

Unveiling Spain's Feminist Foreign Policy: A comparative analysis

▬ *Trabajo de Fin de Máster* ▬

Máster Universitario en Diplomacia y
Organizaciones Internacionales

Autor/a: Alma Sáez Portillo
Tutor/a: Ana García Juanatey

Fecha de entrega: 12-05-2023

“The feminist foreign policy is a response to the discrimination and systematic subordination that still characterizes everyday life for countless women and girls around the world”.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Ana García Juanatey for guiding me through the process and providing me with insightful feedback and help whenever needed.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my friends Edu, Alba, Roeland, and Sander not only for their support throughout the whole process but for ensuring that we still shared fun moments together in this stressful time.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the women in my life for empowering me, as we continue to fight for a more gender equal world together.

Abstract

The emergence of feminist foreign policies has marked a significant milestone in the global fight for gender equality through foreign policy. This study aims to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Spain's approach to a feminist foreign policy by conducting a comparative analysis with Canada and Sweden. By learning from the experiences of Canada and Sweden, Spain can enhance the effectiveness of its feminist foreign policy and avoid the fate of Sweden's policy discontinuation. Moreover, by utilizing a theoretical framework constructed from a synthesis of existing theories on foreign policy analysis, this thesis aims to provide a set of guidelines essential for the success of any feminist foreign policy.

Keywords: Feminist foreign policy, feminism, foreign policy, gender equality, Canada, Spain, Sweden

Resumen

La aparición de políticas exteriores feministas ha marcado un hito significativo en la lucha global por la igualdad de género a través de la política exterior. Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar las fortalezas y debilidades del enfoque de España en su política exterior feminista mediante un análisis comparativo con Canadá y Suecia. Al aprender de las experiencias de Canadá y Suecia, España puede mejorar la efectividad de su política exterior feminista y evitar así repetir situaciones como la de Suecia en la que se produjo una discontinuación de este tipo de políticas. Además, utilizando un marco teórico construido a partir de una síntesis de teorías existentes sobre análisis de políticas exteriores, esta tesis tiene como objetivo proporcionar un conjunto de pautas esenciales para el éxito de cualquier política exterior feminista.

Palabras clave: Política exterior feminista, feminismo, política exterior, igualdad de género, Canadá, España, Suecia.

Table of contents

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	6
2.	METHODOLOGY.....	8
3.	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	10
4.	SETTING THE SCENE.....	12
4.1.	Historical background.....	12
4.2.	Defining Feminist Foreign Policy.....	13
4.3.	Improving the concept of Feminist Foreign Policy: Challenges and Criticisms	15
5.	SWEDEN’S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY	17
5.1.	An introduction to the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy	17
5.2.	Characteristics of Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy.....	18
5.3.	The paradoxes of Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy	20
5.4.	Exploring the factors behind Sweden’s abandonment of the policy	21
5.5.	Analyzing the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy	23
6.	CANADA’S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY.....	26
6.1.	An Introduction to the Canadian Feminist Foreign Policy.....	26
6.1.1.	Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)	27
6.1.2.	Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS)	29
6.2.	Towards a Feminist Foreign Policy for Canada	30
6.3.	Striking a Balance Between Gender Equality and Radical Transformation.....	32
6.4.	Analyzing the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Policy.....	35
7.	SPAIN’S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY	38
7.1.	An Introduction to the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy	38
7.2.	Characteristics of the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy.....	39
7.3.	Challenges and Recommendations for the Effective Implementation of the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy.....	42
7.4.	Analysis of the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy	43
8.	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: APPLYING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	47
8.1.	Nature and solution of the problem.....	47
8.2.	Aggestam and True’s principles	50
8.3.	Measuring the strength of the policies	52
9.	CONCLUSION	55
10.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	57

1. INTRODUCTION

The fight for equality through foreign policy and the emergence of feminist foreign policies represent significant milestones in advancing gender equality on a global scale. Traditionally, foreign policy has focused on geopolitical considerations, but an increasing recognition of the importance of gender equality has led to a paradigm shift. By 2023 a number of countries have already implemented a feminist foreign policy, including Spain (2021), Luxembourg (2021), Germany (2021) and Chile (2022), among others. The concept of feminist foreign policy is relatively new, with Sweden having been the first country to ever label a foreign policy as feminist. While the recognition of a feminist foreign policy as a breakthrough for promoting women's rights globally through external action is noteworthy, it is essential to acknowledge that this achievement was built upon prior international efforts aimed at advancing the rights of women and girls. Such efforts include the UNSCR 1325, the Sustainable development goal number 5, the Beijing Conferences and other numerous initiatives.

Although a feminist foreign policy is an effective means to advance gender equality certain obstacles can undermine its impact, rendering the policy merely symbolic. To begin with there is not an internationally agreed upon definition of what constitutes a successful feminist foreign policy. Thus, each country applies its own understanding and interpretation of feminism when formulating its foreign policy, as there are no established guidelines in place. This has resulted in each country developing different feminist foreign policies. Consequently, several international organizations dedicated to promoting women's rights, along with subject-matter experts, have joined forces to outline the essential characteristics that a foreign policy must embody to be regarded as feminist. These criteria have provided a foundation for evaluating various foreign policies and assessing their strengths and weaknesses.

In 2021, Spain introduced a feminist foreign policy, becoming the fifth country in the world to do so. This move clearly demonstrated Spain's commitment to promoting gender equality beyond its borders and encompass feminism in its foreign engagements as well. To evaluate the effectiveness and identify areas for improvement within the Spanish feminist foreign policy (FFP), this thesis will conduct a comparative analysis with a focus on Spain, Canada and Sweden. The inclusion of Canada and Sweden as case studies is significant, as they were among the pioneering countries to implement a FFP. These two countries are particularly relevant for analysis due to their longer history with feminist foreign policies and the unique aspect that Sweden, despite implementing its policy around the same time as Canada, later chose to discontinue it. By examining the FFPs of these three countries, this study aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Spain's approach while drawing insights from the experiences of Canada and Sweden. Therefore, this thesis will aim to answer the following research question:

How can Spain's implementation of a feminist foreign policy draw upon the lessons learned from the cases of Canada and Sweden?

This thesis will take an inductive and qualitative approach to answering the research question through a comparative analysis of the feminist foreign policies of the three countries. A content analysis is performed using the policy handbooks of each country to identify the policy objectives, strategies and key initiatives of each FFP. This will then be analyzed using a theoretical framework constructed from a combination of existing theories on how to study FFPs. To facilitate a comprehensive comparative

analysis of the three policies, this thesis will employ a set of sub-questions aimed at delving into the intricacies of each policy:

How does the implementation of the Spanish feminist foreign policy compare to that of Canada and Sweden in terms of policy objectives, strategies, and key initiatives?

What are the key challenges and opportunities faced by Spain in implementing its feminist foreign policy, and how do these compare to the experiences of Canada and Sweden?

How can the insights learned from the experiences of Canada and Sweden be applied to enhance the effectiveness of Spain's FFP?

This thesis holds relevance due to its focus on conducting a comparative analysis of the feminist foreign policies of Spain, Canada and Sweden, with the objective of identifying their respective strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, this thesis holds academic significance because it will offer valuable insights into the analysis of FFPs and contribute to the current body of literature through its comparative study. The implementation of a FFP signifies a commitment to advancing gender equality on a global scale, rendering it pertinent to the achievement of gender equality worldwide. According to UN Women, FFPs not only share goals with existing commitments on gender equality in development but also provide a cohesive political framework for governments to implement diverse gender-related strategies.¹ Furthermore, FFPs improve coordination, effectiveness, and promote governmental accountability in advancing gender equality and women's rights.²

Through this study, valuable insights will be gained into the strengths and weaknesses specific to the Spanish FFP, utilizing the examples of Canada and Sweden as comparative benchmarks. Consequently, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how the Spanish FFP can enhance its efficacy while also avoiding the fate of Sweden's policy abandonment. Moreover, the study will draw lessons from these examples to illustrate the pathways through which Spain can implement a more efficient FFP.

¹ UN WOMEN, "Feminist Foreign Policies: an introduction", *UN Women*, 2022, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Brief-Feminist-foreign-policies-en.pdf>

² Ibid.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research takes an inductive approach to answering the research question. The methodology for this thesis relies on a comparative analysis of the FFP of three countries: Sweden, Canada and Spain. Therefore, the focus of this research is to conduct a thorough analysis of the FFP of Sweden and Canada, in order to compare them with the FFP of Spain. By doing so, this thesis will provide valuable insights into the unique approaches of each country, identifying the key takeaways in terms of the common elements and differences between them.

To achieve this, the thesis uses a qualitative approach using existing literature on the topic as well as the handbooks of each policy. Given that the concept of FFP is still relatively new, there is no uniform global consensus on what it should entail. As a result, countries have adopted their own unique interpretations of feminism, resulting in varied implementations of FFP.

To best understand the most relevant characteristics that a FFP should display to be considered strong, this thesis will conduct a thematic analysis of existing literature to identify the patterns. Through this thematic analysis a theoretical framework has been constructed, resulting from a combination of existing theories on the different possible approaches to study FFPs, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each policy. For this, various sources were taken into account, namely those of the countries which decided to follow a FFP, experts on the matter and other international organizations which are advocates of women's rights. The international organizations used include the International Centre for Women's Research (ICWR), the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), and UN Women (UNW) among others.

As the thesis aims to examine the weaknesses and strengths of the Spanish FFP, to establish its strengths, it will use Sweden and Canada as they were the first countries to implement a FFP. Since the policies of Sweden and Canada have been in place for quite some time, there is analysis available on how these policies have progressed. Therefore, these countries serve as a good guideline on the correlation between displaying certain characteristics and the success of the policies. Not only this but Sweden provides an interesting example as even though their adoption of a FFP was groundbreaking, as it was the first country, it has also been the first country to abandon it. This provides a compelling case study, as it offers an opportunity to analyze the factors that were unsuccessful, thereby facilitating an identification of the key lessons that Spain can derive from this experience.

Most Different System Design (MDSD)

For the comparison section this thesis uses the Most Different System Design (MDSD). The goal of the MDSD is to “select cases that are different in most respects and only similar on the key explanatory variable of interest”.³ The MDSD facilitates the identification of the factors which contribute to policy success and failure, through the selection of different cases that are similar in some respects but different in terms of the policy outcome being studied.⁴ Furthermore, the factors that differ throughout the cases are studied to determine their impact on the outcome; and to identify which factors are most important in determining policy success or failure.⁵

³ HEATH, OLIVER, and HALPERIN, SANDRA, “Political research methods and practical skills”, *Oxford: Oxford University Press*, 2016, pp. 241-242.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

The goal of this thesis is to analyze the foreign policies of Sweden, Canada and Spain in order to draw conclusions and identify the lessons that can be applied to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Spain's FFP. The three countries have been selected because they each share some similarities and differences of the key characteristics required for the implementation of a FFP. However, each country has had a different outcome with respect to their FFP. Sweden has abandoned their policy, Canada has not fully implemented a FFP, while Spain seems to have a fully developed policy. Although the three countries share some common characteristics, it is important to examine the factors that have led to the different outcomes in the implementation of their FFPs.

The use of the MDSD method will facilitate the comparison between the countries and enable the identification of the effect of the independent variables, the characteristics for the implementation of the policies, on the dependent variable, the strength of the feminist foreign policies.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Recent years have seen an increase in the inclusion of gender focus norms in foreign policy which have translated in some countries labelling their foreign policy as “feminist”. The implementation of a FFP can be attributed to past efforts to fight for gender equality globally. For example, the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000 was an important push for the consequent implementation of a FFP in certain countries.⁶ Additionally, certain countries have established a FFP in accordance with the targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goal number 5, which aims to attain gender equality by 2030.⁷

However, the concept of “feminist” foreign policy being a relatively new phenomenon, there exists a significant gap in the literature of this topic, as there are not a lot of comparison studies in place. This can be attributed to a range of factors, namely the fact that there is “general skepticism among feminist scholars regarding the capacity of state-centred institutional frameworks to further feminist political agendas” and “that there may be a reluctance to engage and analyze accounts from within by diplomats and foreign policy leader”.⁸

This research will use different theoretical frameworks to analyze the different foreign policies. Firstly, it will use Jennifer Thomson’s analysis on foreign policy whereby he aims to answer the questions of *what is the nature of the problem?* and *how is this problem resolved?* both questions relating to foreign policy. Secondly, the theoretical frameworks proposed by Aggestam and True will be used to analyse whether the FFP of Sweden, Canada and Spain fulfil the criteria of what a FFP should be and should achieve. Lastly, Thompson’s and Clement’s study of feminist foreign policies will be used to analyse the four commitments of a FFP, and whether Sweden, Canada and Spain fulfil these.

Jennifer Thomson offers an analysis of Canadian and Swedish FFP based on how these policies convey feminism. She focuses specially on the ways in which feminism seems to be used for economic ends, as feminist discourse now acts to support neoliberal economic policy-making.⁹ A number of authors agree with this statement. For example, McRobbie argues that “although feminism continues to exist, it does so in a version bent to neoliberal state and economic interests”.¹⁰ Rottenberg goes even further to suggest that “neoliberal feminism is mobilized to convert continued gender inequality from a structural problem into an individual affair thus removing the necessity for action on the part of governments or institutions”.¹¹ In studying the FFPs of Canada and Sweden, Thomson raises the questions of *what is the nature of the problem?* and *how is the problem being solved?*¹² This is a useful ground on which one can carry a comparative analysis of the feminist foreign policies of the countries proposed in this thesis. Aiming to answer these two questions proposed by Thomson provides for a relevant basis on which the purpose behind the naming of the foreign policy as feminist can be studied.

⁶ THOMPSON, LYRIC., and CLEMENT, RACHEL, “Is the future of Foreign Policy Feminist?”, *Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 2019.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ AGGESTAM, KARIN, and TRUE, JACQUI, “Gendering Foreign Policy: A Comparative Framework for Analysis”, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 16, 2020, num. 2, pp.143–162.

⁹ THOMPSON, JENNIFER, “What’s Feminist about feminist foreign policy? Sweden’s and Canada’s Foreign Policy Agendas”, *International Studies Perspectives*, 2020, pp. 424–437.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

Moreover, by identifying a problem which the FFP will address, it facilitates evaluating the successes of the policy.

Karin Aggestam and Jacqui True offer a theoretical framework, grounded in both international feminist theory and foreign policy analysis, to examine the implementation of FFP. They also raise three main questions:

1. How far pro-gender norms have become embedded in foreign policy domain, such as development and humanitarian policy versus security and defense domains?¹³
2. To what extent can we trace continuity and change in foreign policies with respect to pro-gender norms?¹⁴
3. What difference does a gendered approach to foreign policy make compared with traditional approaches to conventional foreign policy?¹⁵

On the one hand, international feminist theory explains that norms on gender and gender equality are fluid dynamic and non linear and are therefore prone to change throughout time.¹⁶ It is therefore important to take this into account when analysis FFP as it is normal that norms change and adapt over time, especially regarding gender. This is also the case in the WPS foreign policy domain, as initially there was a binary conception of sex at the heart of the UNSCR 1325, yet, throughout time the understanding of sex has undergone changes becoming more diverse and intersectional.¹⁷ On the other hand, foreign policy analysis has sought to “open up the black box of decision-making by pursuing actor-oriented and multilevel theories of foreign policy processes, resulting in complex multifactorial analyses on a broad range of issues”.¹⁸ Furthermore, other authors bring to light the way in which foreign policy analysis enables a comparison of how national policies influence the foreign ones. For example, Michael Barnett analyses “how foreign policy change can be legitimized by studying the interaction between normative international structures and domestic institutional contexts and cultural landscapes, which inform political actors and guide social practices”.¹⁹ This is relevant as it suggests that the success of a FFP is dependent on the way that the national policies also reflect gender equality within their national policies.

