

FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: ANALYZING THE CORE VALUES AND IDENTITIES OF  
FEMINIST STATES

by

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A commitment to feminist foreign policy (FFP) has become increasingly prevalent in the current world order. Feminist foreign policy lacks a universal definition but is considered by the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy as “a political framework centered around the wellbeing of marginalized people and invokes processes of self-reflection regarding foreign policy’s hierarchical global systems.”<sup>1</sup> Feminist foreign policy aims to utilize a gendered perspective in international interactions so that state decisions are made with the understanding of how it may impact marginalized populations. In addition, FFPs are established with the understanding that women’s rights are human rights and thus strive for equality between various sexes or genders. Feminist foreign policies also tackle traditional hierarchical structures in foreign policy agendas. Classical understandings of foreign policies were often focused around “patriarchy, colonization, heteronormativity, capitalism, racism, imperialism, and militarism.”<sup>2</sup> FFP challenges these patriarchal mechanisms that continue to rule international order and reinforces a new perspective on how global forces should interact. By focusing on equality, FFP reaffirms the idea that the modern world order can prosper without these archaic interpretations of foreign policy.

A multitude of states have declared explicitly feminist foreign policies over the last few years. Sweden was a pioneer in feminist foreign policy launching their first explicit FFP legislation in 2014.<sup>3</sup> Sweden’s FFP demonstrated the country’s commitment to “the advancement of global gender equality and support for UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).”<sup>4</sup> Sweden’s feminist foreign policy is

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<sup>1</sup> Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy. “Feminist Foreign Policy.” *CFFP*.  
<https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/feminist-foreign-policy>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Aggestam, K., & Rosamond, A. B. “Re-politicising the Gender-Security Nexus: Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy.” *European Review of International Studies*, 5(30), (2018), 30.

<sup>4</sup> Aggestam & Rosamond, 31.

stated to focus on the ideals represented in the “WPS-framework” and how the “WPS-agenda” effects global security.<sup>5</sup> Sweden will act as the first state for analysis within a structural focus comparison. Secondly, Canada’s feminist foreign policy was implemented in 2017 and highlights the relationship between gender equality and poverty.<sup>6</sup> Canada has also committed to the WPS agenda and even aims to lead “through example when it comes to gender equality and military forces.”<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Canada has focused on the economic empowerment of women, and will be the second case within this analysis. By 2019, France declared four pillars of FFP as essential to their foreign policy including “ending gender-based violence, ensuring equitable and quality education and health, promoting economic empowerment, and ensuring full equality between women and men in public policy.”<sup>8</sup> These countries will be the basis of the case studies utilized throughout this research.

This study will delve into Sweden, Canada, and France’s feminist foreign policies by analyzing published documentation and categorizing the reoccurring themes. These were among the first countries to utilize FFP and therefore represent the preliminary foundation of what feminist foreign policy is understood to be. By analyzing the feminist foreign policy documentation, the goals, values, and interpretations of feminist foreign policies will become clear. Due to the lack of a standard definition of FFP, analysis into the current discourse surrounding feminist foreign policy will aid in determining what countries view as the most important aspects for implementation. As the discourse is broken down, the intricacies of FFP’s can be better compared to determine if there is a cohesive perception of what feminist foreign

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<sup>5</sup> Aggestam & Rosamond, 32-33.

<sup>6</sup> Zhukova, E., Rosén Sundström, M., & Elgström, O. “Feminist foreign policies (FFPs) as strategic narratives: Norm Translation in Sweden, Canada, France, and Mexico.” *Review of International Studies*, 48(1), (2022), 205-206.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

policy is and what it is used for. The discourse that is utilized within each of these countries will aid in comprehending specific goals and values that are most prioritized by states when adopting a feminist foreign policy. Thus, allowing for a heightened understanding of what defines feminist foreign policy.

This study is aimed at comprehending how countries understand feminist foreign policy, and what the implementation of such a policy reveals about the identity of each state. I argue the similarities and differences found between each country reflect the commonalities in the interpretation and definition of feminist foreign policy and further highlight individualistic state goals and identities. Each of the case studies indicates how these countries not only view themselves, but how they wish to be perceived by the international community. The definitions of these policies will evolve, but the study has found that the standard feminist foreign policy will include human rights, peacebuilding and security, climate protocols, power relations, and the role of others. The state can utilize feminist foreign policy as a strategy to not only benefit at risk populations but to advance their position in the global hierarchy.

