantly bargain with these perceptions in order to participate at all.

Part of the reason why these approaches remain unchallenged by international actors who fund many women's organizations and other peacebuilding activities is that their own internal structures remain patriarchal. As a result, there is a tendency to underestimate the importance of gender and the ways in which gender inequalities impact the effectiveness of interventions they are intended to support, as well as the strategic agency that women employ in their own peacebuilding models,⁷⁰ often rendering international interventions locally irrelevant.⁷¹ Gender tends to be seen as trivial or secondary to "real" issues in the post-conflict environment, a perspective which further highlights the patriarchy inherent in many international organizations.⁷²

In order to better support gender equality efforts, policymakers and international organizations must at least recognize the gender biases within their organizational structures and consequently their approaches to gender equality. There must be an internal examination of the preconceived notions around gender that typically go unchecked and how these notions reduce the space for locally contextualized understandings that would greatly improve programs and interventions. This could begin by integrating sufficient time and resources into program design and planning for thorough gender analyses and assessments. This would reduce the oversimplification of post-conflict contexts and the gendered realities that women and men face. This would also maximize the impact of resources by identifying and building upon women's existing networks and peacebuilding efforts.⁷³ Furthermore, gender analyses could lead to a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of gender that could improve the effectiveness of interventions by better tailoring interventions to local

dynamics, also reducing unintended consequences in fragile post-conflict contexts.

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INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AS EVIDENCE OF WIDESPREAD GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE ARAB REGION

Lina Abirafeh

INTRODUCTION

The Arab region is a diverse grouping of 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Despite a range of economic, political, and security configurations, the one commonality is the region’s poor standing in terms of gender equality, ranking lowest in the world on both the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report and the Women, Peace, and Security Index.¹

The World Economic Forum (WEF) found that, despite progress in closing the gender gap across the region in 2018, it nonetheless remains the world’s least gender-equal region.² It will take the Middle East and North African economies “153 years to close the gender gap at the current rate of change,” the report stated.³ While Tunisia topped the region for gender equality, ranking 119 globally; the UAE ranked 121 with the gender gap closed at 64.2 percent;⁴ Saudi Arabia ranked 141 with a 59 percent gender gap rate, showing “modest progress,” with improvement in wage equality and women’s labor force participation; and Lebanon ranks third to last in the region, ahead of only Syria and Yemen. As such, social indicators are not promising – and not progressing. Patriarchal societies, growing conservative movements, and lack of political will to advance and achieve gender equality together are building a foundation to foment a backlash against women’s rights and freedoms.

Gender inequality exists in many forms and can be found in the realms of health, education, economics, and politics. However, gender-based violence remains the most egregious manifestation of inequality and entrenched patriarchy in the region. No country is immune to gender-based violence; one in three women and girls worldwide will experience some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime.⁵ The Arab region is no exception. Ending gender-based violence has proved to be an intractable human rights challenge partially due to its prevalence across all socio-economic and cultural groups. This violence takes many forms – sexual, physical, emotional and economic. Globally, intimate partner violence is the most common form of gender-based violence.⁶

Labeling gender-based violence when it occurs remains a challenge. An inability to identify it makes it extremely difficult to legislate against and

eradicate. For instance, in many countries worldwide, sexual harassment, marital rape, and coerced sex are not considered violence. This is not to mention verbal harassment, which is also not considered a violation of women's rights and bodily integrity.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE ARAB REGION

In the Arab world, violence against women exists in multiple forms. Intimate partner violence is the most common and least reported, affecting more than 30 percent of women in the region.⁷ Similarly to other parts of the world, in the Arab region, intimate partner violence is often not labeled as such. When it is, social stigma and family and community pressures keep women from reporting it.

Most Arab countries lack adequate gender policies and provisions in their constitutional and legal frameworks. Women are not protected against marital rape, sexual harassment, and other forms of gender-based violence. When protective and preventative legislation does exist, it is often not fully applied.⁸

Addressing gender-based violence in the region is dramatically impeded by contexts of conflict and protracted crises – undoubtedly more dangerous for women and girls.⁹ Existing vulnerabilities and inequalities are exacerbated, and women are deliberately targeted.¹⁰ Gender-based violence increases in such settings because communities are disrupted, populations are moving, and there are no systems of protection or support.

Around the Arab world, the myriad competing and long-running conflicts, from Syria to Yemen, show no signs of abating. As insecurity increases and opportunities to make a living decrease, women are increasingly resorting to riskier sources of income, such as trafficking and prostitution.¹¹ In the informal sector, women are exposed to a range of abuses and no protection.

Preventing gender-based violence and caring for survivors is a challenge across the world. But in emergency situations, the problem is amplified. For instance, in Yemen, the UN reports that women are at even greater risk of gender-based violence than they were before the current conflict began. In countries that host Syrian refugees, child marriage is increasing as a response to the ongoing crisis.¹² One in seven girls is married as a child, with the highest rates in Mauritania, Sudan, and Yemen.¹³

Challenges to addressing gender-based violence remain great. Services and support are scarce in contexts of ongoing insecurity. Such conflicts are increasingly regional, rather than national in nature, and solutions need

to move beyond borders. Religious fundamentalism continues to restrict women's freedom and condone abuse.¹⁴ Funding is woefully limited¹⁵ and short-term,¹⁶ despite the long-term nature of emergencies.¹⁷

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC

Emergency contexts aside, home remains the most dangerous place for women. This is contrary to perceptions that home is a safe space. In fact, the home can be considered another emergency for women. A recent report published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) revealed that most female homicide victims worldwide are killed by partners or family.¹⁸ In 2017, approximately 87,000 women were killed around the world, and 58 percent of these homicides were committed by intimate partners or family members.¹⁹ This amounts to some six women per hour being killed by people they know well. With these figures in mind, it is clear that intimate partner violence is pervasive and thus challenging to address.