Finally, Aggestam and True propose three methods for studying a FFP by combining international feminist theory and foreign policy analysis. The first method emphasizes the importance of incorporating both descriptive and substantive gender representation at the core of the FFP.²⁰ This means that the analysis on whether representation is successful should take into account the intersectionality of class, ethnicity and sexuality inter alia.²¹ Secondly, gender mainstreaming should be part of all aspects across the FFP.²² Thirdly, there should be clear feminist transformative principles which will enable a critical scrutiny of gendered relations, and illuminate contentious politics and patriarchal power policies.²³ These all enable for an in depth analysis of FFP.

Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement provide three commitments that a feminist policy should abide to, which also serve to examine the strength of the FFP. Namely, resource endowment, comprehensiveness, and coherence within the whole of the foreign

¹³ AGGESTAM, KARIN, and TRUE, JACQUI, *op.cit.*, note 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

policy.²⁴ Resource endowment is a quantitative indicator which looks at the level of investment for the implementation of the policy and achievement of its goals.²⁵ Comprehensiveness refers to the necessity of the policies focus on gender to be intersectional and to take into consideration the different ways in which women may be marginalized, such as race, ethnicity, disability, class, or refugee status.²⁶ Lastly, coherence is one of the most important characteristics of a FFP as it helps with credibility.

These theories proposed by the different authors will serve as a framework for the analysis of the feminist foreign policies of Sweden, Canada and Spain. Up to this point there exists no framework specifically dedicated to FFP. Therefore, this thesis will utilize a combination of the theories and frameworks explained above. It will use the questions provided by Thompson to analyse why the policies were labelled as feminists, in particular to understand the problem that the policies aim to address. Aggestam's and True's theoretical framework will be used to establish whether the foreign policies of the three countries display a descriptive and substantive gender representation, gender mainstreaming, and feminist transformative principles. All characteristics that a FFP should present to be considered as such, as argued by Aggestam and True. The three questions provided by them will also be used to guide the analysis of the policies. Finally, the FFP characteristics as identified by Thompson and Clement will be used as guidelines to further analyse the policies.

4. SETTING THE SCENE

4.1. Historical background

These past years have seen an advancement in the promotion and protection of women's rights globally. Although there is still a long way to go, there has been some important milestones that should not be forgotten. For example, the Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), signed in 1979, and the UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, approved in 2000 are both landmark events for the promotion of gender equality everywhere.

The UNSC Resolution, also referred to as the WPS agenda, calls on all UN member states to “ensure the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding”.²⁷ Moreover, the resolution calls on all parties to take special measures in situations of armed conflict “to protect women and girls from gender based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse”.²⁸ Since the implementation of the Resolution, 98 UN Member States have issued a national action plan to implement the agenda and several foreign ministers have aimed to advance the resolution.²⁹

²⁴ THOMPSON, LYRIC, and CLEMENT, RACHEL, *op. cit.*, nota 6.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ JOACHIM, JUTTA, “What difference does a feminist foreign policy make?”, *Clingendael Institute*, July 2022, Available at: <https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/what-difference-does-feminist-foreign-policy-make>

²⁸ General Assembly resolution 1325, “Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security”, (S/RES/1325). August 2008.

²⁹ JOACHIM, JUTTA, *op. cit.*, nota 27.

Therefore, the implementation of a FFP by some countries could be considered as an advancement for gender equality as expressed in the UNSC Resolution 1325.

Authors such as Aggestam and True back this up, as they have also expressed that in recent years a growing number of states have taken the lead in promoting gender equality in global affairs.³⁰ Politicians such as Hilary Clinton and Margot Wallström have framed the advancement of women issues, representation, gender equality, empowerment and leadership as smart diplomacy and economics.³¹

Emerging research has also shown that increasing women participation in peace processes as delegates and representatives, as well as participation in politics and civil society movements can lead to a less conflictual world.³² Taking this into consideration, the implementation of a FFP seems to be the right step towards a more gender equal and inclusive world.

4.2. Defining Feminist Foreign Policy

The concept of a FFP is relatively new, and therefore there currently exists no internationally accepted definition for it. For this reason, each of the countries that have put in place a FFP, has done so following their own interpretation of feminism. This includes establishing their own priorities and strategies, although they maintain common lines and objectives. FFP in different contexts does not arise from a fixed understanding of what feminism is, and this poses opportunities and challenges at the same time, as the agenda continues to develop.³³ Over the past years, more and more countries have taken a pro-gender norms approach to their foreign policies. By July 2022 Sweden, Canada, France, Mexico, Spain, Luxembourg, Germany and Chile had taken a feminist approach towards their foreign policy. This section will look into existing literature surrounding FFP, to aim to establish a definition for this study; and the characteristics that it should display to be considered as such.

Before delving into the definition of FFP, it is important to consider both terms, ‘feminism’ and ‘foreign policy’ separately to better understand their combination. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, foreign policy is “the policy of a sovereign state in its interaction with other sovereign states”.³⁴ The concept of sovereignty is especially important in this case, as it enables states to take the approach they prefer in terms of human rights, and women’s rights. This is particularly relevant for FFP, as states have limited impact on other states which do not necessarily view the importance of promoting women’s rights. The Merriam Webster Dictionary describes ‘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”.³⁵

Therefore, if one was to take both definitions into account, a FFP would be “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

³⁰ AGGESTAM, KARIN, and TRUE, JACQUI, *op. cit.*, nota 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ SOLANAS, MARÍA, “La política exterior Feminista de España: un análisis preliminar”, *Tempo Exterior* N-42, 2021, pp.27-43.

³⁴ THOMPSON, LYRIC, and CLEMENT, RACHEL, *op. cit.*, nota 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

rights and interests”.³⁶ This definition, although accurate when merging the two concepts, lacks some depth, especially when it comes to intersectionality. For example, this definition fails to take into consideration the intersectionality of feminism, whereby not only women’s rights should be protected and promoted, but also those of other marginalized communities.

Taking this into consideration, Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement provide their own FFP definition.:

*“Feminist Foreign policy is 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, and seeks through its implementation to disrupt patriarchal and male-dominated power structures across all of its levers of influence, informed by the voices of feminist activists, groups and movements”*³⁷

Aside from the definition, there are certain characteristics that a FFP should include to be considered as such. Authors such as Karim Aggestam and Jacqui True, have identified four commitments that a gendered foreign policy should follow. Firstly, there should be an explicit practice of “gender mainstreaming” to advance gender equality and women’s rights across all levels of foreign policy making.³⁸ Secondly, an international development assistance should be implemented to ensure that gender inequality is targeted and that gender relations are transformed within foreign policy.³⁹ Thirdly, there should be a clear focus on women’s security and human rights as indicators of state stability and international security.⁴⁰ Lastly, institutional or legislative mechanisms should be implemented to promote gender equality in foreign policy, such as showcasing explicit commitments to promote women’s leadership within foreign policy decision making processes.⁴¹ These four commitments should be used to complement the definition provided above, to better understand the characteristics that a FFP should display.

A discussion carried out by a group of professionals on the key principles and accountability mechanisms of FFP also provided a good basis of what FFP should be based on and possible accountability mechanisms. The participants of the discussion were asked to identify the main features of a FFP. They identified seven main elements, namely, the need for the policy to be rights-based; reinforcing the idea of the state as the ultimate duty-bearer for human rights; the need for the policy to change the status quo for gender norms; the need for it to be inclusive and intersectional; the policy should demand policy coherence and should be clear; it should promote non-violence and demilitarization; it should include self-scrutiny and accountability.⁴² These elements were the ones chosen by the group as the most relevant for a foreign policy to be considered feminist.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ AGGESTAM, KARIN, and TRUE, JACQUI, *op. cit.*, nota 8.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² RIDGE, ALICE; LAMBERT, CAROLINE and CRAWFORD JOANNE et. al., “Feminist Foreign Policy: Key principles and accountability mechanisms”, *International Center for Research on Women, International Women’s Development Agency and Center for Global Affairs, NYU, 2019.*

Other specialists, such as professor Toni Haastrup, explain that while each state appeals to their own understandings of both foreign policy and feminism there are two main themes that seem to run across FFP.⁴³ Firstly, by implementing a FFP countries are committing to existing global normative and policy frameworks like the sustainable development goals and gender equality, peace institutions as well as the women peace and security agenda.⁴⁴ Secondly, there is also a commitment to human rights and gender equality as the basis of foreign policy design and practice.⁴⁵

UN Women brings to light the similar themes covered by a FFP so far. They all commit to mainstream a gender perspective in all foreign policy actions and agencies, advocate for progress in gender adequate resources to gender equality as part of their development and humanitarian aid.

Taking all of this into account we can identify a list of four characteristics of a FFP which will serve as a guide for this thesis. Firstly, the policy should be founded on the principles of human rights and dignity, emphasizing a rights-based approach. As argued by Thompson et al., having a rights-based approach to FFP is crucial to prevent feminist development outcomes from being subordinated to national interests.⁴⁶ However, given the intersectionality of feminism, it should not only be based on women's human rights but should also include the rights of other marginalized communities. Secondly, representation is a main aspect of a FFP. Women should be at the table where decisions on foreign affairs, security and peace are being made; they should also hold leadership positions on diplomatic and external affairs. Thirdly, resources should be allocated for the promotion of gender equality at all levels of foreign affairs. Resources can take the form of money, institutions to support the process, mechanisms of accountability... Lastly, the policy should be able to promote and create change. The policy should disturb the status quo and fight against the longstanding patriarchal institutions. These four characteristics will serve as a broad guide of what a FFP should include to be considered as such.

4.3. Improving the concept of Feminist Foreign Policy: Challenges and Criticisms

Since “feminist foreign policy” is a relatively new concept, there is still room for improvement. One of the major challenges that this policy is facing is the lack of accountability mechanisms. While several advocates have identified a number of necessary characteristics for a FFP, there is currently no system in place to ensure that these characteristics are implemented effectively and followed through.

To address this issue, a group of professionals proposed three possible mechanisms that could work to keep accountability in relation to FFP:

1. Public and inclusive planning and progress reporting: this means that the goals of the FFP should be made public, and its progress should be reported periodically in an inclusive and transparent manner.⁴⁷

⁴³ HAASTRUP, TONI, “Exploring Feminist’ Foreign Policies”, *Institut Barcelona Estudis Internacionales*, January 30, 2023, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OefmVFLfx5M&list=PLUS_RvHbDIAC1Nktp9inJ89zdyAZO-kvB&index=3

⁴⁴ RIDGE, ALICE, ET. AL, *op. cit.*, nota 42.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

2. Adequate human, financial, and legal resources: Resources should be provided to the FFP to achieve its goals. This could include funding, staffing and legal support.⁴⁸
3. Sector-specific accountability: Accountability mechanisms should be developed to ensure that the FFP is being implemented effectively in different sectors, such as climate change and military intervention in certain conflicts. These mechanisms could be tailored to specific sectors to ensure that they are effective in holding decision-makers accountable for meeting the goals of the FFP.⁴⁹

Aside from the lack of accountability mechanisms, other researchers have identified several flaws with the current concept of FFP, such as the polarizing nature of the term “feminist”, which can distract from its objectives.⁵⁰ Critics also argue that the label of feminist can be limiting, focusing solely on women and girls without considering intersectionality with other marginalized groups. As scholar Jutta Joachim argues, “gender is still equated in a rather narrow fashion”, with women at the center perceived as a homogenous group and LGBTQ groups, for example, only being mentioned occasionally without explicit details about their integration.⁵¹ Finally, the use of the word “feminist” oversimplifies debates and creates false barriers of militarization versus peace.⁵² Furthermore, Jutta Joachim also argues that there needs to be an extension of the gender perspective to policy areas such as trade or other traditional security matters.⁵³

These criticisms will be used to analyze whether the feminist foreign policies of Sweden, Canada and France reflect these faults or instead have taken them into account.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ ABDUL RAHMAN, EIRLIANI AND B.BUMP, JESSE, “Sweden ditched ‘feminist foreign policy’. Is it time for ‘fair foreign policy?’”, *Newsweek*, 2022, available at: <https://www.newsweek.com/sweden-ditched-feminist-foreign-policy-it-time-fair-foreign-policy-opinion-1758462>

⁵¹ JOACHIM, JUTTA, *op. cit.*, nota 27.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

5. SWEDEN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

“Why should this be part of the foreign policy? And it's rather simple, actually. We know from experience that more women means more peace. If women are around the table when peace deals are negotiated, then those peace agreements will last longer. There will be more options on the table when these negotiations take place. And women are good peacekeepers as well.” - Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

5.1. An introduction to the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy

Sweden was the first country to introduce a FFP in 2014 under Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. Sweden had already established a reputation as a champion of women's rights even prior to the adoption of its FFP, consistently ranking at the top global indices measuring gender equality.⁵⁴ Moreover, Margot Wallström is widely recognized as a leading advocate for gender equality and the advancement of women's and girl's rights on a global scale.⁵⁵ Through the implementation of a FFP, Sweden further established its position as a feminist country, as it continued to foster gender equality globally.

With the adoption of a FFP, Sweden not only redefined security by prioritizing the rights of women and girls, but also emphasized the need for a legal framework that empowers women to claim their rights. This was highlighted by Margot Wallström in an interview with the Council of Foreign Relations stating that in order for a FFP to work, there needs to be a legal framework in place and a normative situation that allows women to claim their rights.⁵⁶ Wallström also highlighted that a FFP is related with more peace and security, as more women means more peace.⁵⁷ To illustrate this, she provided the example of Syria raising the question “how can you arrive at peace in Syria without allowing women a place in the constitutional commission or at the table, or taking into account the suffering of women, but also the role that they play”.⁵⁸ In this way, the implementation of a FFP by Sweden not only advanced its promotion of gender equality,

⁵⁴ WALFRIDSSON, HANNA, “Sweden's new government abandons feminist foreign policy”, *Human Rights Watch*, 2022, available at:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/31/swedens-new-government-abandons-feminist-foreign-policy>

and MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, “Handbook on Sweden's feminist foreign policy”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Offices of Sweden*, 2014, available at:

https://www.swedenabroad.se/globalassets/ambassader/zimbabwe-harare/documents/handbook_swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf

⁵⁵ PEACE WOMEN, “Hiding behind the f-word: the failures of Sweden's feminist foreign policy”, *Women's international league for peace and freedom*, (n.a), available at:

<http://peacewomen.org/resource/hiding-behind-f-word-failures-swedens-feminist-foreign-policy>

⁵⁶ COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, “Feminist Foreign Policy: A conversation with former foreign minister Margot Wallström of Sweden”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2019, available at:

<https://www.cfr.org/event/feminist-foreign-policy-conversation-former-foreign-minister-margot-wallstrom-sweden-0>

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

but also served as a powerful reminder of the critical role that women's rights and participation play in achieving sustainable peace and security worldwide.

In the aforementioned interview, Margot Wallström discussed two of the potential challenges that could come with the implementation of the FFP. One of the key issues she addressed was how to ensure that those involved in the implementation of the policy aligned with its principles, given that not all women identify as feminists.⁵⁹ Wallström responded that a FFP tackles issues of violence and security as a whole, therefore the goal would be to find a common ground on which everyone, whether feminists or not, can agree in order to protect women.⁶⁰

Margot Wallström also brought to the fact that feminism can be perceived and interpreted differently in every country. As a result, feminism can sometimes have negative connotations or be twisted in a negative way.⁶¹ Additionally, not every country prioritizes the protection and promotion of women's rights, so dialogue and debate are necessary to advance FFP goals. Furthermore, countries that choose to implement a FFP will do so according to their own interpretation of feminism.⁶²

In relation to this, Wallström articulates that:

“We must not forget that this is about peace and security. It's a women's issue. It is really about peace and security and development. Without women, we cannot have neither peace, nor security, not anymore development.”⁶³

Sweden's distinction as the first country to adopt a FFP has resulted in the creation of clear guidelines that can be used as a blueprint by other countries contemplating the implementation of a similar policy. Furthermore, the country was recognized as a major pioneer in recognizing that “gender equality is crucial for broader foreign policy objectives, including security, prosperity, and sustainable development”.⁶⁴ This chapter will therefore present the Swedish FFP and its characteristics. Then, it will present the contradictions within the policy, followed by an illustration of the reasons why the policy was abandoned. Finally, it will offer an analysis of the Swedish FFP as a whole.