The importance of understanding feminist foreign policy is also essential to furthering the equality of women and additional marginalized communities. The spread and adoption of feminist foreign policy can aid in turning the tide for other human rights related issues. FFP can open the door for academics, organizations, and activists to call their own governments to action thus, allowing for women's rights improvements internationally and domestically. If states want to improve their international reputation, they can promote a comprehensive discourse that has stemmed from analyses on the inherent feminism in FFP. Therefore, by acknowledging and analyzing state discourse we gain a more cohesive idea of what values the state wishes to portray to the international realm. The understanding of how states utilize feminist foreign policies to

advance individualistic state goals can also aid in the proliferation of FFP. Finally, this provides the international community a clear understanding of what steps must be taken to empower both women and other marginalized populations.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminist foreign policy often focuses on ensuring gender equality both domestically and throughout the international community. Concentrating on how women can affect a state both at home and abroad is essential to acknowledging why feminist foreign policy can be beneficial to countries across the world. The importance of empowering women can be seen through peace processes and post-conflict resolution.<sup>9</sup> The adoption of feminist foreign policy will also be integral in reducing international and domestic conflicts regarding security, education, and poverty.<sup>10</sup> Empirical research has shown that there is a “strong statistically significant relationship between the physical security of women and three measures capturing the relative peacefulness of states.”<sup>11</sup> Countries with clear indicators of gender inequality are “more likely to be involved in interstate disputes and more likely to rely on violence to settle those disputes.”<sup>12</sup> As women’s status, rights, and freedoms increase, so does the relative security of the state they reside in. Thus, “the physical security of women... is strongly associated with the peacefulness of the state, the degree to which the state is of concern to the international community, and the quality of relations between the state and its neighbors.”<sup>13</sup> The countries that have improved upon the security of women domestically can be predicted to have better relationships with neighboring states, and thus more cooperation between borders. Providing evidence to the claim that an effective feminist foreign policy should better a country’s security and peace-making

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<sup>9</sup> Lwamba, E., Shisler, S., Ridlehoover, W., Kupfer, M., Tshabalala, N., Nduku, P., Langer, L., Grant, S., Sonnenfeld, A., Anda, D., Eysers, J., & Snilstveit, B. “Strengthening women’s empowerment and gender equality in fragile contexts towards peaceful and inclusive societies: A systematic review and meta-analysis.” *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 18(1), (2022), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Hudson, V. M., Caprioli, M., Ballif-Spanvill, B., McDermott, R., & Emmett, C. F. “The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States.” *International Security*, 33(3), (2008), 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Caprioli, Mary. “Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in predicting Internal Conflict.” *International Studies Quarterly*, 49(2), (2005), 162.

<sup>13</sup> Hudson, Caprioli, Ballif-Spanvill, McDermott, & Emmett, 39.

abilities. The “impact of gender inequality on intrastate violence should not be underestimated” and can be used as a tool to determine the future conflict of the country itself.<sup>14</sup> As the level of gender inequality increases “the greater the likelihood such a state will experience internal conflict.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, “states characterized by gender discrimination and structural hierarchy are permeated with norms of violence that make internal conflict more likely.”<sup>16</sup> Without addressing these gender hierarchies and imbalances of power, the state is actively diminishing its chances of lasting peace and progress in international relations. Essentially, the betterment of women’s rights domestically will aid in fostering peace between the state and other international actors. Globally, these interactions can assist in the proliferation of women’s rights that has been continuously advocated for through international organizations such as the United Nations.<sup>17</sup> Research into FFP’s is essential for furthering these agendas throughout the world.

Furthermore, FFP’s can target the political participation and educational needs of women and minority populations. A survey of nearly “64,000 respondents about preferred leadership styles” found that “nearly two thirds of people around the world- including the majority of men- feel that the world would be a better place if men thought more like women.”<sup>18</sup> Feminist foreign policies can be shaped to recognize and advance women into leadership roles which would effectively create new international perspectives stemming away from masculine ideals. As women representation in key political and professional roles increases, the awareness for education and healthcare should also follow suit. This can be seen within a multitude of the current feminist foreign policies, which focus on combating poverty, expanding education, and

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<sup>14</sup> Caprioli, 162.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Shair-Rosenfield, S., & Wood, R. “Governing Well after War: How Improving Female Representation Prolongs Post-Conflict Peace.” *The Journal of Politics*, 3(79), (2017), 995.