Furthermore, the existence and threat of such violence is a direct result of women's unequal status at home and in society. To illustrate this point, UNODC Executive Director Yuri Fedotov said: "While the vast majority of homicide victims are men, women continue to pay the highest price as a result of gender inequality, discrimination, and negative stereotypes. They are also the most likely to be killed by intimate partners and family."²⁰ These findings are in line with oft-cited World Health Organization statistics, which show that almost one third (30 percent) of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner.²¹

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ACROSS THE REGION: EVER PREVALENT, WELL HIDDEN

In the Arab region, it is estimated that 37 percent of women have suffered intimate partner violence (IPV).²² For example, the UN reported 40 murders of women and 163 cases of self-immolation in Iraqi Kurdistan in a six-month period alone;²³ in Egypt, 33 percent of women experience physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime and 7 percent experience sexual violence; in Jordan, 21 percent experienced IPV and 8 percent had been subjected to sexual violence; and in Tunisia, 20 percent of women suffer IPV and 14 percent of women experience sexual violence.²⁴

Honor killings are also prevalent in many Arab countries, which have largely failed to amend relevant laws. Jordan has the highest known rate of

occurrence in the region, with a 53 percent increase in honor killings in 2016 alone.²⁵ While acknowledging that real figures are likely to be higher in Syria, the in 2014, UN also reported there are between 300 and 400 cases of honor killings in Syria annually.²⁶ Data on honor killings are scarce, as such crimes often go unrecorded and unreported. Nevertheless, studies indicate that honor killing is still common practice in the region. When perpetrated in rural areas, honor killings are particularly difficult to record. Fortunately, efforts have been made to reveal the scope of this problem in several countries.²⁷

LEGISLATION: NOTABLY ABSENT, OR WILLFULLY NEGLECTED

In terms of legislation, the Arab region has fewer laws protecting women from intimate partner violence than any region in the world.²⁸ Rapists are often shown leniency or even acquitted in the Arab region if they marry their victims.

However, some progress has been made in terms of legislation in the Arab region, including the recent repeal of the rape marriage Article 522 of the Penal Code of Lebanon and Article 308 in Jordan;²⁹ and the passage of the pioneering Tunisian Domestic Violence Bill, which recognized domestic violence for the first time and places a responsibility on the state to act in situations previously considered part of the private sphere.³⁰ According to a 2010 study by the National Family and Population Office of Tunisia, 47.6 percent of women between the ages of eighteen and sixty-four have been victims of at least one form of violence in their lifetime, giving this law the potential to have a significant impact.³¹ Lebanon's Law 293 on the Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence covers all four forms of violence against women (i.e., physical, sexual, emotional, and economic) and yet has serious omissions, as will be addressed below.³²

RISK FACTORS AND JUSTIFYING ABUSE

Many global and regional studies have identified risk factors for intimate partner violence. While these are worth noting, it is critical to state that responsibility for all forms of violence lies entirely in the hands of the perpetrator, never the survivor.

Studies reveal that disagreements on household issues, disputes with in-laws, refusal to comply with the demanding and controlling behavior of husbands, refusal to have sex, or even wanting sex, are all justifications for abuse.³³ Additionally, rural women are at greater risk, according to studies

conducted in both Egypt and Syria.³⁴

Lack of financial support is also a common thread. For instance, Egyptian women who do not engage in paid labor are twice as likely to be beaten as those who do engage in paid labor.³⁵ In one Syrian city, wealthier women report lower levels of IPV than those with lower economic means.³⁶ Economic hardship, measured in terms of income and household living arrangements, was also shown to be more common and more acute among those in violent relationships than among those who were in nonviolent relationships.³⁷

Age is also a factor, with the frequency of violence being greater among those under age 30 compared with those over 30.³⁸ In Egypt, the proportion of ever-married women beaten during pregnancy declines with age, from 40 percent of women ages 15 to 19 to 26 percent of those aged 40 to 49.³⁹ On the other hand, the percentage of women who reported being beaten more or as frequently during pregnancy rises with age.⁴⁰ Additionally, attitudes varied more by the level of education than any other background characteristic, with less educated women more likely to justify wife abuse.

In the Arab region, IPV is often not reported or is hidden by victims because they fear isolation or being shunned.⁴¹ A major concern regarding IPV and other forms of violence against women in this region is that many women have been conditioned to believe the violence is not only justified but also is their fault. Women face high rates of violence from their intimate partners and a culture that tends to tolerate this problem all too readily.

The lack of social services and legal assistance available for victims further complicate addressing IPV in the region. For example, although different reasons are behind the prevalence of domestic violence in Lebanon, some key factors are the social acceptance of such behavior, the patriarchal nature of the Lebanese society, and the lack of support and financial resources provided to women in this region.

CONSEQUENCES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: SEVERE, AND OFTEN FATAL

All forms of gender-based violence have great consequences, not only for women's physical and emotional health, but also for their families, the community, and the country at large.

It is the woman who suffers first and foremost. As one example, data from a 1995 Egyptian survey show that, compared to women who are not abused by their husbands, battered women are more likely to have unwanted or mistimed pregnancies, to commence antenatal care later (or

not at all), and to terminate a pregnancy.⁴² For example, infant and child mortality rates for children born to abused mothers are significantly higher compared to those for children of non-abused mothers.⁴³ Other studies have found that pregnant women who are abused enter antenatal care at a later time. They are also more likely to be hospitalized before delivery, suffer from premature labor, and deliver by Cesarean section.⁴⁴ A study of Saudi women additionally found a higher risk of abruptio-placenta, fetal distress, and preterm birth among abused pregnant women than among their non-abused counterparts.⁴⁵

Violence is expensive, with survivors often paying for their own health care and legal expenses. These costs have implications for communities and for the state. Trauma results in a loss of productivity, which affects economic growth and overall development. For example, in Morocco, it is estimated that intimate partner violence costs the justice system \$6.7 million annually.⁴⁶ In Egypt, the cost of the violence women and their families experienced in 2015 was estimated to cost at least \$208 million and possibly up to \$780 million.⁴⁷ The total direct and indirect costs of gender-based violence for countries are estimated to be as high as one to two percent of Gross National Product.⁴⁸ At the global level, this amounts to millions of dollars. These figures regarding the societal costs of violence are now used more frequently with country governments to galvanize action.

ARAB COUNTRY EXAMPLES: WIDE PREVALENCE

Saudi Arabia

The WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women found that, in Saudi Arabia, 21 percent of ever-married women over the age of fifteen had experienced physical intimate partner violence. A total of 2301 women participated in the 2014 survey with a response rate of 81 percent. Saudi women comprised 58 percent of the sample, while expatriate women made up 42 percent of the population. The study found that abused women were significantly more likely to report body self-hatred, food addiction, and hopelessness.⁴⁹ Existing studies show a link between number of children and the likelihood of abuse.⁵⁰ This is in line with global findings that link large family size to low education levels and poor household economic status.