5.2. Characteristics of Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy

This section will now present the characteristics of the Swedish FFP. The main objective of Sweden's FFP was to strengthen all women's and girl's rights, representation and resources, based on the reality in which they live.⁶⁵ Hence why it is said that the Swedish FFP is based on the three R's (rights, representation and resources) with an added fourth R (reality), to implement the three R's to the realities of women and girls around the world. The policy aims to change existing patriarchal structures and enhance the visibility of women and girls as actors in peace and security matters based on intersectionality.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it focuses on two main areas. Namely, “international

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² The definition of feminism used for this thesis can be found in the “Defining Feminist Foreign Policy” chapter of this thesis.

⁶³ COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, *op. cit.*, nota 56.

⁶⁴ WALFRIDSSON, HANNA, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

⁶⁵ OECD, *op. cit.*, nota 1.

⁶⁶ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

agenda-setting through a gender-sensitive lens that allows for the reframing and mobilization of international policy action” and “normative entrepreneurship, guided by an ethically informed framework of cosmopolitanism and human rights that seeks to shape global developments in a gender-sensitive direction”.⁶⁷

“Throughout the world, women are neglected in terms of resources, representation and rights. This is the simple reason why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy – with full force, all around the world.”⁶⁸

The three R’s on which the FFP is based each aim to promote a different dimension of women in peace and justice matters. Firstly, the rights aspect aims to “promote all women’s and girl’s full enjoyment of human rights, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action”.⁶⁹ Secondly, the representation aspect aims to “promote women’s participation and influence in decision making processes at all levels and in all areas, and shall seek dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including civil society”.⁷⁰ Finally, the policy should ensure the allocation of resources to “the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for all women and girls to enjoy human rights”.⁷¹ In terms of the reality aspect, this was implemented afterwards to ensure that the main three R’s could be implemented taking into account the reality of each situation. The three R’s on which the Swedish FFP is based, clearly identify the main goals of the policy and can serve as a toolbox on which other countries can base their FFP.

Based on the three R’s the Swedish FFP prioritizes five main areas for policy action. Following the Foreign Service Action Plan 2015-2018 the government’s prioritized areas were promoting the rule of law, comparing gender-based and sexual violence, addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights, economic empowerment of women, and advocating sustainable development.⁷²

Initially the implementation of the policy was successful due to two key factors. Firstly, due to the full integration in the ministry of foreign affairs, as “the policy benefited from strong leadership and deep ownership through a bottom-up approach that has involved consultation with all ministry staff”.⁷³ Secondly, the support for roll out which involved a comprehensive set of guidance and support mechanisms for implementation, including the introduction of gender budgeting and making sure that the diversity of the staff in the ministry reflected its commitment to gender equality.⁷⁴

In a nutshell the Swedish FFP aims to change existing patriarchal structures, enhance the visibility of women and girls in matters of security, and strengthen their rights, representation and resources based on the reality they live in.

⁶⁷ AGGESTAM, KARIN, and BERGMAN-ROSAMOND, “Swedish feminist foreign policy in the making: ethics, politics and gender” in *Ethics and international affairs, Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs*, vol. 30, 2016, num. 3, pp 323-334.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679416000241>

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² AGGESTAM, KARIN, and BERGMAN-ROSAMOND, *op. cit.*, nota 67.

⁷³ OECD, *op. cit.*, nota 1.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

5.3. The paradoxes of Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy

While the initial success of Sweden's FFP was apparent, its implementation revealed certain contradictions, leading to criticism of the Swedish government's approach to the policy. This section will present the two major contradictions of the policy which led to its abandonment: the export of arms to countries with poor human rights records, and Sweden's migration policies.

Firstly, the export of arms to countries with poor human rights records was viewed as a contradiction to the policy's goals. The government had declared itself as a humanitarian superpower following a feminist-oriented foreign policy, yet the weapons exported by Sweden often contributed to gender-based violence and the repression of women in conflict areas.⁷⁵ For example, Sweden has not only continued to export arms to Saudi Arabia, an authoritarian state which consistently commits human rights infraction and women's rights violations, but it has also supported its military operations, the consequences of which hit women and girls the hardest.⁷⁶ This is an enormous contradiction in Swedish FFP as the strengthening of women's rights, resources and representation is not feasible if the country continues to support military action that further harms women and girls.

As previously mentioned, the 2017 action plan for Sweden's FFP stated that the government should encourage a gender perspective disarmament and weapons control.⁷⁷ However, the Swedish government has failed to incorporate this into their military plans. The Swedish government agency in charge of exports of military equipment declared that they "had not received any political signals that a feminist policy should be incorporated into their operations".⁷⁸ Initially Wallström had wanted to implement Article 7 of the UN Arms Trade Treaty ratified in 2013.⁷⁹ The treaty requires state parties to prohibit the export of arms if they will be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian or human rights law.⁸⁰ Wallström was met with heavy resistance from Saudi, Swedish and EU business actors concerned about the impact on their exports.⁸¹ This clearly shows an incoherence between the stated goals in the FFP and its application to all aspects of the foreign policy, especially military action.

Sweden's migration policies were also contradictory to the FFP. The migration crisis of 2015 led Sweden to close their borders, which negatively impacted the human rights of women and girls.⁸² Specifically, the temporary asylum legislation implemented in 2016, which "renders family reunification practically impossible for most people claiming asylum in Sweden".⁸³ This legislation meant that women and girls often had no alternative but to remain in conflict zones, refugee camps, or become stranded in transit routes.⁸⁴ Once again the implementation of this asylum legislation shows a contradiction with the goals stated in the Swedish FFP.

⁷⁵ AGGESTAM, KARIN, and BERGMAN-ROSAMOND, *op. cit.*, nota 67.

⁷⁶ PEACE WOMEN, *op. cit.*, nota 55.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Article 7 requires States Parties to take into account the potential for arms to be used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women and children when conducting this risk assessment.

⁸⁰ PEACE WOMEN, *op. cit.*, nota 55.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

These contradictions raise questions on the effectiveness of the implementation of a FFP. Considering the fact that Sweden has often been considered to be a feminist country, and its tendency to use feminist language as part of its “brand”, its FFP “runs the risk of becoming a convenient smoke screen to hide the unsavory parts of the country’s foreign policy agenda”.⁸⁵ As argued by Peace Women, “while Sweden may stand up to Trump’s heavily masculine-coded foreign policy, the government also effectively chooses to pragmatically turn a blind eye to other human rights violations concerning women and girls worldwide when it concerns Sweden’s own interests”.⁸⁶

Although Sweden’s implementation of a FFP may have been a milestone in the promotion of women’s rights in the country, and an eye opener for other countries worldwide, there is much room for improvement. The contradictions presented with the policy goals and its actual implementation may be due to the fact that it is a new concept and there are no guidelines as to how to effectively implement it. However, the lack of cohesion of the policy’s goals and implementation might have been the driver factors that have pushed the Swedish government to stop following its FFP in 2022.

5.4. Exploring the factors behind Sweden’s abandonment of the policy

Sweden’s introduction of the first-ever FFP sparked global debate with both positive and negative reactions. This section will analyze the successes and the failures of the policy in order to establish the reasons why the Swedish government decided to abandon it in 2022.

On the one hand, the FFP enabled Sweden to make progress in promoting gender equality in certain countries around the world, demonstrating several achievements of the policy. In 2017, whilst Sweden was on the UN Council, it worked to implement a resolution that sexual and gender-based violence could be grounds for sanctions.⁸⁷ Moreover, Sweden helped contribute to a number of new policies on female political representation in Moldova and Somalia, and it played a key role in the inclusion of gender equality issues in Colombia’s 2016 peace deal.⁸⁸ Lastly, it helped advance new legislation regarding gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage in around 20 countries, and encouraged women’s right advocates from Somalia and Nigeria to speak at the Council.⁸⁹ These examples clearly show that although the Swedish FFP has seen some criticism, it has had a good impact on the promotion of women’s rights in some parts of the world.

On the other hand, the policy also had some areas of improvement where it failed to achieve its goals. A prominent example is the diplomatic dispute between Sweden and Saudi Arabia regarding arms deals, due to the implementation of the FFP. In 2015, Wallström made some critical remarks on Saudi women’s rights and democracy which were identified by the Saudi Foreign Minister as “offensive” and a “blatant interfere in its internal affairs” and led Saudi Arabia to recall its ambassador to Stockholm.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Saudi Arabia blocked a speech by the Swedish foreign minister to the Arab

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ BBC, “Sweden ditches ‘feminist foreign policy’”, *BBC News*, 2022, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63311743>

⁸⁸ THE GUARDIAN, “Swedish government scraps country’s pioneering ‘feminist foreign policy’”, *The guardian*, 2022, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/18/swedish-government-scraps-countrys-pioneering-feminist-foreign-policy>

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ BBC, *op. cit.*, nota 87.

league.⁹¹ As a result, Sweden ended what had been a longstanding weapons deal between with Saudi Arabia.⁹² This deal was worth millions of dollars in Swedish arms exports and as a result the decision to end it was met with a lot of backlash from different business actors as it raised concerns about the impact on their exports.⁹³ The policy's inability to effectively protect women in conflict areas and the resulting backlash may have been a catalyst for the government's decision to abandon it..

Despite the strong promotion of the FFP by Margot Wallström, Tobias Billström decided to abandon it. Billström, the Swedish Foreign Minister the successor of Margot Wallström stated that “gender equality is a fundamental value in Sweden and also for this government, but we are not going to continue with a FFP because the label obscures the fact that the Swedish foreign policy must be based on Swedish values and Swedish interests”.⁹⁴ Wallström had been a strong promoter of the FFP, and its implementation had been a landmark for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality globally. As Hannah Walfridsson argues, “using the word “feminism” signals a promise to reflect women's needs and interests in all policy making; it also challenges gendered institutions and power hierarchies”.⁹⁵ This is exactly what the Swedish FFP aimed to achieve, thus, the abandonment of the policy goes against such ambitions. Sweden, which had been a pioneer in the promotion of women's rights in foreign affairs took a step back in this regard.

What is particularly interesting here, is that whilst Billström argues that the use of the word “feminism” clouds the actual goals of their foreign policy, Wallström used the word “feminism” to reflect the foreign policy as aiming to advance women's needs and challenge gendered institutions. Billström alludes that the label does not represent what the Swedish foreign policy should do, which is to display the values and interest of Sweden. This can be linked to the contradictions mentioned above, where the policy faced controversy specially regarding the protection of women's rights concerning arms deals and the migration crises.

The change of the foreign policy also led to a change in the goals of the Swedish government. In a speech Billström established that through the new foreign policy, the government will “primarily pursue a Swedish and European foreign policy with Swedish interests and democratic values at its core”.⁹⁶ In light of the current situation in Europe, with the large-scale war between Russia and Ukraine, Sweden's new policy set out a new course for its overall foreign, security and defense policy.⁹⁷ Some of the new government goals include the commitment to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation; to remain a proactive and constructive partner in the European Union; to foster dialogue and cooperation with China to promote trade; and to make strategic economic partners.⁹⁸

Even though Sweden no longer follows a FFP Billström continues to keep gender equality in foreign policy, although not at the same extent as Wallström. He stated that “excluding women from education, work or in some other way denying them the right to participate in society, as is happening now in Afghanistan, for example, is a violation of their human rights; this government will pursue strategic gender equality efforts in

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ PEACE WOMEN, *op. cit.*, nota 55.

⁹⁴ WALFRIDSSON, HANNA, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ BILLSTRÖM, TOBIAS, “Statement of Government Policy”, *Parliamentary debate on foreign affairs*, 15 February 2023.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

development cooperation policy and foreign policy”.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the new government continues to support various gender equality initiatives, including some in conflict areas where women suffer from sexual violence, exploitation in prostitution and human trafficking.¹⁰⁰ Although the government has chosen to abandon the FFP, it is evident that they are still committed to promoting women’s rights through alternative means. Nevertheless, the level of advocacy will be considerably lower than that of the previous FFP.

The new government’s decision to discard the FFP was a critical choice. Sweden had been the first country to introduce a FFP, which had been applauded by some and criticized by others, but it had been a step in the right direction for the promotion and protection of women’s rights worldwide. Therefore, the abandonment of such a groundbreaking policy raises a number of questions about its legitimacy. The conflict between gender equality and economic interests caused by the contradictions on weapons control policies leads to the following question. Does the abandonment of the policy show that, as human rights watch argues, a FFP is still something that is not fully implemented in the agenda and can be dropped when other issues seem to be more important?¹⁰¹ The disagreement between Billström and Wallström on the use of “feminism” to label the policy raises the following questions. Does the use of the word “feminist” put a target on the policy’s back? Would it be more effective to dedicate a section of the foreign policy to gender equality where all the issues of representation, rights and resources should be addressed? Would this be easier to accept by countries who do not regard feminism or women’s rights as a priority? The events in Sweden regarding the FFP have showed that it is not only different countries which have diverging views on what feminism means, it is also governments within the same country.

All these questions suggest that further research should be carried out to fully understand the factors that pushed the new government to follow a different path. The contradictions of the policy may have shed light on some aspects of the FFP taking away the focus on what was actually important. The policy should have promoted radical change, but it failed to do so in some areas, perpetuating gender inequalities. The focus on these contradictions may have, as was argued by Billström, obscured the actual values and interests of Sweden.

5.5. Analyzing the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy

Taking the characteristics of the policy and the criticism it has received into consideration, the theoretical framework presented will be used to provide an in-depth analysis of the Swedish FFP. Firstly, this chapter will answer the two questions proposed by Jennifer Thomson: *What is the nature of the problem? And how is the problem resolved?* Secondly, it will be studied whether the Swedish FFP presents the characteristics proposed by Aggestam and True. Thirdly, the policy will be analyzed to see whether it fulfils the components mentioned by Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement.

To begin with, Sweden seems to identify gender inequality to be the main problem for foreign and development policy. The main goal of the Swedish FFP as demonstrated above is to strengthen all women’s and girl’s rights, representation and resources based on the reality they live in. The all-encompassing goal for the country’s policy is to “ensure

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ WALFRIDSSON, HANNA, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives”.¹⁰² Therefore, Sweden views gender inequality as the primary problem and implements a FFP as the proposed solution to address it. As argued by Jennifer Thompson, “their foreign policy is underpinned by a liberal feminist sensibility that sees global society as predicated on an imbalance between male and female power”.¹⁰³ To answer the first question proposed by Thompson, Sweden clearly identifies the inequalities suffered by women in terms of their rights, representation and resources globally as the main problem and therefore aims to address this through its foreign policy.

In terms of the second question of *how the problem is resolved* Sweden clearly centers their FFP around the four R's. This provides a clear link between the problem and how it is meant to be resolved. As the problem is considered to be the inequalities regarding the rights, representation and resources of women, Sweden recognizes the improvement and promotion of their rights, representation and resources based on the reality they live in as the way to resolve such inequalities. Furthermore, Sweden provides a clear explanation of how each R is to be adopted and what the goals are. At some points the handbook can be vague in how the goals are going to be measured and accountability is going to be held. However, the aims have clear action plans on how they are to be achieved and they have a policy which is anchored in existing institutional and legal commitments.¹⁰⁴ All in all, the nature of the problem in the Swedish FFP is the systemic inequality suffered by women in regards to their rights, representation and resources and the way to address the problem is to create clear actions plans on how to improve women's situations regarding the three R's taking into consideration the reality they live in.