<sup>18</sup> Karen A. Longman. “Women and Leadership in Higher Education.” *Information Age Publishing*, (2014), x.

improving healthcare. These factors aid in promoting opportunities for women and aim to diminish the most prevalent obstacles women may face. Conversely, many of these topics still fail to upend and reconstruct the traditional patriarchal systems that continue to obstruct the progress of women's rights both domestically and internationally. Gender hierarchies can be utilized "as a benchmark to determine access and power and is the rubric under which inequality is justified and maintained."<sup>19</sup> Gender inequality therefore is intertwined between "economic, political, and social dynamics" creating the "foundation for structural inequality."<sup>20</sup> This inequality becomes apparent throughout all aspects of society, and thus effects how a state or population can adequately respond to conflict, economic crisis, social unrest, and more.

Additionally, the economic standing of women can greatly affect the "capacity of human resources accessible for economic development."<sup>21</sup> The participation of women in the economy is crucial for the overall wellbeing and development of the state.<sup>22</sup> As the accessibility to equal education increases, women are more able to participate in labor that was predominantly ruled by men. Gender is a "significant factor for comprehensive macro-economic outcomes" which effects the level of economic development domestically.<sup>23</sup> The economic equality between men and women or other social groups also plays a part in determining the level of unrest within a state.<sup>24</sup> As economic inequality rises certain groups are given "political and social benefits" tipping the balance of power and leading to "conflict between them."<sup>25</sup> The traditional systems

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<sup>19</sup> Caprioli, 165.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Pal, M., Gupta, H., & Joshi, Y. C. "Social and economic empowerment of women through financial inclusion: empirical evidence from India." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 41(2), (2021), 294.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>24</sup> Tomos, F., Kumar, N., & Clifton, N. "Women Entrepreneurs and Strategic Decision Making in the Global Economy." *Business Science Reference*, (2019), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Tomos, Kumar, & Clifton, 2.

embedded into economic institutions often show a preference towards masculinity which often hinders feminine progress from being accepted. These systems depend on stereotypical gender roles which place men in the forefront of economic success and often disregard women's contributions. Additionally, entrepreneurship is often perceived as being masculine rather than feminine, reasserting the same gender stereotypes that fuel inequality and unrest.<sup>26</sup> Economic standing therefore becomes a representation of social status and class, consistently placing men at the highest points and women below. By advancing women's role in the economy, it gives them a chance to rewrite this stereotype. The social status of women can be raised through economic participation and tackle issues such as "gender stereotypes, gender-based segregation, lack of equal access to technological education and development" and more.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, financial independence can aid in the prevention of physical and sexual violence against women.<sup>28</sup> Women in "formal jobs" that are working outside of the home are exposed to less "physical and/or sexual domestic violence than women in informal jobs."<sup>29</sup> Thus, having the education and the resources to work outside of the home provide women with more "decision-making power inside the household."<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, providing women with the resources to become effective and equal members of the economy can aid in diversifying the economic environment within the state, preventing violence against women, and reducing conflict.

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<sup>26</sup> Tomos, Kumar, & Clifton, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>28</sup> Greulich, A., Dasré, A. "The association between women's economic participation and physical and/or sexual domestic violence against women: A case study for Turkey." *PLoS ONE*, 17(11), (2022), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

The current literature involving feminist foreign policy clearly exhibits a need for an in-depth analysis regarding the inherent feminist perspectives in state and international discourse. These case studies have indicated that feminist foreign policies are lacking a congruent and stringent approach in their definition and application. For instance, Victoria Scheyer and Marina Kumskova determine that although the commitment to women's rights is important within every FFP, a feminist foreign policy is not always designed to combat the power structures that inherently perpetuate inequality.<sup>31</sup> The authors assert that there is no agreed upon definition of feminist foreign policy and suggest a policy format including "intersectional analysis and inclusion, complete disarmament, security concepts centered around the wellbeing and safety of the individual, the inclusion of civil society, the promotion of intersectional solidarity through discourse, and the fostering of communities based on empathy."<sup>32</sup> Despite this recommendation, the authors detail how current states with FFP's are often criticized for their lack of attention to redesigning traditional gendered power structures.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, these claims are reflected by Jennifer Thomson in *The Growth of Feminist (?) Foreign Policy*. Thomson asserts that the proliferation of feminist foreign policy must be stringently watched to see if any real changes in the rights of marginalized communities are made.<sup>34</sup> The author emphasizes how the lack of an agreed upon text defining feminist foreign policy grants states a great "flexibility" when interpreting and implementing FFP thus allowing states to tailor their policies to their own benefit.<sup>35</sup> All authors exhibit a wariness of the current feminist foreign policies and highlight the need for a more strategic approach to FFP application.