Jordan

In Jordan, not only is intimate partner violence prevalent, but acceptance of this abuse is disturbingly common. A study revealed that 87 percent of ever-married women of childbearing age agreed with at least one justification of physical abuse. Overall, 83 percent of respondents felt that betraying one's husband gave him the right to use violence against his wife.⁵¹ Another study reinforced these findings, demonstrating that close to 90 percent of women interviewed had reported a form of abuse in the past year.⁵² Of these women, 47 percent reported emotional abuse, and approximately 20 percent reported being beaten. Another study found that 97 percent of married women reported spouses exhibiting controlling behavior, including psychological violence, physical violence, and sexual violence.⁵³ Another study revealed that 19 percent of pregnant women frequenting health centers were subject to physical violence, and that 11 percent of these women had experienced physical violence during pregnancy.⁵⁴

As such, Jordan presents an extremely difficult landscape, with many risk factors that increase women's vulnerabilities to IPV. These include living in rural areas, low educational attainment, and low socioeconomic backgrounds.⁵⁵ Furthermore, women are unlikely to leave abusive homes due to fear of social stigma, financial dependence, lack of family support, and children.⁵⁶

Palestinian Refugees

Palestinian refugees in Jordan also experience a high incidence of violence. A family survey of 2,590 families in a refugee camp revealed that nearly 50 percent of women have experienced IPV. Interestingly, the percentage of men who admitted to beating their wives is *higher* than the percentage of women who admitted to having been beaten, at 49 percent compared with 43 percent. This is likely due to stigma as well as fear of further violence. Syrian women in Jordan have similar challenges. This is compounded by the fact that many Syrian women are not aware of services available for survivors of gender-based violence. A survey in 2013 showed that 83 percent of Syrian women were not aware of any services or support available to them.⁵⁷

Tunisia

In 2010, the Tunisian National Board for Family and Population conducted a survey on the prevalence of intimate partner violence. This revealed that 48 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 64 had

experienced at least one episode of intimate partner violence.⁵⁸

The Ministry of Women and Family Affairs responded with a draft bill in 2014 condemning and criminalizing domestic violence. The draft law was approved in 2016 and implemented in 2017, with mixed results. The bill prohibits all forms of violence against women (i.e., physical, psychological, sexual or economic), and violations can result in either imprisonment or financial penalties.⁵⁹

Morocco

A survey conducted by the Moroccan High Commission for Planning in 2009 found that 63 percent of women aged 18-65 experienced intimate partner violence.⁶⁰ In response, the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development, and the Ministry of Justice and Liberties drafted a law in 2013.⁶¹ This law includes protective measures against intimate partner violence, such as forbidding the perpetrator from having contact with the victim. However, it does not reflect other aspects of spousal abuse, like marital rape. Ultimately, the bill passed in 2016 but did not go into effect until 2018. In addition, Article 475 of the Penal Code, which allowed rapists to avoid prosecution if they married their victims, was repealed in 2014 following the suicide of a woman who was forced to marry her rapist.⁶²

Iraq

In Iraq, all forms of violence have increased as a result of prolonged violence and insecurity. It is therefore no surprise that the rate of sexual violence increased dramatically after each offensive by the Islamic State. Additionally, the group captured women – particularly Yazidi women – to be used as sex slaves. Rape has often been used as a weapon during of war and has been exploited by ISIS and other power holders in the region as a means of control. Refugees, like those fleeing the almost six-year conflict in Syria, and other vulnerable members of society often experience – or are at risk of – sexual abuse.⁶³

Egypt

A survey in 2013 conducted by UN Women found that 99 percent of women and girls in Egypt reported having experienced some form of sexual harassment.⁶⁴ Further, 86 percent of ever-married women believed that husbands were sometimes justified in beating their wives, with the most commonly specified reason (70 percent) being the refusal of sexual

intercourse. Surprisingly, attitudes varied little by age. The youngest women surveyed (15 to 19 years old) and those living in rural areas were slightly more likely to condone such abuse.⁶⁵

In 2005, the Demographic and Health Survey found prevalence rates of IPV to be as high as 47 percent.⁶⁶ Around the same time, a survey of female and male participants revealed that 30 percent of men admitted to having committed violence against their wives, and 41 percent of women reported being victims of IPV.⁶⁷ This is worth noting largely because men who *admit* to committing such violence are still not representative of those who perpetrate but fail to admit.

Egyptian women's lives are at risk due to IPV. A review of newspaper reports revealed that such murders take place because men doubt the fidelity of their wives and partners – often making false accusations. In 41 percent of such cases, the murderer was the husband.⁶⁸ Women in rural areas continue to suffer more than their urban sisters. A 2007 survey of rural Egypt revealed that 22 percent of women report that beatings can occur without any reason.⁶⁹

CASE STUDY: LEBANON, A COMPLEX PICTURE

In Lebanon, the landscape is extremely challenging. Many Lebanese women and men feel that women are already in possession of their full rights, but this is far from reality. Women's right to health is particularly at risk. The healthcare system is highly fragmented and underregulated, and women and girls in rural areas are adversely affected by limited and poor services. The long-running Syria conflict has placed considerable stress on already fragile health services.⁷⁰

Gender-based violence prevention and response is one of the primary objectives of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon.⁷¹ But unfortunately, the Lebanese legal system does not monitor violations of gender equality. While the Lebanese legal system does include some protections against gender-based violence, consistent and equal enforcement of such laws is sorely lacking. Lebanon is also a destination for human trafficking⁷² and forced labor,⁷³ with female migrant domestic workers at significant risk.⁷⁴

In 2011, Parliament annulled article 562 of the Penal Code, which mitigated the sentence of people who claim they killed or injured their wife, daughter, or other relative to protect the family 'honor'.⁷⁵ Article 5 of the Lebanese Civil Code, which guarantees legal protections against trafficking, was adopted in 2011. However, even when laws are in place to protect women

and prevent violence, incidents continue with relative impunity.