Aggestam and True provide three bases on which to study FFP, descriptive and substantive representation, gender mainstreaming and feminist transformative principles. Sweden seems to have good representation given that it is one of the main goals of the policy, to improve representation of women in all aspects of foreign policy. As stated above, the representation aspect aims to “promote women's participation and influence in decision making processes at all levels and in all areas, and shall seek dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including civil society”.¹⁰⁵ Descriptive and substantive representation of women is a main aspect of the Swedish FFP, which is important for the success of the policy. Furthermore, it also seems to take the intersectionality aspect into consideration as it will ensure dialogue will women representatives at all levels in civil society. However, it is important that intersectionality is also considered in terms of making sure that women belonging to different communities (class, ethnicity...) are considered in the promotion and creation of the policy. With regard to the second aspect Sweden ensures the practice of gender mainstreaming to advance gender equality and women's rights across all levels of foreign policy making.¹⁰⁶ In their handbook they also provide a clear definition of what gender mainstreaming entails so that there is no confusion in the implementation of gender in all policies. It is stated that “gender mainstreaming involves a gender equality perspective being included in all policies that affect people's conditions, so that all women and men, girls and boys can live equal lives”.¹⁰⁷ In terms of the feminist transformative principles, being the first country to label their foreign policy feminist, there were high expectations on their policies to be transformative of the patriarchal structures that enable for gender equality

¹⁰² THOMSON, JENNIFER, *op. cit.*, nota 9.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

¹⁰⁶ AGGESTAM, KARIN, AND TRUE, JACQUI, *op. cit.*, nota 8.

¹⁰⁷ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

to continue to exist. However, the policy failed to have policies powerful enough to create the desired change, especially within the arms sector where the Swedish government continued to export arms to Saudi Arabia, a country which does not protect women's rights. This is also one of the reasons why the government decided to abandon the policy in 2022.

Finally, using Lyric Thompson's and Rachel Clement's criteria, we can evaluate the strength of the Swedish FFP. The Swedish FFP seems to fulfil the first criteria of resource endowment as one of the main goals established in the policy by one of the three R's is the focus on resources to advance women's rights. More specifically the Swedish FFP states that it "should ensure the allocation of resources to the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for all women and girls to enjoy human rights".¹⁰⁸ Even though it is important to allocate resources, the Swedish government does not offer clear instructions on how this should be carried out, or on the amount that should be allocated. When referring to comprehensiveness, we can emphasize that although the Swedish FFP aspires to include an intersectional approach in their policies, it does not indicate how to do this. Lastly, coherence is an important criterion for the successful implementation of a FFP. The Swedish FFP, although successful in some aspects, seems to have failed at the coherence between the theory and the practice. This can specially be seen in the arms export with Saudi Arabia as previously explained.

All in all, Sweden seemed to be presenting a strategic policy using existing structures and working within the liberal international system to achieve its goals.¹⁰⁹ There was a good link between their domestic and international agenda, as they had been considered to be a promoter of women's rights nationally long before they implemented a FFP. Furthermore, they introduced a policy with clear guidelines for the most part of what the goals were and how these were to be achieved. However, one of the biggest mistakes of the policy was the lack of coherence between what they preached and what they carried out. This proved to be extremely detrimental as it pushed the Swedish government to abandon the policy in 2022. It is therefore important to understand that looking at the example of Sweden, for a FFP to be successful it should be coherent and be strong enough so that it is not abandoned when things don't seem to go the right way.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ THOMSON, JENNIFER, *op. cit.*, nota 9.

6. CANADA'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

“Canadians are safer and more prosperous when more of the world shares our values. Those values include feminism and the promotion of the rights of women and girls. It is important - and historic - that we have a prime minister and a government proud to claim themselves as feminists. Women’s rights are human rights. This includes sexual and reproductive rights - and the right to access safe and legal abortions. These rights are at the core of our foreign policy”¹¹⁰ -Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

6.1. An Introduction to the Canadian Feminist Foreign Policy

Canada has been one of the countries to implement a number of feminist initiatives to advance their foreign policy. Canada’s foreign policy has therefore translated into a number of reforms, in different areas of their foreign policy, to represent their approach to a FFP. In the past years the Government of Canada has introduced the following initiatives:

1. The Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) introduced in 2017 “to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world by promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls”.¹¹¹
2. The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and Strong Secure Engaged: Canada’s Defense Policy also introduced in 2017.¹¹²

Furthermore, the government brought gender equality to the center of its 2018 G7 presidency, included a gender equality perspective in several free trade agreements negotiations and appointed the first ever ambassador for women, peace and security in Canada.¹¹³ The federal government has also made a number of feminist investments in its international assistance program, including C\$150 million over three years aimed at supporting women’s organizations and networks in developing countries with the Women’s Voice and Leadership Program, and supporting the Equality Fund with a contribution of C\$300 million.¹¹⁴ At the Women Deliver conference in Vancouver in 2019, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to investing C\$700 million annually over ten years for global initiatives promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, as part of a larger C\$1.4 billion commitment globally to women and girls health.¹¹⁵

The measures taken by Canada are a clear indicator of the country’s commitment to advance and promote women’s rights globally. However, the country has not labelled their whole foreign policy as feminist. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the FIAP and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWS) as Canada’s FFP

110 GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA, “Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy”, Global Affairs Canada, 2017.

111 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “Conversations on Canada’s Feminist Foreign Policy” in Feminist Foreign Policy, Amnesty International, (n.a), available at: <https://www.amnesty.ca/what-we-do/feminist-foreign-policy/>

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

initiatives. Furthermore, this chapter will also include some recommendation on the possible implementation of a FFP which addressed more areas of the foreign policy.

6.1.1. Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

The primary objective of the FIAP is to contribute to global efforts to eradicate poverty globally, targeting in particular gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.¹¹⁶ Following this primary objective, Canada seems to believe that one of the best ways to eradicate poverty is through the achievement of a more gender equal world through the empowerment of women and girls. Canada's handbook states "we need to make sure that women and girls are empowered to reach their full potential so they can earn their own livelihoods, which will benefit families as well as the economic growth of their communities and countries".¹¹⁷ The creation of the policy has been based on the recommendations made by stakeholders and with an aim as to reflect Canadian values, through the definition of an approach based on human rights, one that takes into account all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, place of birth, color, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability or migrant or refugee status.¹¹⁸

The handbook highlights that the policy is evidence-based and takes into account Canada's expertise and comparative advantage.¹¹⁹ The policy also aims to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to eradicate poverty by 2030, and it is also aligned with the Paris Agreement on climate change, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment.¹²⁰

Furthermore, the policy highlights three main issues that it aims to address:

1. The FIAP must underscore the importance of human dignity, especially taking into account the context we are living in where conflicts are multiplying and humanitarian principles, international laws and human rights are increasingly under threat.
2. In order to achieve the maximum impact possible of the goals of the FIAP and help eradicate poverty, we must passionately defend the rights of women and girls so they can participate fully in society.
3. With a goal to keep the actions of the policy sustainable, it must be ensured that there is a contribution to building local capacity.

Taking all this into consideration Canada's FIAP vision can be translated as follows:

"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"¹²¹

Furthermore, Canada's feminist international assistance:

"Will help protect and promote the human rights of all vulnerable and marginalized groups and increase their

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp. vi.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp ii.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

participation in equal decision making since a feminist approach is much more than focusing only on women and girls; rather it is the most effective way to address the root causes of poverty”.¹²²

In order to achieve its goals, the FIAP focuses on gender equality in a manner that is both targeted and crosscutting. The targeted approach allows the policy to “focus on initiatives that fight poverty and inequality by supporting gender equality and defending the rights of women and girls, particularly their sexual health and reproductive rights”.¹²³ The crosscutting approach refers to the facts that “all the international assistance initiatives, across all actions areas, should be developed and implemented in ways that improve gender equality and empower women and girls”.¹²⁴ Furthermore, the crosscutting approach also means that “all the implementing partners must consult with women and involve them in needs assessments, decision making and planning of initiatives, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects”.¹²⁵

The core action for the new policy is gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which should be integrated across all areas.¹²⁶ Such areas include human dignity, covering humanitarian actions, health and nutrition and education; growth that works for everyone, which focuses on areas such as sustainable agriculture, green technologies and renewable energy; environment and climate action focusing on adaptation and mitigation, as well as on water management; inclusive governance, including democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance; and peace and security, by promoting inclusive peace processes and combatting gender-based violence.¹²⁷

The scope of the policy also widens in relation to other policies in its geographical distribution. Canada will no longer limit its international assistance strictly to a list of countries to focus, and it will no longer disperse its efforts in all directions.¹²⁸ Rather, Canada will aim to strike the right balance to ensure that Canada’s contributions have the greatest impact possible all around the world.¹²⁹ For this, it will “address conflicts and climate change in fragile states and contexts, while continuing to foster economic development and growth that works for everyone in the poorest countries and supporting middle-income countries that face particular challenges, notably with respect to governance”.¹³⁰

Taking all this into consideration Canada’s FIAP’s main objective seems to be the eradication of poverty and the creation of a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world through the empowerment of women and girls. Since there is a clear focus on empowerment it is therefore important to understand what is meant by “empowerment” in this policy. The FIAP aims to empower women through supporting efforts to reduce sexual and gender-based violence, to strengthen women’s organization and movements that advance women’s rights, to improve government’s capacity to provide services to women and girls and to improve gender analysis.¹³¹ It is also important to highlight that, as has been stated before and in the handbook, the use of feminism in this policy does not

¹²² Ibid, page vi.

¹²³ Ibid, page ii.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid, page iii.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

limit to women and girls but also includes other marginalized communities who are affected by inequality and exclusion. However, in the application of the policy this intersectionality is hard to be identified.

All in all, the Canadian Feminist International Assistance Policy aims to expand Canada's values globally, namely feminism and the promotion of women and girls' rights, with a goal to eradicate poverty globally and to create a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world through the empowerment of women and girls.

6.1.2. Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS)

As well as the FIAP, the NAPWPS is another initiative implemented by Canada in 2017 for the promotion of women and girls' rights worldwide for the advancement towards the future inclusion of a FFP. Although not a FFP in itself it is a feminist initiative which covers a certain area of foreign policy, namely peace and security. The Government of Canada launched the NAPWPS on the 1st of November in 2017 for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security 2017-2020.¹³²

The main vision of the NAPWPS is to achieve better peace and security for women worldwide. Women, girls, men and boys are affected in different ways by violent conflicts. Canada believes that it is of extreme importance to recognize these consequence and address them, which is also implied by the UNSC women, peace and security agenda.¹³³ The action plan of the NAPWPS provides a framework for a "cohesive whole-of-government" approach to implement the agenda and ensure that the activities the activities carried out in fragile states and states affected by conflict align with Canada's broader commitments such as gender-equality, empowerment of women and girls, respect for women's and girls' human rights, and inclusion and respect for diversity.¹³⁴ Therefore, the main goal of the NAPWPS is to address the inequalities created in conflict areas which affect women more, through the implementation of an agenda which allows for coherence between the theory (the commitments of Canada) and the practice (the activities they carry out in conflict areas).

In order to achieve this Canada will use their diplomatic and programming efforts to advance the women, peace and security agenda, making a specific commitment to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated in all peace and security efforts.¹³⁵ With a view to working towards a more inclusive peace, gender-based analysis tools will be implemented to strengthen Canada's capacity to integrate more targeted gender equality objectives into all the different activities they carry out around the world.¹³⁶

Diplomatic efforts will also be used for the achievement of three other goals. Firstly, "to support gender and diversity objectives when considering how to counter and prevent radicalization to violence and violent extremism".¹³⁷ Secondly, "to manage

¹³² Government of Canada, "Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security", Government of Canada, 2017, available at: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/cnac_wps-pnac_fps.aspx?lang=eng

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

international migration issues by supporting and protecting women and children who are migrating to Canada”.¹³⁸ Thirdly, to integrate gender perspectives when providing advice about justice reform in fragile and conflict-affected states and in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity”.¹³⁹

In order to achieve these goals, the NAPWPS also implements a number of monitoring and reporting mechanisms. To begin with, each of the implementing partners have developed individual implementation plans to guide their activities and ensure effective peace and security for women.¹⁴⁰ Secondly, the plans in place will be updated so as to adapt with arising challenges and changing situation on the ground of conflict areas.¹⁴¹ Lastly, an annual progress report on the implementation of the action plan will be tabled in Parliament to monitor their execution.¹⁴² One last important point that is highlighted in the NAPWPS is the fact that the plan was developed in collaboration with civil society. The NAPWPS created a new advisory group which was made up of civil representatives and government officials, who participate in meetings to monitor the progress of the plan and discuss emerging issues and reactions to those.¹⁴³

Both initiatives implemented by Canada complement each other and promote feminism in some areas of its foreign policy. Whilst the FIAP aims to eradicate global poverty through the promotion of women’s and girls’ rights and their empowerment, the NAPWPS aims to highlight the importance to address the impact that conflict has on the creation of inequalities for women and girls.

6.2. Towards a Feminist Foreign Policy for Canada

Although Canada has not explicitly labeled their foreign policy as feminist, they have implemented a number of initiatives which clearly show that they include feminist approaches in some of their foreign policy areas. The global context for the past couple of years has brought to light the importance to include a fully FFP. With social economic inequality increasingly undermining human rights and democracy, global military expenditures sky rocketing, the impact on the climate crisis globally, the rise in conflicts and humanitarian emergencies the world needs feminist leaders now more than ever.¹⁴⁴ Adding to this is the recent Covid-19 pandemic which has expanded existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting women and gender diverse people.¹⁴⁵

As argued by Thompson, with such impacts of extreme inequality, climate catastrophe, ongoing military conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the erosion of hard-won rights, “feminist foreign policy is one tool that shows promise for taking a much-needed, intersectional and often multilateral approach to women’s rights, simultaneously addressing urgent issues such as climate change, peace and security, inclusive growth, global health and poverty alleviation”.¹⁴⁶ Canada has already taken several initiatives to fight for a more gender equal world with the promotion of women’s rights and therefore is not far from implementing a FFP, which as Thompson has argued, is a necessity to combat all the global arising issues. However, for the effective implementation of a FFP

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, *op. cit.*, nota 111.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ THOMPSON, LYRIC, “Feminist Foreign Policy: A Framework”, *International Center for Research on Women*, 2020, available at: <https://www.icrw.org/publications/feminist-foreign-policy-a-framework/>

in Canada, there are some key feminist principles as well as some accountability mechanisms which should be carefully considered.

In a dialogue launched by Global Affairs Canada in 2020, a working group of organizations came together to gather inputs from activists, practitioners, and scholars who are actively engaged in developing a Canadian foreign policy from feminist perspectives.¹⁴⁷ The group identified the main goals that a FFP should incorporate. Those include “transforming global norms, structures and institutions that perpetuate the inequality of women, gender diverse people, Indigenous people of color, immigrants, migrants and people with disabilities; and to promote a more just, equitable, and peaceful world”.¹⁴⁸ This can be linked to the goals of the FIAP which could be interpreted as the basis for the creation of a FFP. Furthermore they consider the effort to combat the destructive forces of patriarchy, colonialism, racism, heteronormativity, capitalism, and militarism that exist globally and the re-envisioning of foreign policy to benefit everyone as fundamental for the successful implementation of a FFP.¹⁴⁹ Following this line of thought for a successful FFP to exist it should be a drastic change from what has existed so far, and aim to fight against longstanding patriarchal institutions, which is similar to Sweden’s FFP.

The working group identified a number of principles necessary for the implementation of a FFP, which are the following:¹⁵⁰

1. In order to achieve a meaningful and sustainable change, a feminist approach should be incorporated in all elements of the foreign policy, thus demanding policy coherence. It is also importance to consider that the coherence should also be reflected between the policies that Canada executes internationally and those executed domestically.
2. The promotion of international human rights norms and standards must be at the center of the FFP, meaning the FFP should take a rights-based approach. Furthermore, governments should be held accountable for the way their policies impact human rights in Canada and globally.
3. There should be a clear integration of intersectionality, diversity and inclusivity to better understand how power structures and systems of oppression affect all marginalized communities.
4. The FFP should aim to dismantle colonial legacies and promote anti-racism and anti-oppression in order to remove economic, social, cultural and political systems that perpetuate colonial violence and imperial ideologies underpinning international relations.
5. Demilitarization and peaceful resolution of conflicts should be promoted. Both human and economic costs of war as well as the investments on arms, weapons and militaries negatively impact investments in health care and social infrastructures.
6. An effective FFP should follow process principles and promote accountability. The prioritizing should not only be in the results of the policy but also on the process to achieve them. Therefore, consultation, dialogue and involvement of diverse civil society actors is a key component of a FFP.

¹⁴⁷ AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, *op. cit.*, nota 111.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ The following principles are all available at conversations on: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, *op. cit.*, nota 111.