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<sup>31</sup> Scheyer, V., & Kumskova, M. "Feminist Foreign Policy: A Fine Line between "Adding Women" and Pursuing a Feminist Agenda." *Journal of International Affairs*, 72(2), (2019), 57-76.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>34</sup> Thomson, J. "The Growth of Feminist (?) Foreign Policy." *E-International Relations*, (2020), 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Additionally, many authors that analyze feminist foreign policy have found that the discourse used by states vastly differ in their meaning and perception. Zhukova, Rosén Sundström, and Elgström researched the strategies utilized by states to advance their own soft power through norm translation of feminist foreign policy. These authors assert that Sweden, France, and Canada all utilize various forms of feminism and foreign policy objectives to advance their own political agendas.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, “each country emphasizes the elements of feminism that fit its agenda and its domestic and international image” thus having FFP “compete by bringing attention to their specific interpretations.”<sup>37</sup> The lack of a united stance on feminist foreign policy allows for states to utilize FFP’s as strategy to improve the perception of their own country in the international realm. These differences in policies can also be seen within *What’s Feminist about Feminist Foreign Policy? Sweden’s and Canada’s Foreign Policy Agendas*. Thomson explores what the term feminist means to both Sweden and Canada, and how their differing interpretations effect their foreign policies.<sup>38</sup> Sweden has based its FFP on gender equality while Canada focuses on poverty as a way to combat the deficiencies in women’s rights.<sup>39</sup> Thomson asserts that the variation in policies may contribute to the inability “to exert their understandings of feminism within the international system.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the article makes a distinction that feminist foreign policy continues to evolve and adjust with the development of similar policies in other states.

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<sup>36</sup> Zhukova, E., Rosén Sundström, M., & Elgström, O. “Feminist foreign policies (FFPs) as strategic narratives: Norm Translation in Sweden, Canada, France, and Mexico.” *Review of International Studies*, 48(1), (2022), 195-216.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>38</sup> Thomson, J. “What’s Feminist about Feminist Foreign Policy? Sweden’s and Canada’s Foreign Policy Agendas.” *International Studies Perspectives*, 21(4), (2020), 424-437.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 435.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

The final subsection of feminist foreign policy literature that is relevant to this study revolves around state identity. Each country that has implemented FFP has by no means overlooked how this foreign policy can benefit the state's international image. If a state wishes to be perceived as a good actor promoting human rights and women empowerment, feminist foreign policy might help achieve this goal. For instance, Karin Aggestam, Annika Bergman Rosamond, and Elsa Hedling have analyzed Sweden's feminist foreign policy to manage their "national images" and "project their policy preferences, normative values and nation brands globally."<sup>41</sup> Feminist foreign policy can be a strategy at rebranding, marketing, or publicizing a states "goodness" throughout the international realm. The public perception of what a state represents or stands for is critical to the approval of the country overall. The authors find through their analysis that "Sweden's conduct of feminist digital diplomacy has both strengthened its feminist self-narration and offered new opportunities to communicate typically Swedish pro-gender values globally."<sup>42</sup> The spread of Swedish FFP ideals was then able to "spark global outreach and attention" while promoting Swedish policies worldwide.<sup>43</sup> This article successfully evaluates how Sweden utilized digital diplomacy to spread their feminist foreign policy agenda, but there is still analysis to be done on state identity or self-narration. If states are inclined to follow in Sweden's example, is it due to them perceiving themselves as truly similar actors or is it simply a beneficial way to reach their own goals? Through discourse analysis, the domestic identity of each state, how they wish to be seen, and why they wish to be seen this way should become apparent. Thus, furthering the understanding of why the implementation of feminist foreign policies are a priority to every one of these individual countries.