For many years, activists lobbied to pass the Law on Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence. In 2014, Law 293 was adopted by the Lebanese Parliament, but this new law failed to recognize marital rape as an offense. In August 2017, Parliament abolished article 522 of the penal code that had allowed prosecutors to drop charges against a rapist if he married his victim. This is a significant step forward for women's rights and a testament to the activists who have long campaigned to overturn this archaic legal loophole, which violated human rights and compounded the trauma of survivors. Additionally, in 2017, the Council of Ministers approved the first draft law to criminalize sexual harassment in public places and in the workplace. At the time of writing, this remains in draft form.⁷⁶

Lebanese women are denied basic rights due to personal status codes. This is the most egregious manifestation of the country's entrenched patriarchy. Personal status codes, bound by Article 9 of the Constitution, endorse inequality between spouses and openly discriminate against women in all aspects of their lives. Religious authorities take precedence over civil law in relation to marriage laws. Personal status law, which covers matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance, has precedence where there is conflict between the two laws in cases of marital rape and other abuses.⁷⁷

In Lebanon, reform efforts face unique challenges due to the diversity of its 15 separate personal status laws for the country's various officially-recognized religious communities, of which there are 18 in total.⁷⁸ This leads to discrimination between Lebanese women from different religions and impacts many aspects of their legal, social, and economic life. As a result, women's bodies and lives are regulated by the different religious courts in the country.

For refugee women in Lebanon, the situation is even more severe. Syrian women refugees have been subjected to intimate partner violence, early marriage, and forced into survival sex upon arrival in Lebanon. Women reported that IPV has increased since their arrival in Lebanon, due to amplified insecurities and vulnerabilities.⁷⁹ The child marriage rate is high among refugees.⁸⁰ This is often framed as a form of protection for girls, out of fear of sexual violence, and as a way to ensure their virginity and thereby preserve the "family honor." Early marriage also serves to decrease the economic burden on Syrian families whose livelihoods are already stretched beyond capacity.⁸¹ While no law exists against child marriage in Lebanon, the National Commission for Lebanese Women⁸² drafted a law for parliament to

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regulate religious marriage among minors (children under the age of 18) by demanding the consent of a civil judge as well as a religious leader.⁸³

While government and UN actors have drafted a strategy on violence against women, presented in February 2019, there is much more work to be done to reform the legal and political climate to improve the lives of women and girls.⁸⁴ Gender-based violence is the most obvious manifestation of gender inequality in Lebanon.

STRATEGIES AND THE NEED FOR ACTION

There is a wide range of global guidance, goals, declarations, and conventions touching on gender equality, ranging from the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1979 to the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.⁸⁵ Over recent decades, this field has evolved such that there is now general agreement on what must be done. It is beyond dispute that gender-based violence must be prevented to whatever extent possible. When it happens, there needs to be clarity on what constitutes an appropriate response. Those who work to help survivors should coordinate their work and share information.⁸⁶ Approaches must be based on human rights⁸⁷ and focused on the survivor at all times – her safety and her wishes.⁸⁸

Work must include education and awareness-raising efforts that promote gender equality.⁸⁹ Communities must be engaged in all activities from the onset – and the engagement of men and boys is particularly important.⁹⁰ Strategies to reduce risks include guaranteeing safe access to shelter and other basic needs.⁹¹ adequate lighting in unsafe areas, security patrols, and livelihood support is also critical.⁹²

Survivors must have access to a full range of care, support, and services: health care, psychological support, police and security support, legal aid, access to justice, reintegration, and financial support. Economic empowerment and the ability to participate in financial decision-making at the household level are factors that can decrease the likelihood of women experiencing intimate partner violence. The reverse is also true: women who lack economic means and the ability for financial independence are at greater risk of IPV.⁹³

In Lebanon and around the Arab region, there is still a great deal of work to do to end the scourge of gender-based violence, particularly the most hidden form of violence, that in the home. Evidence and information abound. What is needed now are resources and action.

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GENDER EQUALITY IN CLIMATE FINANCE: PROGRESS AND ASPIRATIONS

Catherine Tinker and Renata Koch Alvarenga

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are recognized as a necessary part of action to combat global climate change. The 2015 Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) calls for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming and states in the Preamble:¹

Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights...as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and inter-generational equity....²

The Paris Agreement also refers to the term "climate justice," a human-centered approach to the unequal impact of the effects of climate change, seeking equality for those states and communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change who are also the least responsible for climate change.³ They include small island developing states likely to disappear as sea levels rise; least developed countries that contributed few GHG emissions compared to industrialized countries; and populations including women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and the poor, who most directly suffer from climate-induced drought, heat, flooding and the like. An important element of climate justice is the concept of gender justice, addressing the disparate impact on women and girls of the extreme effects of climate change and achieving gender equality in climate finance. This article explores the development of specific policies and action plans to bring gender considerations into financing for climate change plans and projects under three specific public climate change funds established under the UNFCCC: the Global Environment Facility of the World Bank; the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC; and the Green Climate Fund with its Gender Action Plan.⁴

Gender justice is "an important element of change in a world where degradation of resources.... drive[s] and exacerbate[s] gender inequalities," according to Mary Robinson, former Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Climate Change and former President of Ireland.⁵ She is the founder

and head of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice, a non-profit organization addressing climate justice issues worldwide, whose work is based on “the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change... using the principles of human rights and combining issues of sustainable development with responsibility for climate change.”⁶ Other non-governmental organizations and activist groups making the link between climate justice and gender justice include the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO); the UNFCCC Women and Gender Constituency of civil society organizations; the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) with Both Ends; and GenderCC, all working to build capacity and knowledge to track, monitor and influence projects and financial flows of the climate funds.⁷ These and many other NGOs and local community groups worldwide, private sector groups or companies, philanthropies, and regional organizations together with states and international organizations are working for the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 13 on climate change.⁸

In *The Age of Sustainable Development*, Jeffrey Sachs defines sustainable development as a “normative” or ethical outlook on what a “good society” should be, one concerned about extreme poverty, inequality, social mobility, discrimination, and social cohesion.⁹ Finding a balance among three systems – “the world economy, global society, and the Earth’s physical environment” – is the challenge of sustainable development. In the case of climate change, action involves both mitigation¹⁰ and adaptation.¹¹

*We will need not only to prevent future climate changes by decarbonizing the energy system...but also learn to live with at least some climate change as well.... A 2-degree Celsius rise [in global average temperature] will imply massive changes to the climate system, including more droughts, floods, heat waves, and extreme storms....*¹²

Climate disasters such as droughts and floods have worse impacts on women than on men due to ingrained stereotypical roles and discrimination towards females in society. This inequality limits women’s decision-making power politically, restricts their access to water and land in parts of the world, and provides fewer opportunities for an adequate standard of living for women and their families.¹³ The narrative of women as victims of climate change, however, has begun to shift. Women’s voices, ideas, and lived experiences of how to manage resources effectively and how to respond to the global rise in temperatures are essential to changing human behavior and reaching long-term sustainability. Both as a practical necessity and from a

human rights perspective, achieving gender equality is now recognized as an inherent part of achieving sustainable development. According to a UN report in 2019, “There is simply no way that the world can achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals without also achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.”¹⁴

Since 1945, beginning with the UN Charter itself, the UN has affirmed the equal rights of women and men and prohibited discrimination as a matter of international law. Today this means supporting the use of strong gender criteria for climate-related project financing. However, there is still not enough policy space for women to sufficiently influence climate decisions or address the impacts of climate change on the livelihoods, daily activities, and security of women and girls of all ages, including the youngest and oldest in society.