As can be seen in these principles, a FFP should address a number of areas and be intersectional, to assure the inclusion of all marginalized communities, to be effective. Although Canada has clearly made progress towards the implementation of a FFP in the future, there are still all of these principles that need to be taken into consideration for an effective implementation of a FFP.

6.3. Striking a Balance Between Gender Equality and Radical Transformation

Canada's FFP has received some criticism on the fact that it is not as radical as it should be for a FFP to be transformative. The integration of gender equality aims in policy drafting is necessary, however it is not new, as we have seen with the example of Sweden. Some previous attempts have demonstrated that putting gender equality at the center of a policy is not always successful as it can easily be replaced by other goals considered more important.¹⁵¹ Canada has identified women's empowerment and gender equality as outcomes of the FFP rather than the drivers of the FFP. This way Canada may not follow the same path as previous FFPs whereby they can be replaced if other goals are considered more important, like in Sweden. However, Canada has not proposed any new structures, and therefore cannot be considered as a radical FFP.¹⁵²

Several authors who have analyzed the policy have identified a number of issues and have provided several recommendations for the improvement of the policy. This section will delve further into these recommendations, it will also demonstrate why the policy is not as radical as it should be to create impactful change. Firstly, the scope of the policy as well as its goals will be analyzed. Secondly, the implementation of the policy will be examined. Finally, the way in which the policy has been created, in terms of the participants will be examined.

The scope and the goals of the policy have been criticized for being too narrow and not including certain aspects necessary for a FFP to be successful.

Thus far, the scope of the Canadian FFP is focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Although whilst it is important to include both of these aspects in the content of the FFP, it should not be limited to that. By having such a limited scope, only focusing on those two aspects, the FFP can contribute division between foreign policy, security and defense, human rights, and development.¹⁵³ As it has been previously established, it is important for a feminist approach to foreign policy to bridge those divides and include a holistic, cross-sectoral, and intersectional perspective. Therefore, the Canadian government should also aim to take into account the need for some institutions that perpetuate the marginalization of women and underrepresentation of disadvantaged groups to undergo changes.¹⁵⁴ A broader and more nuanced scope of the FFP agenda is needed to eventually deconstruct the structural inequalities which continue to perpetuate gender inequality and hinder women empowerment. A feminist approach to foreign policy should therefore include the views and voices of those at the margins of society, and recognize the value of diversity and inclusion better.

¹⁵¹ HARPER, CAROLINE, "Canada's feminist aid agenda: brave but not radical", *ODI*, 2023, Available at: <https://odi.org/en/insights/canadas-feminist-aid-agenda-brave-but-not-radical/>

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ BOUKA, YOLANDE; VON HLATKY, STÉFANIE; MARTEL, STÉPHANIE; MARTIN-BRÛLÉ, SARAH-MYRIAM; MARTIN DE ALMAGRO INIESTA, MARIA; ZAHAR, MARIE-JOËLLE, "Policy Report: Is Canada's Foreign Policy Really Feminist? Analysis and Recommendations", *Network for Strategic Analysis*, 2021 (13).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

In relation to the goals, Canada's FFP scope is a bit too narrow and does seem to have an overarching approach to the achievement of such goals. Canada's FFP goals are focused on the short term, rather than having a holistic vision including short, medium and long-term objectives.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Canada mentions goals but it does not recognize how these will bring about fundamental change, some critics see this as the main problem of the policy.¹⁵⁶

There are also several problems with certain contradictions presented in the goals of the FFP. Firstly, some criticize the "business-centric approach in which the empowerment of women and girls is seen as a way to make countries more economically prosperous, in part because it serves the self-interest of the donor state".¹⁵⁷ This can be detrimental to the advancement of gender equality as if initiatives for economic prosperity are not implemented in the right manner, incentivizing a country to become more economically prosperous can perpetuate gender roles. Other discrepancies can be seen for example in the fact that although the Canadian government has introduced a number of initiatives to tackle women empowerment in different areas of foreign policy without a clear commitment to "disarmament, indigenous rights or intersectional approaches to decision-making, the policies cannot be transformative enough".¹⁵⁸ These highlight the importance of having an overarching vision which includes all aspects of foreign and security policy that should be included in the goals of a FFP. Up to this point Canada has presented the case for inclusion as a "smart thing to do" rather than "the right thing to do"; "while instrumental logic may be needed to convince reluctant parties, it is important for Canada's FFP not to lose sight of the importance of the normative values of equity and diversity, which should be pursued as ends unto themselves".¹⁵⁹ All in all, Canada should take a holistic approach to the scope and goals of the FFP to make sure that they are not reproducing gender stereotypes, and ensuring their inclusion and participation in all aspects of foreign policy.

Other issues with the Canadian FFP can be seen in the implementation of its goals. Some have questioned the approach whereby gender equality is not regarded as "an end in and of itself, but as the answer to other problems, such as economic growth or reducing poverty". The FIAP initiative advocates for gender issues highlighting the importance of greater economic opportunities for women. However, there is no evidence that this will change traditional gender roles and relations.¹⁶⁰ Gender equality as the answer to combat poverty can lead to the perpetuation of gender roles and stereotypes if implemented as the answer to the problem rather than the end goal.

There is also a lack of measurements of the impact of the initiatives. For example, the FIAP does not provide concrete measurements for the long-term impact of the initiatives as well as any indicator of successes and failures.¹⁶¹ The lack of instruments to measure success or failure is an obstacle for the improvement of the policy. This can lead to some incoherence within the policy itself. For example, while claiming to be a feminist and an advocate for women's right, the Liberals continued to sell armored vehicles to the government of Saudi Arabia, a regime well-known for committing human rights violations, particularly affecting women's rights and gender equality.¹⁶² This clearly

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² LAMENSHC, MARIE, "Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy", *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2020, available at: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canada-s-feminist-foreign-policy>

shows a discrepancy between the policy's feminist rhetoric and certain actions taken by the Trudeau government. Without instruments in place which signal these incoherences, it is hard to identify the things that do not work and therefore need changing. It is clear that women's inclusion and gender equality need structural change. However, for this to happen it is important that a FFP takes into consideration not only short-term goals, but also long-term ones; and that it develops a sophisticated manner of assessing change in power relations or structural inequalities.¹⁶³

One last important problem that the implementation of the Canadian FFP is facing, is the lack of sufficient investment. There has been limited financial resources allocated to the FIAP.¹⁶⁴ Instead of allocating new money, the Canadian government is redirecting existing funding towards gender equality and women and girls programming.¹⁶⁵ Although this may lead to results, there has also been an increase of the military budget, whilst also keeping aid spending at 0.26%, which has received a lot of criticism.¹⁶⁶ A government who rises their military expending whilst only relocating money to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment loses some credibility when claiming that they follow a FFP. Especially when such increase in spending and arms trade takes place with a country that violates human rights, in particular women's rights.

One last relevant aspect to consider is the fact that a FFP should take into account the importance of having the right partnerships and stakeholders to participate in the creation and the implementation of the policy. For an FFP to work, it should be "collaborative and inclusive but it is important to consult local non-state stakeholders which matter for the design of FFP initiatives".¹⁶⁷ One of the problems presented above is the fact that Canada's FFP fails to include a number of marginalized voices. By making sure that different state and non-state actors, which represent the different marginalized communities, have a role in the creation of the FFP the problem of representation could be addressed. Furthermore, the inclusion of both state and non-state actors in the drafting and implementation of an FFP will allow for voices with different interests to participate, thus ensuring a more holistic vision for the FFP and including both political and social interests.

Taking different opinions into account is also important when referring to the meaning of feminism and security. The understanding of feminism and security may vary within a country or outside the country. For example, the concept of feminism in the West might not be the same as in the East, therefore a FFP should be mindful of how it will be perceived in other parts of the world. Furthermore, the same can happen within a country which promotes a FFP, certain groups within society might not agree with the use of the word "feminist" to define a foreign policy. For a FFP to be accepted by those communities and countries that do not necessarily have the same concept of feminism, partnerships that include such views should be included in the creation and implementation processes. This is well presented in one of the recommendations by Yolande Bouka et. al in which they argue that Canada should pay attention to the manner in which its partners and other stakeholders understand security; it should also be more mindful of sources of resistance and concerns about the Western overtones of FFP, as well as potential backlash from religious groups and traditional communities.¹⁶⁸ In order to do this, Canada should build genuine partnerships that include the different possible points

¹⁶³ BOUKA, YOLANDE, ET. AL, *op. cit.*, nota 153.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

of view and encourage more engagement to build a FFP that encompasses various opinions. This way it can reach a wider audience and might be more easily accepted by countries which do not necessarily share the same meaning of feminism and security.

All in all, for Canada's foreign policy to be improved there should be more inclusion in all areas of the policy: the goals, the focus, the implementation, the drafting... In achieving this, it is easier to have an overarching and holistic view which encompasses different opinions and is more likely to reach all the marginalized communities. Analysis of the current FFP in Canada suggests that the policy would be improved by "more rigorously meeting GBA+ criteria, defined by Global Affairs Canada as an assessment of how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives".¹⁶⁹ Canada's main problem seems to be the lack of inclusion of diverse perspectives into the policy in terms of goals, implementation and focus. It should not only focus on women empowerment, and it should not think of women empowerment as an answer to other problems but as the end goal. The same would apply to gender equality, and expanding gender equality to not only mean women but other groups who are affected by such policies as well.

6.4. Analyzing the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Policy

This chapter will use the theoretical framework provided for the analysis of the policies, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the policy.

Canada's main aim for its FFP, through their Feminist International Assistance Policy and their National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security is the eradication of poverty globally through the empowerment of women and girls. Therefore, here the main problem is global poverty and the solution is the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality. As stated in their handbook "by eliminating barriers to equality and helping to create better opportunities women and girls can be powerful agents of change and improve their own lives and those of their families, communities and countries; this is a powerful way to reduce poverty for everyone".¹⁷⁰ According to this goal, women seem to be the key to social development and the eradication of poverty for themselves, their communities and their countries. As argued by Jennifer Thomson, this not only creates an enormous amount of pressure and responsibility on women, but it also means that their rights and their needs are not understood in their own terms but only in relation to the broader impact that their development will have on their wider context.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, women and girls are presented as being both the victims and the "saviors" of society, as they have the power to change and therefore better the world.¹⁷² Clearly Canada identifies the problem to be global poverty instead of gender inequality in itself, which raises doubts as to the intentions behind the policy. Is the policy really feminist? Or is the "feminism" only being used as a way to advance Canada's economic means?

In terms of the solution to the problem of poverty, Canada aims to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. Although the policy presents action plans it lacks clear instructions on how this are to be implemented and therefore how the goals are to be achieved. Furthermore, the solution to the problem of women empowerment seems to be focused on economic savings and bringing in the involvement of the private sector.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA, "Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy", *Global Affairs Canada*, 2017.

¹⁷¹ THOMSON, JENNIFER, *op. cit.*, nota 9.

¹⁷² Ibid.

The Canadian government provides that “as the economies of developing countries strengthen and become more stable, there is an opportunity for Canada to form new and mutually beneficial trading partnerships”.¹⁷³ This portrays that the Canadian government regards economic empowerment as the main solution for the eradication of poverty. Therefore, the Canadian FFP seems to be mostly focused on economic gains rather than on gender equality as a whole. Furthermore, the Canadian FFP can present challenging because they do not explicitly mention any existing legal frameworks on how gender equality should be advanced, and thus have to create their own narrative, which so far is only economy based. As argued by Thomson, “although the document calls for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls, this is not based in existing treaties and international organizations”.¹⁷⁴ Thus far it can be argued that the Canadian FFP’s goal is to eradicate global poverty, which they identify as the main problem, and the way to do this is the economic empowerment of women worldwide. This can prove problematic as the main goal is economic gains rather than gender equality, which is what feminism is about.

With regards to the commitments that a FFP should display, established by Aggestam and True, Canada does not fulfil all of them. Firstly, it does not mention the need for women representation in the policy, only with regards to their representation in Peace and Security.¹⁷⁵ Therefore it cannot be said that Canada is carrying out a descriptive and substantive gender representation. Furthermore, with regards to gender mainstreaming, Canada does not seem to prioritize this in their policy as they do not mention it in their handbook. However, this might be due to the fact that Canada is implementing a feminist international assistance policy as part of a broader foreign policy and therefore it cannot be said to have an influence on other parts of the foreign policy. Yet, the policy aims to include feminism in different areas of assistance such as climate change, peace and security and inclusive governance, amongst others.¹⁷⁶ The Canadian FIAP does not present feminist transformative principles as the policy has not been able to implement transformative feminist change. Although the policy has had some successes, in order to achieve meaningful and substantial change a feminist approach should be incorporated in all elements of foreign policy. With labelling just the international assistance policy as feminist, rather than a full foreign policy, there is a risk that some necessary aspects, for the promotion and protection of women’s rights as a whole in foreign affairs, are left out.

Lastly, the three bases on which the strength of a FFP can be analyzed according to Thompson and Clement will portray that the Canadian FFP as it is now, is weak. Canada has allocated limited financial resources to the implementation of the FIAP. Instead of allocating new money, it has just redirected existing funds towards gender equality. This might create challenges to its successful implementation and to create change. It is also ironic that whilst there is no new funding for the FIAP, the military expenses have risen. In terms of the comprehensiveness of the policy, Canada’s FFP this far does not seem to integrate enough intersectionality, diversity and inclusivity. This is needed to better understand how power structure and systems create different ways of marginalization and discrimination and how to address all of them. Coherence, another important aspect to measure the strength of the policy, seems to lack in the Canadian FFP. Although the foreign policy aims to encourage the empowerment of women, it also continues to raise military expenses and engage in arms exports with countries that do not respect women’s

¹⁷³ GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA, *op. cit.*, nota 110.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. vii.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

rights. Therefore, it cannot be said that coherence exists within the Canadian FFP. Taking these three aspects into consideration, one can argue that the Canadian FFP is not as strong as a foreign policy should be to be considered feminist according to Thompson and Clement.

All in all, the Canadian FFP as it exists now should undergo some changes to increase its capacity to implement change and to actually achieve significant development for gender equality globally. To accomplish this, it is important to recognize that formulating the main goal as women being the sole key to eradicating places an overwhelming burden on women and makes it unfeasible.

7. SPAIN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

“La igualdad es sinónimo de diversidad y, por ello, de riqueza. Riqueza en el ejercicio de los derechos por parte de toda la ciudadanía; pero también riqueza económica, prosperidad y justicia. En ese sentido, la política exterior feminista promueve tanto la defensa de nuestros intereses como los valores de nuestra sociedad”.¹⁷⁷ - Arancha González Laya, Ministra de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación.

7.1. An Introduction to the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy

Spain has emerged as a leading country in terms of its strong political commitment to promoting gender equality, primarily through its adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁷⁸ The persistence of gender inequalities in all aspects of society underscores the urgency of increasing efforts to bridge gender gaps. In this regard, Spain's FFP aims to make tangible progress in achieving genuine and meaningful gender equality on the global stage.¹⁷⁹ Through the implementation of a FFP Spain is therefore enhancing its efforts to provide better support for women in terms of gender equality, internationally. The current global context has highlighted the existing gender equality imbalances within society. Such inequalities can be perceived in areas such as employment, gender violence, lack recognition within society, resource disparities and general economic circumstances conditions by well ingrained patriarchal institutions.¹⁸⁰

Similarly, to Canada and Sweden, Spain has also based its FFP on international development for the promotion and protection of the rights of women such as UNGA Resolution 1325 and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal number 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.¹⁸¹ Following this, Spain has implemented a number of national policies which continue to promote gender equality and are to be translated to the international sphere through the FFP. For example, law 2/2014 of the Action and the Foreign Service of the State identifies the promotion of equality between women and men and the eradication of gender violence within the values and interests of Spain.¹⁸² The implementation of a FFP makes it possible for Spain to further the fulfilment of their gender equality commitments, internationally.