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<sup>41</sup> Aggestam, K., Rosamond, A. B., & Hedling, E. "Feminist digital diplomacy and foreign policy change in Sweden." *Place Branding & Public Diplomacy*, 18(4), (2022), 314.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

Overall, the literature represented above agrees that there are a myriad of varying representations and definitions of feminist foreign policy. Although many of the authors have utilized their research to assess how a state can better define FFP's, there is still a need for a comprehensive analysis on what discourse have been used when implementing feminist foreign policy. This research will aid in furthering the understanding of what key ideas and statements can be utilized to make a cumulative policy or a step towards more inclusive legislation for women's empowerment. The authors of these works have primarily focused on how feminist foreign policy has been established, implemented, and constructed within states. Additionally, these studies have queried how these varying definitions have affected the efficacy of FFP's. This work suggests that there is still a need for analysis on what similarities can be found between each foreign policy, and how these parallels can be utilized to aid in the proliferation of feminist foreign policy. The correlations between what is recognized as feminist foreign policy could assist in creating a standard and agreed upon practice between states and within the international system. If one value, principle, or ideal is consistently repeated across all FFP policies, it is a clear indicator of an international goal or norm. Although each author has previously found the differences between each policy, the similarities are what can be utilized to formulate a strategy of international FFP expansion which will be integral in the empowerment of both women and minority groups. Although many of the authors have already examined the FFP's of Sweden, Canada, and France this research aims to thoroughly expand upon what principles coincide between each policy. This will allow for further understanding into what international ideals fall in line with feminist foreign policies.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This work will utilize qualitative analysis to understand and define the feminist foreign policy discourse being used for the involved states. This methodology will determine what concurrent themes are being emphasized domestically and how this reflects the country's international perception. The similarities and difference found within this analysis will help determine what key ideas of feminist foreign policy are being most integrated into state discourse. This will also highlight which areas of FFP states regularly align themselves with. Sweden, Canada, and France will be utilized as case studies within this research. These states have already implemented explicitly feminist foreign policies and have commonly been seen as pioneers in FFP application.

The method used to determine the similarities and differences between each state will be a content analysis of official government documents, speeches, action plans, and policies. Each document is thoroughly analyzed and any statements that were continuously utilized within the discourse were categorized. For example, while examining Swedish FFP any repeated statement involving economic equality would be highlighted, categorized, and pulled for data collection. Each sentence that is selected will contain key phrases or words relating to specific goals. Key terms could include "human rights", "economic equality", "political participation", or any other specific terminology. These sentences are then collected and stored into each category. The most common classifications or key terms include human rights (containing gender-based and sexual violence, economic equality, and political participation), peace building and security, climate protocols, power relations, and the role of others. These classifications will be compared and the number of times each key term is utilized will be recorded throughout the discourse.

The states will be assessed in chronological order beginning with the first country to implement feminist foreign policy. Thus, Sweden will be assessed first followed by Canada, and France. Due to the recent implementation of FFP France may have fewer examples of discourse in comparison to Sweden and Canada. After the first analysis of Sweden each subsequent state will be reviewed under the same parameters. Thus, allowing the data to show any variance between each state. As the data collection continues the categories will expand to encompass any differing facets of each state's feminist foreign policy. For instance, if one state explicitly mentions healthcare and the other states do not, the data will still be collected to show any outliers within the application and conception of each unique feminist foreign policy. Additionally, by thoroughly analyzing the discourse used both domestically and internationally I aim to be able to connect similar goals, values, and policies between each state. The cumulative research will then be divided into depending on the results of the content analysis. These subsections can then be compared between states to find commonalities in each FFP.

The utilization of the qualitative analysis software, Quirkos, will allow for a more in-depth investigation into these feminist foreign policies. The data will be formed into word clouds which selects and configures the most used words throughout the documentation. This will provide a unique look into what terms are frequently applied in feminist foreign policy discourse for each state. The word cloud will provide a visual representation of these key terms and the sizes of each word correlate to the size represented within the world cloud. Additionally, tables will be created for each individual state so that the number of categorizes can be distinguished. The tables will breakdown the sub-categories of human rights and any miscellaneous groupings. For instance, if one state includes a category that is completely unique from the other case studies it will still be included into the data analysis. This will allow for all goals, values, or categories to be represented within the study.