Climate finance mechanisms of various types and funds created under the UNFCCC and implemented by international organizations like the World Bank or UN specialized agencies have long screened projects for environmental impact prior to project approval or funding. Similar screens for gender impact under criteria adopted by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other climate funds under the UNFCCC, like the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and its Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan of 2017, are beginning to ensure that climate change projects involve women in project selection, implementation, and assessment, as well as addressing gender concerns. These programs and action plans are reviewed in this article.

The article concludes that all proposals for funding climate action through entities created under the UNFCCC should be screened according to the gender policies and plans of the climate funds, including the GEF and the GCF, and the results should be available publicly to provide transparency and build trust and accountability. Broader inclusion of women in decision-making and the requirement of evidence of a gender perspective prior to approving financing for climate change projects will contribute to the normative element of sustainable development and its implementation. The intersection of gender justice and climate justice in reducing the dangerous effects of climate change means allocating adequate financial resources to women leaders and projects generated and administered by women at international, regional, national and local levels, for large and small projects and programs alike.¹⁵

GENDER JUSTICE IN CLIMATE FINANCE

The momentum for gender equality and climate justice has become integrated into existing climate funds through the United Nations. Globally, research and literature shows that gender-responsiveness in climate finance results in better efficiency and effectiveness in projects for adaptation and mitigation.¹⁶ Therefore, women must be acknowledged as a key stakeholder group in order to ensure the best result from climate finance mechanisms.¹⁷

The global climate finance architecture is quite complex. The financial interaction between developed countries and developing countries in terms of mitigating and adapting to climate change was first outlined at the UNFCCC in 1992, specifically in Article 4.3, which discusses compliance with the treaty. The treaty requires that “Developed country Parties ... shall provide new and additional financial resources to meet the agreed full costs incurred by developing country Parties.”¹⁸

When discussing climate finance, the UNFCCC focuses its actions on fund mobilization, fund administration and governance, and fund disbursement and implementation, which are tied to key principles that must be followed by the States Parties to the climate treaty. According to the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (hereinafter “the Foundation”), these principles include “transparency and accountability,” referring to the public disclosure of financial contributions, and “respective capability,” tying financial contributions for climate action to the existing national wealth of countries.¹⁹

A diagram (Figure 1) created by the Foundation illustrates the global financing system for climate action with three multilateral channels for climate finance created under the UNFCCC: the Global Environment Facility (which also administers the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund); the Adaptation Fund (established under the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC); and the Green Climate Fund (created under the Paris Agreement with specific language on gender and a Gender Action Plan in 2017).²⁰ The three climate finance mechanisms discussed in this article are identified in Figure 1 under the heading “UNFCCC Financial Mechanisms.”

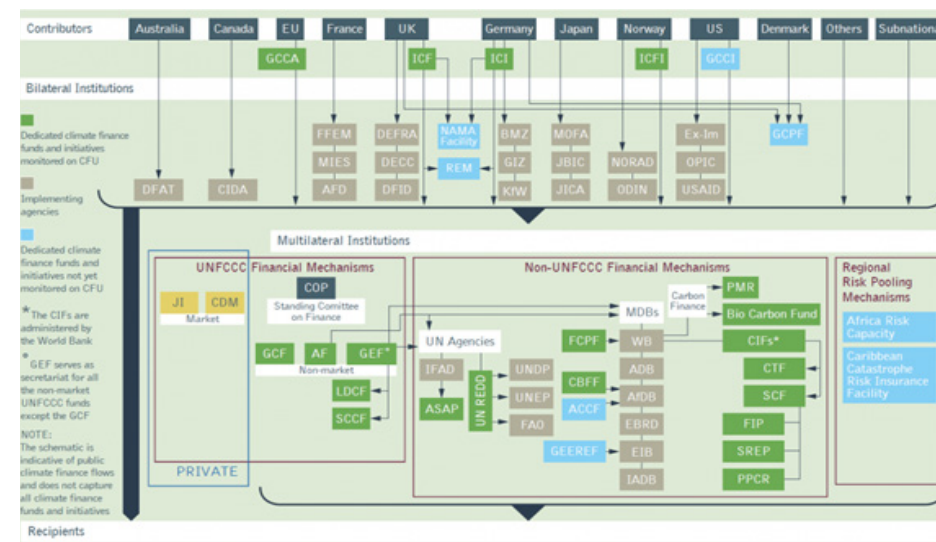


Figure 1²¹

1. *Global Environment Facility (GEF)*

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an active global climate fund, established in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit (UNCED) as the financing mechanism for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Since 1992, the GEF has given USD 18.1 billion in grants and has mobilized through co-financing another USD 94.2 billion for thousands of projects in 170 countries in six focal areas: climate change, biodiversity, international waters, chemicals and waste, forests, and land degradation.²² Since the inclusion of gender equality as a factor in the policies of GEF began only in 2011, it is quite recent, considering that the Fund was created nearly 30 years ago.

In 2011, the GEF's Policy on Gender Mainstreaming was adopted to enhance the promotion of gender equality throughout GEF operations, mainstreaming gender by establishing policies, strategies, and action plans inclusive of gender as a condition of receiving financing for GEF projects.²³ There was a significant improvement in the inclusion of gender equality policies in climate finance mechanisms in 2014, when the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) of the GEF was approved. That plan served as a review and update of the Policy on Gender Mainstreaming of 2011, supporting its implementation.