Furthermore, Spain considers that gender equality benefits society as a whole and not just women and girls. This is portrayed by Spain's argument that gender equality

¹⁷⁷ MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA Y COOPERACIÓN, “Política Exterior Feminista: Impulsando la Igualdad en la Acción Exterior Española”, 2021, available at: https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Documents/2021_02_POLITICA%20EXTERIOR%20FEMINISTA.pdf

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

promotes economic growth, employment, and the improvement of productivity.¹⁸³ Furthermore, the full inclusion of women in every step of conflict resolution, including peace processes has proven to be necessary to guarantee efficiency, success and sustainability.¹⁸⁴ Taking all of this into consideration, the Spanish FFP should aim at encouraging the promotion of women's rights nationally, as well as continuing to promote them internationally, in every aspect of their foreign policy. By achieving to have coherence between the feminist national values and the international ones with regards to foreign policy, Spain will gain more credibility as a feminist promoter of a FFP.

7.2. Characteristics of the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy

Broadly speaking, at present the main goal of the Spanish FFP is addressing the existing gender inequality through the intensification of efforts to close the gender gaps towards a more real and effective equality globally.¹⁸⁵ In order to achieve this the Spanish FFP has a dual focus; it will aim to both make gender equality a priority in the Spanish External Action and include a gender equality focus in all the areas of the foreign policy.¹⁸⁶ The policy is primarily based on five principles:

1. Transformative focus, whereby the policy will promote a global vision of its FFP, ensuring coherence among all areas of external action. The transformative focus will also seek to create deep and structural change in the well ingrained patriarchal institutional culture, through the incorporation of a gender approach in a transversal and systematic way.¹⁸⁷
2. Committed leadership, meaning that the entire Foreign Service commits to promoting the FFP within the scope of their competencies, integrating the principle of equality among its priorities. Furthermore, the management of human, material and financial resources available will be redirected to achieve the aforementioned goals.¹⁸⁸
3. Ownership, according to which the Foreign Service has put in place coordination mechanisms to ensure that those in leadership positions have the specific responsibility of promoting gender equality within the scope of their action.¹⁸⁹
4. Inclusive participation and fostering alliances. In order to achieve this, it is important to unite efforts with all the actors that may be able to contribute to achieving sustainable and lasting advances for women.¹⁹⁰
5. Intersectionality and diversity are necessary for a successful FFP. The situation of women and girls cannot be improved without recognizing the existence of intersection and multiple forms of discrimination. For example, in addition to gender discrimination women can also suffer discrimination related to their ethnic or racial origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status, religious beliefs, disability or place of

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

origin. Therefore, it is extremely important that intersectionality is applied to take all of these possible forms of discrimination into account.¹⁹¹

These principles within the Spanish FFP serve as a guide to showcase the goals that the policy aims to achieve. Furthermore, the Spanish government has also implemented a number of instruments to ensure the achievement of the goals set out in the FFP.

Firstly, there will be a mainstreaming of gender approach in foreign policy.¹⁹² This means that the gender equality will be incorporated as a focus cross-sectionally in all foreign policy instruments and actions.¹⁹³ Furthermore, this cross-sectionality will be applied to relatively new strategies regarding climate change, the fight against trafficking or commercial relations.¹⁹⁴ It is also important to consider that for this cross-sectionality to work, it should be taken into account in all the stages of the foreign policy, its planning, creation, implementation, tracking... By including a FFP which aims to apply an overarching vision, this will facilitate reaching all aspects of women's lives and therefore assure the protection of their rights in different areas of foreign policy.

Secondly, there will be bilateral and regional diplomacy in order to promote the goals of the FFP both internationally and nationally.¹⁹⁵ The Spanish government has recognized the need to include issues related to gender equality and women's and girl's rights in political dialogues and enquiries and negotiations, assuring also the participation of women and/or women's organizations.¹⁹⁶ As argued by the Spanish government, "the FFP confers a new prominent role to Spain's diplomatic and consular missions as well as other bodies that channel its external action, fostering their active engagement in promoting equality".¹⁹⁷ This instrument will therefore ensure that women come at the forefront in regards to foreign relations issues.

Thirdly, through its FFP Spain will aim to reinforce its position as a gender equality promoter within the European Union. To achieve this, it will participate in the negotiation, elaboration and implementation of all the gender equality related documents and conclusions of the Council.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, it will support the drafting of legislative proposals which promote gender equality at the European level.¹⁹⁹ Spain will therefore not only gain more international recognition for being a supporter and promoter of women's rights, but will also be perceived as a leading country of gender equality within the European Union.

Fourthly, another instrument that will help with the implementation of the Spanish FFP is multilateral diplomacy. By engaging with a variety of different countries Spain can become a driver of new initiatives, especially in countries where feminism is not necessarily perceived in the same manner. As explained in the Spanish handbook for the FFP, good multilateral diplomacy will be achieved by "improving collaboration with other countries in this area, supporting applications that promote this priority or ensuring the integration of the gender approach in funding instruments".²⁰⁰ Multilateral diplomacy

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, pp.9.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, pp.13.

will help Spain communicate with other countries to promote their foreign policy and therefore feminism and women's rights globally.

In fifth place, Spanish FFP will also aim to contribute to international cooperation for sustainable development. The achievement of Sustainable Development Goal number five is a priority for the *V Plan Director de la Cooperación Española 2018-2021* and the *Estrategia de Respuesta Conjunta de la Cooperación Española a la crisis del Covid-19*.²⁰¹ Through a number of bilateral, regional and multilateral instruments Spanish cooperation supports public policies of equality and eradication of gender violence in countries partner with Spanish cooperation strategies.²⁰² Through this instrument, Spain can reach countries which already work with them in cooperation strategies and further promote gender equality in a number of policies.

In sixth place, Spain will ensure consular protection and assistance. In conformation with the Action Protocol for Assisting Spanish Women Victims of Gender-based Violence Abroad, Spain will continue to strengthen its assistance to Spanish women through its network of embassies and consulates, and will stablish cooperation channels with third States.²⁰³ Furthermore, the Protocol is implemented through a set of annual action plans and the office of the Coordinator on Violence against Women at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation.²⁰⁴ This instrument will ensure not only the protection of Spanish women abroad but also the promotion of women's and girl's rights in thirds countries through cooperation channels, which can be an advancement for women's rights in countries where they may not enjoy their full rights yet.

In seventh place, Spain will actively engage in public diplomacy to promote their FFP and its goals, and to continue to consolidate its role as a leader as a promoter of gender equality worldwide. In order to achieve this, a number of tools have been implemented, including campaigns highlighting good practices, participation in international campaigns, as well as events, conferences and publications on these issues.²⁰⁵ In delivering the message of gender equality through these means, Spain will ensure that their principles of inclusive and non-sexist communication are upheld, avoiding gender stereotypes and providing visibility for female voices and points of view.²⁰⁶ This is an important aspect to consider when delivering messages of gender equality as it can be easy to perpetuate gender stereotypes if the right message is not portrayed. Including female voices and perspectives is a necessary way to achieve this.

Finally, equality policies within the foreign service will be introduced. For a FFP to be developed genuinely it is important that the same values that are expressed as goals are applied as internally. For this reason, the Spanish Foreign Service puts emphasis on the values of equal treatment and equal opportunities within its own structures, as expressed in the handbook it is "about achieving substantive equality and highlighting the role of women in Spanish diplomacy".²⁰⁷ To understand the need for these instruments it is relevant to look at some data. In 2021 only 28% of all Spanish diplomats were women; as regards to senior positions, women were in charge of one third of the Foreign Ministry's directorates-general; when looking at the positions of Heads of Missions the proportion of female Ambassadors grew from 14.7% in January 2020 to 21% in 2021.²⁰⁸

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid. pp.18

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. pp. 19

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

This data clearly shows that it is necessary for Spain to advance their internal equality in their Foreign Affairs sector, as promoting gender equality in foreign affairs but not applying it internally could raise questions about their credibility. The Spanish government will be implementing a number of strategies to achieve this, namely it will aim to attract more women to the diplomatic body, it will include more women in positions of responsibility, it will promote the analysis of data regarding the representation of women in the Ministry and it will develop measures to address the specificities of the Foreign Service.²⁰⁹

Having established the principles on which the policy is based, and the instruments set in place to achieve the goals, it is now important to take a look to the lines of action of the Spanish FFP. Spain has used the 1325 UN Security Council resolution to create their Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which is their first line of action considered in the FFP.²¹⁰ The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is applied internally in the Foreign Ministry, at the national level, at the European Union level, and at the multilateral level.²¹¹ Secondly, the FFP will aim at combatting gender-based violence and violence against women as a whole.²¹² Thirdly, human rights of women and girls, including their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights will be made a priority in the policy.²¹³ Fourthly, the participation of women in decision-making will be ensure in all aspects of political and public life and all spheres of society.²¹⁴ Finally, the last line of action involves the economic justice and the empowerment of women.²¹⁵

All in all, Spanish FFP seems to have clear guiding principles, goals, lines of action and instruments in place to ensure the effective implementation of their FFP. In addition, they have monitoring mechanisms and resources which help to identify whether the policy is achieving its goals and if not, how to improve implementation. Such monitoring mechanisms take the form of annual reports, carried out to reflect how Spain's FFP is being executed, which are then presented to the Parliament and discussed with stakeholders and civil society.²¹⁶ This aspect of the Spanish FFP is extremely relevant, because as we have seen with the Swedish and the Canadian FFP it is important to have monitoring instruments in place, and allow for the participation of different state and non-state actors for the effective implementation of a FFP.

7.3. Challenges and Recommendations for the Effective Implementation of the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy

Although the Spanish FFP is relatively new and seems to be in the right path to be successful, there is some things that should be taken into account, to look out for to ensure its effective implementation. Moreover, as the policy is relatively new, it has not yet received criticism on how it could be improved or the way it is being implemented, however Irene Aguirrezabal Quijera provides a number of recommendations to take into consideration for a more effective application. The recommendations are the following:²¹⁷

²⁰⁹ Ibid.pp.20

²¹⁰ Ibid, pp.21

²¹¹ Ibid. pp.22.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid, pp.27.

²¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 32.

²¹⁷ All of the following points belong to the same source: AGUIRREZABAL QUIJERA, IRUNE, “¿Que significa una política exterior “feminista”?, Política Exterior, 2021, available at: <https://www.politicaexterior.com/que-significa-una-politica-exterior-feminista/>

1. To avoid the labelling of the foreign policy “feminist” from becoming just another slogan, and for the policy to actually be feminist a twofold exercise of theorization and practical implementation is required.
2. The effort of theorizing would require time, means and scientific validation. The task of creating an effective FFP cannot be left to the professionals working in the ministry, diplomats and civil servants alone.
3. The qualification of “feminist” foreign policy must be of the same essence as the argument for the validity of the category of “women” as a subject vindicating equality.
4. A logical and responsible consequence of implementing FFP is to provide the necessary human, legal and financial resources to enable the goals and objectives to be fulfilled.
5. The precision of the policy must be visualized in every gesture and aspect. The successes of the policy must be measurable and must be left outside the ideological debate, such as the state policy.

Spain seems to have a strong FFP so far, as it has taken into account different aspects of how foreign policy should be in order for it to be successful. As the policy was implemented in 2021 it still has not been in place long enough for a detailed analysis of the results to exist. Therefore, there is not a lot of criticism on how the policy can be improved. For this reason, the feminist foreign policies of Sweden and Canada have been used as a comparison basis so that the characteristics can be compared and contrasted to see whether the Spanish FFP is on the right track.

7.4. Analysis of the Spanish Feminist Foreign Policy

This section will analyse the policy based on the theories presented in the theoretical chapter. Spain is the country to have implemented a FFP the most recently, therefore the policy will be analyzed on the principles presented in the handbook. First the problem and the solution to it will be identified, answering Thomson’s questions. Secondly, the characteristics of the policy will be analyzed to see if they comply with the characteristics that a FFP should display according to Aggestam and True. Thirdly, the policy’s strength will be analyzed using the guidelines proposed by Thompson and Clement.

Spain’s FFP’s main goal is addressing the existing gender inequality through the intensification of efforts to close the gender gaps, towards a more real and effective equality globally.²¹⁸ The nature of the problem is thus the global existing gender inequality. The current global context, especially with the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light the perseverance of gender inequality in all aspects of society. Spain is aware that such inequalities manifest in different ways such as employment, gender violence, discrimination within society, resource disparities... Spain highlights the fact that the current global context with the pandemic has brought to light the perseverance of gender inequality globally and therefore efforts should be made to close the existing gender gaps internationally. Spain recognized that inequalities exist in all areas of society and are manifested in different ways such as employment, gender violence, discrimination within society, resource disparities... Thus, Spain does a good job at identifying that the problem is not gender inequality as a whole, but the representation of it in different areas of society.

²¹⁸ MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA Y COOPERACIÓN, *op. cit.*, nota 177.

This is useful as it is clear what the problem is and therefore how it should be solved. Acknowledging the ways in which gender inequality manifests, makes it easier to then create policies that target gender inequality in all its forms, rather than as a whole. Moreover, Spain considers that gender equality benefits society as a whole and not just women and girls, as equality promotes economic growth, employment, and the improvement of productivity.²¹⁹ Thus, the solution of the problem, gender inequality, will be beneficial for all globally.

In order to solve the problem of gender inequality worldwide, Spain takes a dual focus, namely, making gender equality a priority in the Spanish External Action and including a gender equality focus in all the areas of the foreign policy. In order to achieve this, Spain includes five principles: transformative focus, committed leadership, ownership, inclusive participation and intersectionality and diversity. Moreover, they implement a number of instruments to achieve their goals: mainstreaming of gender, bilateral and regional diplomacy, promoting gender equality, multilateral diplomacy, contributing to international cooperation for sustainable development, providing consular protection and assistance, public diplomacy, and introducing equality policies within the foreign service. Furthermore, in order to keep track of the progress Spain includes monitoring mechanisms consisting of annual reports which are to be presented to the Parliament and discussed with stakeholders and civil society. Clearly Spain has included a number of relevant instruments to both indicate how to achieve the goals proposed and how to monitor the progress of the policy. Having such clear guidelines is helpful as it facilitates the understanding of how the identified problem of gender inequality is to be solved.

Once the problem has been identified and the resolution of it has been explained, the principles of the policy themselves will be examined using the guidelines provided by Aggestam and True. Firstly, Spain's FFP includes a descriptive and substantive representation in terms of gender in all aspects of its foreign policy. Through the implementation of equality policies within the foreign service the Spanish government is promoting and ensuring equal treatment and equal opportunities within its own structure, thus ensuring representation in all aspects. Moreover, through the principle of inclusive participation they are helping with representation as they encourage the participation of different actors to help with the development and implementation of the policy. This also ensures inclusivity as having different actors helps with the representation of different communities. Lastly, the principle of ownership, which ensures that those in leadership positions must implement the policy adequately, contributes to substantive representation. This is due to the fact that having those in leadership positions ensure the implementation of the policy, helps with the representation of the policy as a whole.

Secondly, gender mainstreaming is part of the Spanish FFP. One of the instruments through which the goals of the policy are to be achieved is through the incorporation of gender equality cross-sectionally in all aspects of foreign policy instruments and actions. Not only that but the Spanish government also ensures that this cross-sectionality applies to new policies dedicated to new arising problems such as climate change, human trafficking or even commercial relations. This closely related to tackling the nature of the problem. As previously explained, Spain identified the nature of the problem to be the perseverance of gender inequality in different areas within society, which had been highlighted by the current global context with the emergence of new challenges. Therefore, including a gender focus in old and new policies is a great way to ensure that the different ways in which gender inequality is manifested are addressed.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Having a feminist approach to resolving arising global challenges is a good reflection of a FFP.

Thirdly, Spain displays clear feminist transformative principles by ensuring the policy exhibits a feminist transformative focus. As stated in the handbook, “the transformative focus will also seek to create deep and structural change in the well ingrained patriarchal institutional culture, through the incorporation of a gender approach in a transversal and systematic way”.²²⁰ This is highly important as the implementation of a FFP should come with actual change to be successful. An FFP should be bold and change the status quo to be effective.²²¹ Thus, the inclusion of transformative principles is important for its success as without relevant change in the well ingrained patriarchal structures a FFP just becomes a foreign policy with the word “feminist” in front of it, rather than an actual FFP.