This analysis utilized a myriad of publications including speeches by foreign ministers, departmental plans, action plans, handbooks, official statements, and more. Action plans, strategies, or departmental plans which all outline how each state will aim to implement feminist foreign policies. These documents commonly outline the main goals and values of the country and represent the most crucial aspects the state wishes to reform. The number of quotes may not be equal between each state as it is dependent on the information which is published. For instance, a 5-page Canadian document may have only two quotes pertaining to a relevant category whereas a Swedish paper of the same length may have 10.

The documents included in the study were some of the most available and publicized examples of discourse for each state. For example, the documents that are most advertised on the state website, platform, or forums represent what discourse the country most wants to be viewed. What is presented on a public platform represents how the states wish to be seen both domestically and internationally. If a state promotes documents on their website that specifically revolve around security objectives, it would be clear that security is one of the most integral policies for the state. Thus, by utilizing some of the most readily available documentation it will be a clear representation of what each country wishes to be communicated to both the public and the international community. This will also allow for further insight into how often the state is publishing, promoting, or publicizing feminist foreign policy discourse. By publishing these documents electronically, the states can become efficient in digital diplomacy.<sup>44</sup> This proficiency in the “digital articulation of feminist foreign policy” can help project the “self-narrative of a just state, committed to gender equality, representation and rights within and

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<sup>44</sup> Aggestam, Rosamond, & Hedling, 314.

beyond borders.”<sup>45</sup> Countries have realized that in the modern global environment social media is one of the most useful and impactful tools to “project their policy preferences, normative values and nation brands” that are valuable for their own state goals.<sup>46</sup> Despite the relative recentness of feminist foreign policy implementation, states can clearly see how FFP’s can allow for a self-narrative to be catered to their own benefit and agenda. Thus, the FFP documents that are most easily accessible and promoted are singularly significant to determining how states would like to be seen domestically and internationally.

Additionally, during this research Sweden announced the country’s departure from their feminist foreign policy. The newly elected prime minister, Ulf Kristersson, stated “his new foreign minister, Tobias Billstrom, declared the policy reversal.”<sup>47</sup> This is an example of how quickly gender politics and foreign policies can vary with domestic politics.<sup>48</sup> As new political representatives come into power, their values and goals for the state fluctuate and “gender equality agendas have historically met barriers and reversals.”<sup>49</sup> Due to this change, only 12 official documents and statements previously published by Sweden were collected before the feminist foreign policy was removed from their digital archive. Therefore, all states will have an equal number of publications utilized for this analysis. Despite Sweden’s departure, the impact of the state as the first to implement FFP is still valuable to the international community. Additionally, Sweden’s clear proficiency in digital democracy highlights the need for discourse to be analyzed to determine how states wish to be seen internationally. Therefore, Sweden’s documentation will still be used for data collection throughout this study.

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<sup>45</sup> Aggestam, Rosamond, & Hedling, 314.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> George, R. A. “Sweden’s feminist foreign policy can’t be undone.” *Foreign Policy*. (2022). Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/11/18/sweden-feminist-foreign-policy-billstrom-gender-equality/>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

## IV. CASE STUDIES

### 1. SWEDEN

Sweden was the pioneer of feminist foreign policy when the state announced they would be pursuing an explicit FFP in 2014.<sup>50</sup> Sweden was the first state to explicitly utilize the term “feminist” within a foreign policy agenda.<sup>51</sup> The state publicly declared their stance against the “global subordination” of women and other minority groups.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, Swedish feminist foreign policy focused on the three R’s which stood for:

Rights, meaning the promotion of women’s issues, including by countering gender-based violence and discrimination; representation, including support for women’s participation at all levels of decision making, from parliament to private sector boards to the legal system; and resources, to ensure equitable allocation among people of all gender, whether in government budgets or development projects.<sup>53</sup>

Sweden emphasized the three Rs throughout their feminist foreign policy discourse and published extensive documents furthering the self-narrative of leading the way in FFP implementation. Rights, representation, and resources are the main goals of the state overall. Sweden aimed to implement these goals by “integrating a gender perspective in all its activities.”<sup>54</sup> The three main policy areas of Sweden’s feminist foreign policy include “foreign and security policy, development cooperation, and trade and promotion policy.”<sup>55</sup> These goals are indicators of what Sweden believes to be essential to achieving gender equality and realizing feminist foreign policy goals. The state emphasizes the need for these factors to be executed for

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<sup>50</sup> Aggestam & Rosamond, 30.