In October 2017, the GEF replaced the 2011 Policy on Gender Main-

streaming with the “Policy on Gender Equality” in response to increasing global advocacy and the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2017 Policy on Gender Equality represents a shift by the GEF from a “gender-aware approach,” that focuses on ‘doing no harm’ to a “gender-responsive approach” that adopts a more proactive approach to achieving the goals of women’s equality and empowerment.²⁴

Furthermore, the GEF established its own Gender Focal Point position in the Fund’s Secretariat in order to screen gender-sensitive approaches in submitted proposals and encourage women’s empowerment through its network of partners.²⁵ When a proposal for a project is received, GEF staff analyze several factors to ensure that a project has succeeded in gender mainstreaming. Four factors, called “Gender Markers,” are examined: whether the entity has conducted a gender analysis, developed gender actions, specified budget allocations for those actions, and included gender indicators. A project can achieve a maximum rating of two by meeting all four criteria.²⁶ If a project does not meet any of the criteria established by the GEF, it gets a rating of zero, meaning the GEF will not fund the project. If it partially meets the criteria established in the Gender Markers, it receives a rating of one.²⁷

By 2017-2018, GEF reported that 92% of funding proposals considered by the GEF Board contain gender assessments, and 83% contain project-level gender action plans.²⁸ The numbers are not broken down into proposals in the focal area of climate change alone, but indicate a high level of implementation of requirements for proposals to include both gender assessments and gender action plans when submitting requests for funding.

The GEF also works with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) as the implementing agency to fund a “Small Grants Programme” which finances community-led initiatives to address global environmental and sustainable development issues, including climate change. Since 1992, grants under this program total USD 600 million for 22,000 projects in 125 countries.²⁹ As of 2017-2018, 93% of completed projects in the Small Grants Programme were counted as gender-responsive, and 34% of the projects were led by women; of these, 259 projects were for decarbonization and low-carbon energy transformation at community level.³⁰ The focal area distribution of financing under the GEF Small Grants Programme is 40% on biodiversity and 26% on climate change mitigation and adaptation.³¹ Climate financing is overwhelmingly for mitigation rather than adaptation. The effect is priority for large infrastructure projects like dams and roads and energy efficiency programs rather than the community-level efforts to protect land and structures against devastation from the effects of climate change, such as extreme

weather events and increasing numbers of natural disasters.

2. *Adaptation Fund (AF)*

The Adaptation Fund (AF) is the climate finance mechanism established under the Kyoto Protocol of the UNFCCC, proposed in 2001 and adopted in 2009.³² It was created to finance adaptation projects in developing countries, mainly those particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The AF is functional to this date, having been included in the text of the Paris Agreement in 2015. Since 2010, it has committed USD 564 million in funding for 84 adaptation projects.³³

In 2013, the Adaptation Fund adopted the Environmental and Social Policy (revised in 2016) with the goal of ensuring that the projects supported by the Fund do not result in any environmental and/or social harm to society.³⁴ Amid its environmental and social principles, the text mentions gender equality and women’s empowerment. It states that both men and women need to be included equally in opportunities to participate in the projects implemented, including the receipt of comparable social and economic benefits.

Although there had been some progress toward addressing gender in the AF, it was not until 2015 that the Board of the Fund seriously considered a review of gender in the projects and programs of the AF. This resulted in the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy, which expands the key principles already outlined in the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy. The principle of *gender equity and women’s empowerment*, “which is process-oriented and often subjectively contextualized,” was changed to *gender equality*, which is easier to measure and thus to manage.³⁵

This shift in the terminology of the AF Gender Policy is important because, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (“OHCHR”), the term “gender equity” could be interpreted in a way that perpetuates existent stereotypes about women and their role in society. Instead, the OHCHR recommends the use of “gender equality,” as it is the legal terminology used under international human rights instruments.³⁶ UN Women, an inter-agency coordinating group within the UN System, also uses the term “gender equality” in addressing financing and budgeting for sustainable development that empowers women and girls and ensures their equal participation in decision-making.³⁷

According to the AF Gender Policy itself, while gender equity is the process of being fair to men and women, gender equality is about ensuring equal rights between men and women, which leads to the achievement of human

rights. This strengthens the relevance of the Fund's Gender Policy, which is human rights-based and refers to various international instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund is based on the following set of principles: commitment, comprehensiveness in scope and coverage, accountability, competencies, resource allocation, knowledge generation and communication, and review and revisions. One of its objectives is to "provide women and men with an equal opportunity to build resilience, address their differentiated vulnerability, and increase their capability to adapt to climate change impacts."³⁸

In 2017, the AF approved a Medium-Term Strategy to guide its work in the next five years (2018-2022). The Strategy stated that activities performed by the Fund are designed to empower vulnerable communities and advance gender equality, with the goal of supporting vulnerable developing countries in adaptation.³⁹

3. *Green Climate Fund (GCF)*

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was created in 2010 at the UNFCCC COP16 in Cancun, with the goal of supporting developing countries financially in their efforts to combat climate change.⁴⁰ GCF projects are intended to help in reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adaptation to climate change impacts, with the aim of providing equal amounts of financing to mitigation and adaptation. The GCF is an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the UNFCCC (along with the GEF), a role recognized in the Paris Agreement. The Fund is specifically concerned about the nations that are most vulnerable to climate change, such as the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), African States, and LDCs.⁴¹

The GCF started mobilizing resources in 2014 with pledges from more than 40 countries, mostly developed ones, and funded its first projects in 2015. It has collected USD 10.3 billion as of May 2018.⁴² The Paris Agreement urges developed countries who are party to the agreement to collectively provide USD 100 billion per year, starting in 2020, in order to fund mitigation and adaptation projects. Hence, many more contributions to the GCF are required to achieve this goal by 2020 and each year thereafter.

The GCF was the first global climate finance mechanism to include gender in its founding principles in 2010. Thus, the GCF is distinct from other environmental funds available for climate change projects like the GEF,

which has added policies and criteria to address the gender perspective in climate finance. The concrete Gender Policy and Action Plan of the GCF was adopted in March of 2015 by GCF/B.08/19 after extensive lobbying by civil society organizations (CSOs).⁴³ The Gender Policy and Action Plan has six main elements: "commitment; comprehensiveness in scope and coverage; accountability; country ownership; competencies; and resource allocation. The principle of resource allocation raises an important point about possible targeted funding for women's activities, which ensures that funds are properly allocated to projects that really do emphasize gender equality and women's empowerment.

This gender policy on climate finance in the GCF is different from other climate funds because gender assessments and the application of the gender perspective are actual *requirements* for GCF-funded projects. Furthermore, the Fund commits resources for adaptation and mitigation projects that specifically contribute to women's empowerment and ensures that GCF programs successfully benefit women and men equally in financial measures.