The last guideline proposed by Aggestam and True relates to the coherence between national policies and international ones regarding gender equality. Engaging in bilateral and regional diplomacy enables the Spanish government to promote their FFP both nationally and internationally. Gaining national support for the FFP is important as it ensure coherence between what is preached internationally and the domestic believes. Moreover, the Spanish government will also carry out public diplomacy to promote the FFP and its goals. This will be conducted through a series of campaigns highlighting good practices, participation in international campaigns, as well as events, conferences and publications on these issues.²²² By doing this Spain will aim to gain the support for the policy both nationally and internationally, which contributes to its legitimacy. Furthermore, by doing this, the Spanish government is recognizing the need to include issues related to gender equality and women’s and girl’s rights in political dialogues, enquiries and negotiations.²²³

In order to analyse the strength of the policy the three recommendations proposed by Thompson and Clement will be used. Firstly, in terms of resource endowment the handbook indicates that human and material resources will be redistributed within the foreign service.²²⁴ Furthermore, in the committed leadership initiative, there are financial resources allocated for the facilitation of its implementation.²²⁵ However, the handbook does not really clarify the number of resources to be allocated or how they will be divided or assigned. This can be a weakness at there is no clear guides on how to use the resources and therefore this might raise questions on how to do it.

Secondly, comprehensiveness, whereby the policy acknowledges that women suffer from different types of discrimination, is another indicator of a strong FFP. Spain has done a good job in this so far as it ensures intersectionality and inclusivity in its policy. As stated in the handbook, “the situation of women and girls cannot be improved without admitting the existence of intersection and multiple forms of discrimination”.²²⁶ It is highlighted that discrimination can be exhibited in relation to one’s ethnic or racial origins, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status, religious belief, disability or place of origin. By accepting this, Spain is ensuring that the different ways of discrimination are tackled through the policy or that at least they are taken into account. This is something to look out for because although the policy does mention the existence

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ RIDGE, ALICE ET. AL., *op. cit.*, nota 42.

²²² MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA Y COOPERACIÓN, *op. cit.*, nota 177.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

of different manifestations of discrimination it does not specifically say how to address each one of those, which might present a weakness.

Lastly, with regards to coherence, so far Spain has demonstrated good coherence when it comes to its national and international policies regarding gender equality. It ensures that the FFP gains support nationally and internationally through a variety of means. Furthermore, it has portrayed coherence in the way that it goes in harmony with the sustainable development goals. For example, this is illustrated in Spain's commitment to Sustainable goal number 5 through the initiatives of *V Plan Director de la Cooperación Española 2018-2021* and the *Estrategia de Respuesta Conjunta de la Cooperación Española a la crisis del Covid-19*.²²⁷ This is important as having coherence between the theory and the practice is a sign that will help the policy attain legitimacy. However, it is important to take into consideration the fact that the Spanish FFP has not been in place for enough time to enable an in depth study of whether the policy is achieving its goals. So far, the way that the Spanish FFP has been presented, with clear principles, guidelines and monitoring mechanisms is a good step towards the achievement of its goals. Thus, taking into account the three guidelines proposed by Thompson and Clement one can argue that the Spanish policy is relatively strong. The only part where it seems to be lacking is in the allocation of resources. Yet, the novelty of the policy suggests that more time needs to go back to see whether the policy remains as strong as it looks in its application.

²²⁷ Ibid.

8. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: APPLYING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will compare and contrast the feminist foreign policies of the three countries using the theoretical framework explained above. The analysis will begin by using Jennifer Thompson’s questions to compare how the three countries identify and solve the problem, followed by the analysis of the policies using the criteria provided by Aggestam and True. Finally, the policies of the three countries will be compared using the four commitments created by Thompson and Clement.

8.1. Nature and solution of the problem

	Sweden	Canada	Spain
Nature of the problem	Gender inequality	Global poverty	Gender inequality
Solution to the problem	→ Strengthen all women’s and girl’s rights, representation and resources based on the reality they live in (4Rs)	→ Eradication of poverty through the empowerment of women and girls	→ Closing global gender gaps: → Making gender equality a priority in the Spanish External Action → Including a gender equality focus in all areas of foreign policy
Outcome	FFP	FFP	FFP

Table 1 portrays the different ways in which the countries arrived to the creation and implementation of their feminist foreign policies. While Spain and Sweden share a common concern regarding gender inequality as the nature of the problem, Canada faces a distinct challenge, identifying global poverty as its primary concern. The identification of the problem is an important first step to elaborating the foreign policy. Therefore, having a problem which is closely related to feminism is important. Feminism is “a movement advocating for women’s social, political, legal and economic rights equal to those of men”.²²⁸ Therefore, for a policy to be considered feminist it must at least aim to promote equality between women and men in terms of their rights. The identification of gender inequality as a problem already highlights that women are not equal to men. Therefore, by recognizing this and labelling their policy as feminist, one can assume that the foreign policy will aim to advance women’s social, political, legal and economic rights to promote gender equality.

²²⁸ UN WOMEN, “Women Unite: A timeline of women’s activism”, *UN Women*, n.a. Available at: <https://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/timeline/womenunite/en/index.html#/>

Canada's identification of the problem as global poverty follows a different path than Spain and Sweden. Although poverty does affect women more than men, and therefore fighting against poverty might help promote gender equality in some economic aspects, it leaves many other aspects out of the equation. Poverty is only one way through which women experience discrimination. By establishing global poverty as the main problem, Canada is neglecting the fact that women suffer inequality in many other ways. Furthermore, by focusing on poverty as the main problem Canada is implying that gender inequality in and of itself is not a problem, but the way it is represented in poverty is. This is might also translate in the consideration of women's rights not being relevant enough to fight for, but rather the economic advances that their promotion might lead to are considered more important.

The comparison of these three countries in relation to the designation of the problem clearly shows that Spain and Sweden are following policies in accordance to what feminism is considered to be. This is because they are identifying gender inequality as the problem, and feminism aims to fight for equality between men and women in relation to their economic, social, political and legal rights. Therefore, by recognizing gender equality as the issue at hand, their foreign policies will strive to promote these rights in every aspect of their foreign policy. On the other hand, Canada does not seem to regard gender inequality as the problem and therefore is not as closely related to the definition of feminism as Spain and Sweden are. This can lead to questions on whether the foreign policy can be considered feminist to begin with since the main objective is not to advance women's rights to eradicate gender inequality, but to eradicate global poverty. The way that these countries have identified the problem that needs to be solved, can be used as an indicator of how the policies will be drafted and what kind of feminism will be promoted through the policies.

Canada, Sweden and Spain have all taken different approaches for the solution of the problem they have identified. Table 1 illustrates that the solution to gender inequality according to Sweden is through the implementation of the 4 R's; to strengthen all women's and girl's rights, representation and resources based on the reality they live in. According to Spain, the solution to gender inequality is through the intensification of efforts to close the gender gaps with a dual focus of making gender equality a priority in the Spanish External Action and including gender equality focus in all the areas of foreign policy. According to Canada the solution to the problem of global poverty is the empowerment of women and girls.

Although Spain and Sweden have identified a similar problem, they implement different solutions. Whilst Sweden implements the 4 Rs to identify the different areas that need improving, Spain mentions the more general aspect of "gender gaps" and a dual focus to achieve this. As the overall solution to the problem Sweden seems to have a more explicit approach of the areas that need tackling, whereas Spain seems to have a broader approach. This can influence the creation of the policy as one could argue that the more precise the solution to the problem is, the more precise the policy objectives would be.

On their side, Canada has recognized that women and girl empowerment is the solution to the problem of global poverty. This is an assumption which, unless specified is extremely broad. Women empowerment can take many forms and is important for the advancement of women's rights. However, looking at the problem and the solution of the problem together, one could argue that Canada's foreign policy refers to the economic empowerment of women and girls. Assuming that the power to eradicate poverty lays in the hands of women and girls creates an enormous amount of pressure for women. Global poverty is caused by a varied of factors including poor governance, conflict, exploitation

and gender discrimination or ethnicity...²²⁹ Therefore, considering women to be the solution to eradicate global poverty neglects the role that other factors such as better governance should play in the eradication of poverty. This can exempt governments from taking responsibility, and instead put all the responsibility on women and girls. Thus, relying only on women for the eradication of poverty is unrealistic. Furthermore, this highlights that women's rights are not regarded important enough in and of themselves, but rather important for the achievement of economic gains, as seems to be the case of the Canadian foreign policy. The empowerment of women and girls is therefore a means for the eradication of poverty rather than for the fight against gender inequality and the promotion of equal rights. One can therefore argue, that the Canadian foreign policy is more focused on economic rewards, through the use of feminism, rather than the fight for equal rights between men and women, which is what feminism is initially about.

Table 1 also shows that although all three countries might have different problems identified and therefore different solutions, the outcome was the implementation of a FFP. Although they all implemented a FFP, the nature and solution to the problem plays a big role in the creation of the policy in terms of its goals, guidelines and instruments. From what has been explained above, one could argue that the Swedish and Spanish FFP have more feminist characteristics on which to base their policy as they tackle gender inequality directly, which is also a primary function of feminism. The fact that the three countries labelled their foreign policy as feminist having identified a different nature and solution to the problem highlights the fact that feminism is open to interpretation. Each country that implements a FFP will base their policy on their own interpretation of feminism.

The way that the problem and the solution were framed may have also contributed to the way it is regarded within society and the international community as a whole. Sweden is a good example of this, as even though it was the first country to implement a FFP, and it seemed to be promising, the government abandoned the policy in 2022. This is mainly attributed to the fact that the policy was lacking coherence between the theory and the practice. This was seen specially in the fact that although the country preached to be advancing women's rights globally through the FFP, they continued to participate in arms exports to Saudi Arabia, a country which does not protect women's rights. Such a contradiction led to the abandonment of the policy. This raises questions regarding the importance of the identification of the nature and the solution of the problem. While Sweden identified gender inequality as the problem, which is closely related to feminism, it failed to properly project their policy into the practice, leading to its abandonment. This also highlights that, in the case of Sweden, other priorities, which were not gender equality, were deemed more important.

This section has provided an analysis on the factors that drove Canada, Spain and Sweden to create and implement a FFP; and what they aimed to achieve through its adoption. The nature of the problem from which a policy rises is important as it establishes a basis on which the solution has to be found. The use of the word feminism to label a policy should suggest that the policy will advance gender equality, as feminism is the fight towards equality between men and women. The three policies examined in this thesis have a set of principles and characteristics which suggest that they are doing this, in different ways. However, the comparison has shown how the different countries

²²⁹ WORLD VISION, "Global Poverty Facts", *World Vision*, 2021. Available at: <https://www.worldvision.org/sponsorship-news-stories/global-poverty-facts#:~:text=Poverty%20has%20multiple%20root%20causes,factors%20that%20contribute%20to%20poverty>.

interpret feminism within their policies. Whilst Canada has taken a more economic approach, Spain and Sweden focus on gender equality. The latter countries seemed to have a more feminist approach mainly because their policy was based on gender equality rather than on economic gains, like the Canadian one. Yet, Sweden has abandoned their FFP which raises doubts about the importance of identifying the nature of the problem, as Sweden seemed to have identified the problem representative of what a FFP should look like.

8.2. Aggestam and True's principles

	Sweden	Canada	Spain
Descriptive and substantive representation	YES (main aspect of their FFP, one of the three Rs)	YES to a certain extent (only mentioned the need for the representation of women in Peace and Security and not the everywhere in the policy)	YES (principle of inclusive participation, principle of ownership, implementation of equality policies)
Gender mainstreaming	YES (provides clear guidelines on gender mainstreaming and how it should be implemented within the policy)	NO (they don't mention this in their handbook)	YES (cross-sectionality applied to all the policies new and existing)
Feminist transformative principles	YES / NO (the policy failed because it did not live up to the expectations of creating significant change)	NO (economic aspect, needs to include feminist principles in all policy aspects)	YES (transformative focus of the policy to create deep structural change)

Table 2

Table 2 presents the ways in which the policies implement the different characteristics identified by Aggestam and True. While the three countries display a descriptive and substantive representation within their policy, they differ in gender mainstreaming and feminist transformative principles.

In relation to descriptive and substantive representation Sweden clearly includes this as one of the four Rs is dedicated to representation within the policy. Spain also includes a descriptive and substantive representation with the implementation of the inclusive participation principle, the ownership principle and the implementation of equality policies. Canada, presents descriptive and substantive representation to a lesser extent as they only mention representation in Peace and Security and not in relation to other aspects of the policy. Aggestam and True state that the analysis on whether representation is successful should take into account the intersectionality of class,

ethnicity and sexuality *inter alia*.²³⁰ Sweden and Spain take into consideration different communities and the different ways in which women may suffer from discrimination, in order to include an intersectional approach to representation. However, Canada does not consider the intersectionality of class, ethnicity and sexuality in their representation. By only mentioning representation in Peace and Security, in decision making processes, Canada fails to acknowledge other parts of foreign policy in which it is necessary to include feminism to advance gender equality globally. Since Canada's FFP goals are mostly economy based, one would think that for the achievement of such economic goals, they would try to include representation in the areas of the policy related to economy. In relation to this characteristic Spain seems to have a stronger ground for their policy in terms of inclusive representation throughout the whole policy.

The characteristic of gender mainstreaming is present in the policies of Spain and Sweden, but not in the Canadian FFP. Sweden provides clear guidelines on gender mainstreaming, in relation to what it means and how it should be applied in the policy. Similarly, Spain aims to cross-sectionally apply feminism to all policies new and existing. Gender mainstreaming is an important characteristic of FFP as it ensures that feminism is applied in all aspects of the policy. On the other hand, Canada does not mention anything about gender mainstreaming in their policy handbook. However, this might be due to the fact that, as previously explained Canada's FFP consists of a series of initiatives which aim to be feminist, rather than having a foreign policy which is feminist as a whole. Canada's FFP translates into a Feminist International Assistance Policy, which seeks to eradicate poverty through the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, and a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Since feminism only applies to these two initiatives within its foreign policy rather than to the foreign policy as a whole, it is hard to implement gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the policy.

Lastly, the inclusion of feminist transformative principles is also an important characteristic that should be included in a FFP. Creating change should be one of the goals of a FFP, as in order to advance gender equality globally there needs to be a clear change in the existing patriarchal structures that contribute to gender inequality. Initially, Sweden being the first country to implement a FFP, the policy was groundbreaking and there were high expectations. Furthermore, one of the aims of the policy was to change existing patriarchal structures and enhance the visibility of women and girls.²³¹ Thus, it can be argued that the Swedish FFP did display feminist transformative principles. However, as the policy progressed it failed in some key areas where the policy should have included such transformative principles to achieve change. Sweden failed to achieve this especially in relation to its arms export, which, as previously explained, became one of the main reasons why the FFP was abandoned. Similarly, to Sweden, Canada has failed to include feminist transformative principles also in relation to its arms export. Both Canada and Sweden continued to engage in arms export with countries which do not protect women's rights, thus undermining the legitimacy of their FFP. Both foreign policies have received a large amount of criticism, as this can be interpreted as the countries trying to assert their moral authority on the global stage rather than engaging in substantive policy reforms. On the other hand, one of the principles of the Spanish FFP is a transformative focus, which clearly shows Spain's intentions of creating change through their foreign policy. This characteristic is particularly important as without feminist transformative principles the policy risks becoming more symbolic than substantive. Therefore, in relation to Canada and Sweden, Spain seems to be on the right track to achieve structural change in the existing patriarchal system within matters relating to foreign policy.

²³⁰ AGGESTAM, KARIN, AND TRUE, JACQUI, *op. cit.*, nota 8.

²³¹ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *op. cit.*, nota 54.

The three characteristics provided by Aggestam and True enable for an analysis of whether the foreign policy of the countries display the components necessary to be considered feminist. Although most of the elements seem to be present in the policies, there is a relevant difference between the theory and the practice in the cases of Sweden and Canada. The inclusion of these characteristics in the foreign policy is not enough to make them feminist. If these characteristics are not translated into the actual implementation of the policy the use of the word “feminist” remains a symbolic feature rather than a policy capable of creating substantial change. Thus, the addition of these features in the policy are important as long as they are actually implemented in the practice of every aspect of the policy.