<sup>51</sup> Vogelstein, R., & Bro, A. “Sweden’s feminist foreign policy, long may it reign.” *Foreign Policy*. (2019). Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/30/sweden-feminist-foreignpolicy/>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. “Sweden’s feminist foreign policy Examples from three years of implementation.” Government of Sweden, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. “Handbook Sweden’s feminist foreign policy.” Government of Sweden, (2019), 9.

the feminist foreign policy to be successful. Additionally, the state highlights extensive lists of implementation goals throughout its discourse.

The Foreign Service of Sweden would lead the way to further the feminist foreign policy by defending, collaborating, and contributing to the FFP goals within the state. The Foreign Service will utilize efforts in the European Union, United Nations, International Criminal Court, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to aid in spreading a gender perspective throughout all international communication.<sup>56</sup> Sweden consistently mentioned the need for interstate collaboration, as without this gender equality goals may be hindered on a global scale. The advancement of FFP was therefore the main responsibility of the Foreign Service since 2014. Sweden has effectively utilized these strategies to become a pioneer and leader for feminist foreign policy throughout the world.

They have utilized feminist foreign policy to form a specific and targeted narrative of what their state stands for throughout the world. Sweden has continuously communicated their FFP through “digital diplomacy” so that they can effectively “project its external priorities and visions” as well as effectively branding its public diplomacy.<sup>57</sup> Sweden has created a “normative platform whereby states and other actors employ digital means to highlight their commitment to the transformation of gendered injustices in global relations.”<sup>58</sup> The state has been outspoken in their efforts to spread gender equality and human rights objectives throughout the international community. Additionally, this allows the public to easily have access to FFP objectives, action plans, and legislation. By allowing the domestic population to effortlessly obtain feminist foreign

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<sup>56</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. “Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including areas of focus for 2016.” Government Offices of Sweden, 14-15.

<sup>57</sup> Aggestam & Rosamond, 315.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.



*Table 1: Words & Frequency for Sweden*

Words	Number of Occurrences
Gender	971
Foreign	849
Women	714
Policy	651
Equality	637

This table allows for quick insight into what terms are being consistently reiterated within Swedish discourse. Terms such as “gender” and “women” highlight the main groups and categories the feminist foreign policy documentation is covering. Sweden also mentions other groups within their FFP including men, LGBTQIA persons, and other disenfranchised populations. Despite this, through Swedish discourse it is clearly shown that women and gender create the basis of their feminist foreign policy agenda. Women are at the forefront of their policy and additional groups are not as focused upon. The FFP is clearly signaling to the rest of the international community that Sweden is prioritizing the rights and conditions of women domestically and throughout the globe. Additionally, the term “equality” occurred 637 times in comparison to “rights” which reached 443. Women, gender, and equality all represent the core ideas of Swedish feminist foreign policy understanding. These terms are still just indicators as to how the state interprets and understands FFP but do allow for insight into the chosen discourse Sweden utilizes to depict its version of feminist foreign policy publicly. Any statement, policy, or other work from Sweden was meticulously written, reviewed, and publicized for a reason. Sweden can utilize these documents to establish their viewpoint across both their domestic and international spheres and reap any social rewards for doing so. Championing women’s rights,

human rights, and other social goals makes the state look like a good actor to both the public and other countries alike. The utilization of these terms therefore represents both state understanding and state goals. Sweden’s implementation of FFP is a statement of how Sweden wishes to be seen internationally and in turn how they understand feminist foreign policy itself. Clearly, women, gender, and equality are some of the most crucial terms in understanding this interpretation and the state’s goals overall.