In addition to the effect of the Gender Policy and Action Plan of the GCF in applying gender criteria to proposed projects, gender has been integrated throughout the operational policies of the Fund in recent years. One example is the accreditation process for all public and private applicants to the GCF to qualify for this status, enabling them to apply for financing from GCF. The Fund expects gender competency to be shown by all entities wishing to be accredited, which is evaluated by checking the record of the entity on efforts to achieve gender equality internally or externally, and whether there is a gender action plan in place for the proposed project.⁴⁴ In addition, to aid sub-national groups, civil society organizations and others to become accredited and apply for projects, the GCF has adopted a simplified application process (SAP), which include gender requirements.

Furthermore, efforts toward gender equality by the GCF can be seen through the six investment criteria indicators outlined by the Fund in 2018, which must be present in any new proposal submitted to the GCF going forward. They are: "impact potential, paradigm shift potential, sustainable development potential, needs of the recipient, country ownership, and efficiency and effectiveness." The Fund's sustainable development potential is the most important investment criterion for gender equality, because it requires proposals to identify at least one positive co-benefit related to any of the 17 SDGs, whether primarily environmental, social, or economic, in addition to "gender empowerment co-benefits outlining how the project will reduce gender inequality."⁴⁵ Co-benefits may be aligned with achievement of the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which include gender equality

and the empowerment of women and girls throughout and in the stand-alone SDG 5.

GREEN CLIMATE FUND'S GENDER ACTION PLAN

The Parties to the UNFCCC adopted the Gender Action Plan (GAP) at the UNFCCC COP23 in Bonn, 2017.⁴⁶ The GAP was created to assist in the implementation of decisions related to gender under the Climate Change Convention. The Plan acknowledges that women have to be represented in all UNFCCC processes as a condition to making activities of the Convention more effective. The Gender Action Plan assists in the development of gender-sensitive policies for all areas of climate policy, such as finance, technology, development and transfer of technology and capacity-building, in addition to climate finance.⁴⁷

Among its priorities, two are related to climate finance. First, the GAP invites the Standing Committee on Finance to initiate a dialogue with relevant stakeholders on including gender in its work as a way to integrate gender-responsive policies in finance and climate action; this dialogue is to be conducted by 2019. Second, the GAP also calls on the Parties, United Nations entities, the Financial Mechanism and other stakeholders to strengthen the capacity-building of gender mechanisms for a gender-focused approach of budgeting into climate finance by 2018, for future implementation.⁴⁸

The first GCF projects were funded only in 2015 and results have not yet been reported on achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women through GCF financing. "Mainstreaming Gender in GCF Activities," a 2017 publication by GCF with UN Women, provides chapters on a Performance Measurement Framework and a checklist for Project Appraisal, as well as two annexes to the report with examples of gender assessments Gender Action Plans, and indicators.⁴⁹ Therefore future grants will apply these standards in the approval and evaluation phases.

Financing in the amount of USD 267 million was approved for climate action at the July 9, 2019 meeting of the GCF Board.⁵⁰ Total GCF financing committed to date is USD 5.26 billion, of which nearly 50% is under implementation, according to the GCF. This represents financing for 111 projects resulting in 1.5 tons of CO2 equivalents avoided and 310.3 million people with increased resilience.⁵¹ These figures do not count explicit progress in gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in climate action but may demonstrate co-benefits which affect women worldwide. More needs to be done to disaggregate the data for accountability on gender equality in climate action and specifically in climate financing. Continuing progress will,

of course, depend on the replenishment of the GCF as states pledged in the Paris Agreement, beginning with the full contribution of USD 100 billion by 2020, a sum to be renewed annually. One open issue is the question of who exactly is responsible for making the contributions, since the total of USD 100 billion is to be reached each year "collectively" – whether all or only some states party to the UNFCCC, private sector stakeholders, philanthropies, or some combination of donors.

Updating the GCF Gender Action Plan is being discussed. The GCF Board in its Decision GCF/B.23/23 of July 2019 requested the GCF Secretariat to present an assessment of implementation considerations, including cost-benefit analysis, and of capacity to implement the GAP.⁵² The matter is scheduled to be revisited at the November 2019 Board meeting, in line with consultations that have taken place and will continue on updating the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan. This process is a positive sign. However, data from within the GCF's Independent Evaluation Unit in a report on GCF "environmental and social safeguards" is still "forthcoming."⁵³

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women's perspective may improve the goals, construction, management and assessment of climate action projects, whether small scale adaptation efforts in local communities or large-scale infrastructure mitigation programs. The Global Environment Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and most explicitly, the Green Climate Fund have made efforts to be gender-responsive in climate finance decisions and programs, but there are still opportunities for improvement and greater transparency.

Reports addressing public climate finance flows from developed to developing countries have been issued by two organizations, the Biennial Assessment of the GEF Standing Committee on Finance and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).⁵⁴ As pointed out by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, figures from 2018 in the GEF Biennial Assessment showed "some reference to the intended gender impact of investments and how this correlates to tracing public climate finance. In contrast, the OECD report did not."⁵⁵ As long ago as 2008, the OECD included a section on women and climate change in its publication entitled *Gender and Sustainable Development, Maximising the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women*.⁵⁶ More granular data on achievement of gender equality and empowerment in climate finance from the climate funds themselves and from the OECD is needed, with annual reporting widely accessible to the public.

Overall, greater public accountability, analysis and publication of disag-

gregated data and the direct involvement of women in all phases of climate project design, execution and evaluation are needed. Specific reporting on application of gender-responsive policies in climate finance in line with the GCF's Gender Action Plan, and measurement of increases in the number of women on boards of public climate funds and staff in policy- and decision-making positions, are needed on a regular basis. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the boards of various climate funds – especially the newest one, the Green Climate Fund – are constantly reviewing their policies on gender equality to ensure that gender responsiveness is properly addressed in the strategic plans the funds implement over subsequent years and in the budgets they adopt. Measuring the effectiveness of policies, identifying best practices and analyzing compliance failures will contribute to more success in achieving gender justice in climate projects and more effective action to fight against climate change.

Accountability and transparency are principles that need to inform the practice of the boards of climate funds like GCF, AF and GEF to ensure that any projects currently receiving funding are required to submit an adequate gender assessment and a gender action plan as part of their interim reports and final project evaluation. GCF requirements that all proposals for new financing include an adequate gender assessment and gender action plan before being awarded financial assistance need to be enforced, and similar practices adopted, enforced and updated in the GEF and AF. Reporting on the number of projects in compliance or denied financing for failure to meet the gender assessment and gender action plan standards should be made publicly available on an annual basis, ideally disaggregated by type, size and location of project, with reasons for denial of financing or positive examples of compliance provided as models.