8.3. Measuring the strength of the policies

	Sweden	Canada	Spain
Resource endowment	→ Ensure the allocation of resources to the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for all women and girls to enjoy human rights	→ Redirecting existing funds towards gender equality, rather than allocating new money	→ Human and material resources to be allocated
Comprehensiveness	→ Includes an intersectional approach to the policy	→ Does not integrate enough intersectionality, diversity and inclusivity	→ Ensure intersectionality and inclusivity in the policy
Coherence	→ Failed in the coherence due to the arms export with Saudi Arabia	→ Continues to raise military expenses and engage in arms exports with countries that do not respect women’s rights	→ Coherence between national and international policies regarding gender equality

Table 3

Table 3 uses the commitments that a feminist policy should abide to, as proposed by Thompson and Clement, in order to analyse and compare the strength of the three policies. According to Thompson and Clement, the way that the feminist foreign policies integrate these three commitments is a reflection of their strength.

The three countries allocate resources for the implementation of the policy, however they all fail to properly explain the amount and how its implementation should be carried out. One main difference between the three countries is that while Sweden and Spain allocate new money to the policy, Canada is merely redirecting existing funds to the policy. Furthermore, although there is no new funding for the FIAP, the military

expenses in Canada continued to rise. In their handbook Sweden explains that the allocation of resources for the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for all women and girls to enjoy human rights will be ensured. However, this is extremely vague as there is no clear indication of how this should be carried out. The FFP handbook of Spain states that they will aim to implement both human and material resources for the exercise of the policy. Yet, similarly to the other two policies it fails to give directions on how this is to be carried out for the effective endowment of resources. The allocation of resources alone without specification on how to do it is not enough for a FFP to be considered strong. There should be clear instructions on how resource endowment should be carried out.

As explained in the theoretical chapter, comprehensiveness refers to the need for policies to focus on gender intersectionally and to take into consideration the different ways in which women may be marginalized, such as race, ethnicity, disability, class or refugee status. On the one hand, the policies of Sweden and Spain both include an intersectional approach to the implementation of the FFP. Spain goes even further than Sweden as they recognize the intersectionality issue in the nature of the problem, and thus is a driver for the creation of the FFP. It acknowledges that the situation of women and girls cannot be improved without admitting the existence of intersection and multiple forms of discrimination.²³² This is an important commitment as it reflects the countries recognition that women suffer from discrimination in many different ways. By acknowledging this, these countries are more likely to develop policies which take into account all the women from different communities and the different ways in which they suffer from gender inequality. On the other hand, Canada does not intersectionality within their policy as much as Sweden and Spain. The lack of intersectionality, and therefore of comprehensiveness might be due to the fact that the policy had an economic end more than anything, to eradicate poverty through the empowerment of women. By identifying this as the main objective they are only focusing on the economic side of discrimination suffered by women, and not taking into consideration the other ways through which women are discriminated. The comprehensiveness commitment is important as it makes sure that a policy has an overarching perspective which includes and tackles all the ways in which women are discriminated. Thus, the policy can have a more impactful effect on the lives of women.

Coherence is the last commitment identified by Aggestam and True to measure the strength of a FFP, and probably the most important. Coherence within the policies seems to have been the most criticized aspect in both the Canadian and the Swedish FFP. It even drove the Swedish government to abandon their FFP. Both countries failed to be coherent in the way that they promoted women's rights whilst continuing to engage in arms exports with countries that not only did not promote women's rights but also did not protect them. This is a significant incoherence in a foreign policy which is labelled feminist as the goal is to protect and advance gender equality in terms of equal rights for both men and women. Being a promoted of women's rights through a FFP means nothing if activities which hinder women's rights continue to be carried out. Contrarily, Spain so far seems to have a coherent policy. It should be kept in mind that the policy is relatively new, so its impact cannot be studied to the same extent as the Swedish and the Canadian FFP. However, the policy has demonstrated coherence in that the national and foreign policies seem to be aligned, plus it is one of the policy goals to gain national support. Furthermore, Spain has showcased coherence in that it is in harmony with the sustainable

²³² MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA Y COOPERACIÓN, *op. cit.*, nota 177.

development goal number 5, an important driver towards gender equality, through the initiatives of *V Plan Director de la Cooperación Española 2018-2021* and the *Estrategia de Respuesta Conjunta de la Cooperación Española a la crisis del Covid-19*.²³³ In order for the Spanish FFP to continue to be coherent, it should avoid following the same path as the Canadian and the Swedish FFP and make an effort to stay coherent between the theory and the practice.

In conclusion, having compared the three policies based on the commitments as provided by Aggestam and True one can establish that Spain seems to have the strongest FFP. While Sweden and Spain both implemented the resource endowment and comprehensiveness commitments similarly, Sweden's weak point is in the coherence of the policy. Diversly, Canada does not fulfil any of the commitments to a full extent. However, this might be due to the fact that Canada's foreign policy is not considered feminist as a whole, but rather the two initiatives are considered as feminist. Although Spain's policy has the features that a strong FFP should display it is important to acknowledge the novelty of the policy and thus keep a close eye towards its developments. The Spanish FFP can only be considered as a strong policy as long as it "practices what it preaches". If these commitments only stay in the handbook without being applied in the implementation of the policy, the policy stays more symbolic than creating substantive change.

²³³ Ibid.

9. CONCLUSION

The implementation of a feminist foreign policy is relevant for the fights against gender equality globally. However, the absence of a universally accepted definition can create ambiguity among countries. Thus, it becomes crucial to identify a set of key characteristics that can serve as a guide for determining the most important aspects of a FFP. This thesis has undertaken a thorough examination of the FFPs implemented by Sweden, Canada and Spain, with the specific objective of drawing lessons from the experiences of the two former countries to ensure the successful implementation of the Spanish FFP. The FFPs of Sweden and Canada, having been implemented for a longer duration, have undergone extensive analysis and offer valuable insights into the essential characteristics that an effective FFP should embody. In this thesis, the theoretical framework constructed by integrating the theories of Aggestam and True, Thomson, and Thompson and Clement, has provided a solid foundation for a comprehensive analysis and comparison of the three policies. Through this framework, the strengths and weaknesses of each policy have been identified and compared, thereby establishing the effectiveness of the policies and pinpointing areas for improvement in Spain's FFP to enhance its optimization.

The research outcomes imply that Spain's FFP exhibits promising indications of being efficient, as compared to those of Canada and Sweden. Unlike the two other countries, Spain defines the nature of the problem as intersectional gender inequality worldwide, thereby laying a strong foundation for the creation of a FFP. Spain incorporates descriptive and substantive representation, gender mainstreaming, and feminist transformative principles within their policy framework. Moreover, the policy also includes the commitments of resource endowment, comprehensiveness and coherence, all of which are essential characteristics for a foreign policy to be considered feminist. However, while the inclusion of these features is important, itself alone does not guarantee the policy's success. This was evident in Sweden's case where, despite incorporating these characteristics, the policy was ultimately abandoned due to its lack of transformative and coherent implementation. Therefore, while the initial step of including these components within the FFP is crucial, it must be followed by effective and consistent implementation to ensure policy success, as exemplified by the case of Sweden.

On the contrary, Spain has exhibited certain weaknesses within its FFP that should be corrected to have a fully effective policy. Similarly to Canada and Sweden, Spain has failed to provide clear guidance on resource allocation, which significantly hinders the policy's ability to achieve its objectives. Moreover, due to the policy's novelty, an in-depth analysis of its implementation impacts is currently limited. Therefore, it is imperative for Spain to undertake a twofold endeavor: to develop a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the policy and to ensure its effective translation into practical implementation. To avoid facing a fate similar to that of the Swedish FFP, the Spanish government must diligently maintain the coherence they have exhibited thus far. As evidenced by the examples of Sweden and Canada, without coherence between theory and practice, a policy's effectiveness is severely compromised, undermining its legitimacy and hindering the realization of desired outcomes. Spain has managed to demonstrate coherence not only between its FFP and national policies but also with international advancements toward gender equality. However, similar to the policies of Canada and Sweden, there remains a risk of the FFP becoming merely symbolic if its features are not adequately translated into policy implementation.

Based on the aforementioned foundation, the comparative analysis conducted on the Canadian, Swedish and Spanish FFPs has laid the groundwork for assessment and comparison. The primary lesson that Spain can derive from this comparative study is the imperative of policy coherence. It is essential to align policy implementation with the underlying principles and objectives. Drawing insights from the experiences of Canada and Sweden, this entails avoiding the prioritization of economic gains or arms export interests over the pursuit of gender equality, as was the case in those countries. Addressing this challenge requires, for example, a more effective allocation of resources for policy implementation. By ensuring clear and appropriate allocation of resources, the significance of the FFP can also be highlighted, preventing the misallocation to undeserving areas such as arms exports. The lack of clear resource allocation was also an issue in the other two policies, thus suggesting its possible contribution to the lack of coherence and ultimately leading to Sweden's decision to abandon their policy.

In conclusion, this thesis has conducted an extensive and thorough comparative assessment of the Spanish FFP, examining its strengths and weaknesses in light of the experiences of Sweden and Canada. The findings and insights derived from this analysis offer a valuable lesson for Spain to enhance the implementation of their FFP and increase the likelihood of its success. Given the relatively recent introduction of the policy, it is crucial to establish a system of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure its effectiveness. This thesis has established a solid foundation by delineating the key factors that contribute to a successful FFP, guiding Spain on the necessary actions and approaches that should be undertaken for favorable outcomes.

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABDUL RAHMAN, EIRLIANI and B.BUMP, JESSE. “Sweden ditched ‘feminist foreign policy’. Is it time for ‘fair foreign policy?’”. *Newsweek*. 2022. Available at: <https://www.newsweek.com/sweden-ditched-feminist-foreign-policy-it-time-fair-foreign-policy-opinion-1758462>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

AGGESTAM, KARIN, and TRUE, JACQUI. “Gendering Foreign Policy: A Comparative Framework for Analysis.” *Foreign Policy Analysis*. Vol. 16. 2020. Num. 2. Pp.143–162. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orz026>.

AGGESTAM, KARIN, and BERGMAN-ROSAMOND. “Swedish feminist foreign policy in the making: ethics, politics and gender” in *Ethics and international affairs. Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs*. Vol. 30. 2016. Num. 3. Pp 323-334.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679416000241>

AGUIRREZABAL QUIJERA, IRUNE. “¿Que significa una política exterior ‘feminista?’”. *Política Exterior*. 2021. Available at: <https://www.politicaexterior.com/que-significa-una-politica-exterior-feminista/> Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. “Conversations on Canada’s Feminist Foreign Policy” in *Feminist Foreign Policy. Amnesty International*. (n.a). Available at: <https://www.amnesty.ca/what-we-do/feminist-foreign-policy/> Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

BBC. “Sweden ditches ‘feminist foreign policy’”. *BBC News*. 2022. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63311743>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

BILLSTRÖM, TOBIAS. “Statement of Government Policy”. *Parliamentary debate on foreign affairs*. 15 February 2023.

BOUKA, YOLANDE; VON HLATKY, STÉFANIE; MARTEL, STÉPHANIE; MARTIN-BRÛLÉ, SARAH-MYRIAM; MARTIN DE ALMAGRO INIESTA, MARIA; ZAHAR, MARIE-JOËLLE. “Policy Report: Is Canada 's Foreign Policy Really Feminist? Analysis and Recommendations”. *Network for Strategic Analysis*. 2021.

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS. “Feminist Foreign Policy: A conversation with former foreign minister Margot Wallström of Sweden”. *Council on Foreign Relations*. 2019. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/event/feminist-foreign-policy-conversation-former-foreign-minister-margot-wallstrom-sweden-0>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

General Assembly Resolution 1325. “Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security”. (S/RES/1325). August 2008.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA. “Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy”. *Global Affairs Canada*. 2017.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. “Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security”. *Government of Canada*. 2017. Available at: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/cnap_wps-pnac_fps.aspx?lang=eng Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

HAASTRUP, TONI. “Exploring Feminist’ Foreign Policies”. *Institut Barcelona Estudis Internacionals*. January 30, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OefmVFLfx5M&list=PLUS_RvHbDIAC1Nktp9inJ89zdyAZO-kvB&index=3. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

HARPER, CAROLINE. “Canada’s feminist aid agenda: brave but not radical”. *ODI*. (2023). Available at: <https://odi.org/en/insights/canadas-feminist-aid-agenda-brave-but-not-radical/>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

HEATH, OLIVER, and HALPERIN, SANDRA. “Political research methods and practical skills”. *Oxford: Oxford University Press*. 2016. pp. 241-242.

JOACHIM, JUTTA. “What difference does a feminist foreign policy make?”. *Clingendael Institute*. July 2022. Available at: <https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/what-difference-does-feminist-foreign-policy-make>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

LAMENSCH, MARIE. “Canada’s Feminist Foreign Policy”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. 2020. Available at: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canada-s-feminist-foreign-policy>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA Y COOPERACIÓN. “Política Exterior Feminista: Impulsando la Igualdad en la Acción Exterior Española”. 2021. Available at: https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Documents/2021_02_POLITICA%20EXTERIOR%20FEMINISTA.pdf. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. “Handbook on Sweden’s feminist foreign policy”. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Offices of Sweden*. 2014. Available at: https://www.swedenabroad.se/globalassets/ambassador/zimbabwe-harare/documents/handbook_swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

PEACE WOMEN. “Hiding behind the f-word: the failures of Sweden’s feminist foreign policy”. *Women’s international league for peace and freedom*. (n.a). Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/resource/hiding-behind-f-word-failures-swedens-feminist-foreign-policy>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

RIDGE, ALICE; LAMBERT, CAROLINE AND CRAWFORD JOANNE ET. AL., “Feminist Foreign Policy: Key principles and accountability mechanisms”. *International Center for Research on Women, International Women’s Development Agency and Center for Global Affairs, NYU*. 2019.

SOLANAS, MARIA. “La politica exterior Feminista de España: un análisis preliminar”. *Tempo Exterior* N-42, 2021, pp.27-43.

THE GUARDIAN. “Swedish government scraps country’s pioneering ‘feminist foreign policy’”. *The guardian*. 2022. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/18/swedish-government-scraps-countrys-pioneering-feminist-foreign-policy>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

THOMPSON, LYRIC, and CLEMENT, RACHEL. “Defining Feminist Foreign Policy”. *International Center for Research on Women*. 2021.

THOMPSON, LYRIC, and CLEMENT, RACHEL. “Is the future of Foreign Policy Feminist?”. *Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*. 2019.

THOMPSON, LYRIC, “Feminist Foreign Policy: A Framework”, *International Center for Research on Women*, 2020, Available at: <https://www.icrw.org/publications/feminist-foreign-policy-a-framework/>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

THOMSON, JENNIFER. “What’s Feminist about feminist foreign policy? Sweden’s and Canada’s Foreign Policy Agendas”. *International Studies Perspectives*. 2020. pp. 424-437.

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT. “A feminist foreign policy to advance gender equality globally”. *OECD*. 2021. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning/practices/a-feminist-foreign-policy-to-advance-gender-equality-globally-d3b5aeab/>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

UN WOMEN, “Feminist Foreign Policies: an introduction”, *UN Women*, 2022, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Brief-Feminist-foreign-policies-en.pdf>

UN WOMEN. “Women Unite: A timeline of women’s activism”. *UN Women*. n.a. Available at: <https://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/timeline/womenunite/en/index.html#/>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

WALFRIDSSON, HANNA. “Sweden’s new government abandons feminist foreign policy”. *Human Rights Watch*. 2022. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/31/swedens-new-government-abandons-feminist-foreign-policy>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.

WORLD VISION. “Global Poverty Facts”. *World Vision*. 2021. Available at: <https://www.worldvision.org/sponsorship-news-stories/global-poverty-facts#:~:text=Poverty%20has%20multiple%20root%20causes,factors%20that%20contribute%20to%20poverty>. Last accessed: 12th of May 2023.