In the United Nations, a strong coalition of Member States, private sector representatives, NGOs, civil society organizations, UN Secretariat staff, and other organizations and agencies must press harder to achieve equality of women and men and the empowerment of women and girls in climate action everywhere. Annual UN meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, the High-Level Political Forum, and special events like the SDG Summit and Climate Action Summit in September 2019 with heads of state offer an opportunity to focus on gender justice in climate change.⁵⁷ The Summit on Climate Action under the auspices of the UN General Assembly and convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres and his Special Envoy Luis Alfonso de Alba has been planned to “focus on the sectors that create the greatest emissions and the areas where building resilience could make the biggest difference.”⁵⁸ The Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC

CC regularly meets as well (next in Chile in December 2019 at COP25), and the treaty Secretariat, headed by Patricia Espinosa, works closely with UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations like the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).⁵⁹ Meetings such as these need to explicitly articulate the need for gender policies, assessments and action plans like the GCF's throughout climate action plans and turn a spotlight on implementation of gender-responsive climate financing.

All stakeholders need to contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as UN member states have agreed to do in their national programs, policies and regulations. Member states need to see how inclusion of gender responsive budgeting and climate finance at the national level contributes to their ability to meet the targets for the SDGs overall, and in particular SDG 5 and SDG 13, and their pledges (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. Gender-just criteria need to be applied throughout UN agencies, programs, agendas, treaties and funds, as well as in the private sector, governments, and civil society organizations. Meaningful measurement and reporting on climate projects must include adequate and verifiable gender assessments and gender action plans, using models now available from the GCF, and the quality of these documents in each proposal or project needs to be reviewed and improved. Gender specialists need to be hired in climate funds, with adequate budgets and organizational authority to carry out the work. Gender focal points in the climate funds are needed for communications with non-state groups like cities or NGOs interested in applying for financing, whether in the form of loans, grants or guarantees that might lead to additional funding from other sources for climate projects, especially in developing countries. In the process, climate funds need to balance support for adaptation strategies and mitigation strategies to reflect needs and priorities of women and girls around the world and their capacity to contribute solutions.

In part, the effectiveness of gender-responsive criteria in climate financing in the GCF will depend on whether the Green Climate Fund is replenished according to schedule by 2020 for the initial contributions and annually thereafter; pledges by states collectively in the amount of USD 100 billion to date have resulted in approximately USD 10 billion having been received by the GCF by mid-2019, well short of the target.⁶⁰ This ambitious goal was calculated as necessary to achieve climate goals worldwide. How these funds will be applied, and whether they are received in full each year by the GCF, remain to be seen.

The Gender Action Plan's investment criteria on sustainable development potential, requiring proposals to identify how the project will advance

gender equality, is a meaningful step toward a more equal allocation of resources in climate finance. Nevertheless, the GAP, adopted in 2017, needs to be regularly reviewed by the GCF Board and updated as experience is gained, and conditions change. Screening of proposals or projects for sustainability or environmental impact by the climate funds considered here needs to be matched by screening for gender responsiveness in climate financing. The gender criteria need to be applied strictly to deny grants or loans from public funds if the criteria are not met. Efforts need to be made to increase access to information by women's groups at different levels (local, national, regional or international) about available climate financing. Training and capacity building for the application or accreditation processes in the various funds need to be offered by the funds themselves to achieve gender goals.

The use of gender-responsive criteria to achieve gender equality in climate financing has advanced through the three public climate financing funds discussed in this article: the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund with its Gender Action Plan, all under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Yet there remains much to do to implement the aspirations in the policies and programs of the funds to achieve gender equality in climate finance. The urgency of finding solutions to the global climate emergency in the short period of years before the damage to the planet becomes irreversible is a clear reason for supporting leadership and ideas from women as well as men. Climate finance is thus one of the key areas that requires a gender-responsive approach to decision-making, participation and budgeting.

In conclusion, when designing, implementing, monitoring and assessing climate policies, it is manifestly unwise to exclude the skills and innovations of half the planet.⁶¹ The challenges ahead include action needed to conserve non-renewable natural resources and ecosystems, make the transition to clean energy sources, mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases worldwide, restore forests, and build resilience in local communities to adapt to climate change. These challenges require the skills, insights, energy and commitment of the world's women. Achieving gender equality in climate finance is crucial to ensure the well-being of future generations, and to safeguard a sustainable future for all of us everywhere.

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NOTES

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2 Paris Agreement, note 1, p. 1. Recent UN documents on gender and climate change from the latest Conference of the Parties to the climate change treaty (UNFCCC COP24) in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland, include the draft report of the Chair of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body on Implementation ("SBI") of 6 December 2018, <https://unfccc.int/documents/184822>, and the addendum to the Chair's draft report of the same date. These documents will be considered for adoption by UNFCCC COP25 in November 2019 in Santiago, Chile.

3 Paris Agreement, n. 1.

4 Extreme weather events and natural disasters exacerbated by global warming bring deprivation, desperation, disruption of family life and social support systems and deepening inequality around the globe. Global warming is leading to shortages of water which affect food production in certain regions; sea level rise in other regions as glaciers melt, threatening the world's coastal cities; and changes in major ocean currents as the seas warm, affecting shipping and migration of fish and marine mammals.

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10 Mitigation refers to the reduction of human emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide by transitioning away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, achieving more energy efficient forms of transportation, buildings, and production, and reducing consumption of non-renewable products. Key terms are avoiding waste, reuse and recycling of materials.

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19 The foundation is a think tank and policy advocate on environmental issues, including climate change and gender, with offices worldwide, independent of but affiliated with the German Green Party.

20 The diagram reproduced here includes other specialized international, regional and national channels for targeted climate funds. These may be part of national overseas development assistance (ODA) packages (such as the International Climate Fund of the United Kingdom, for example) or programs of UN agencies, development banks, or other multilateral or regional programs. These types of climate finance programs may or may not contain specific gender equality criteria for funding and are not analyzed in this article. According to a short "Climate Finance Guide" from the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, in 2016 approximately 2/3 of climate finance was from private sources and 33% was from public financing, of a total of 410 billion USD a year. <https://us.boell.org/2016/11/07/climate-finance-fundamentals>. How much of this funding is new and additional funds is not identified, nor is whether the funds are grants or loans. An article from the Foundation in 2019 elaborates critiques and gaps in actual climate financing. <https://us.boell.org/2019/06/12/why-green-climate-fund-must-be-replenished-remain-central-multilateral-channel-collective>.

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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 on 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 countries 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.

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