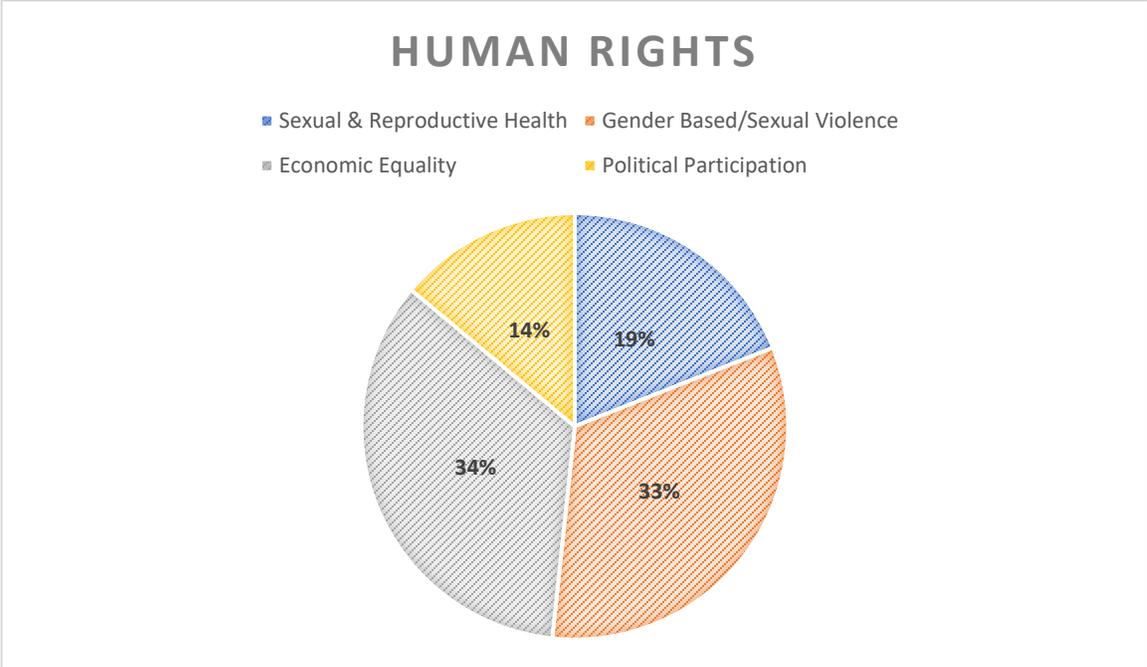


Chart 1: Depicts the percentage of each subcategory within Swedish discourse regarding the topic of human rights.

Additionally, throughout Swedish feminist foreign policy discourse, the state maintains great emphasis on human rights including sexual and reproductive health, gender-based or sexual violence, economic equality, and political participation. The chart below details a breakdown of the frequency in which these topics appeared in Swedish discourse. There were 692 different examples of human rights goals and statements across Swedish documentation. Within these quotations economic equality was most often referred to.

Sweden has adamantly prioritized women's participation in the economy since the implementation of their FFP in 2014. Throughout the documentation economic goals are referenced 163 times. Sweden reiterates the need for "economic rights" and the "economic empowerment of women and girls and their access to economic resources."<sup>59</sup> Sweden's hope to aid in the economic empowerment for women is dependent on the Swedish Foreign Service and their ability to "support women entrepreneurs and conduct promotion activities with a special focus on the participation of women in working life."<sup>60</sup> The Foreign Service will use a "gender analysis" and "gender-responsive budgeting" to aid in women's economic agency.<sup>61</sup> Sweden also emphasizes the need for gender to be considered in the global market and as primary factor in international trade policies.<sup>62</sup> Thus, each opportunity presented to Sweden for trade must be "economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable, and gender-equal" to be agreeable with Sweden's feminist foreign policy.<sup>63</sup>

Sweden also "played a crucial role when the WTO adopted its first declaration on gender and trade in 2017"<sup>64</sup> and further urged for the "Global Deal" which aims to "improve the dialogue between labour market actors and national governments to improve terms of employment and productivity."<sup>65</sup> Sweden utilizes their feminist foreign policy to highlight actions and examples they have implemented since the beginning of their FFP to emphasize their ongoing commitment to the relevant policies. Achieving the third R of "resources" in Swedish

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<sup>59</sup> "Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including areas of focus for 2016.", 4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>62</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. "Feminist Trade Policy." Government of Sweden, 4.

<sup>63</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. "Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights 2018-2022." Government of Sweden, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. "Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Seminar on Feminist Foreign Policy." Government of Sweden, (2019, March 8), 3.

<sup>65</sup> "Handbook Sweden's feminist foreign policy.", 90.

FFP is essential to the development and achievement of economic equality within the state. Sweden's overarching goals are therefore deeply intertwined with economic policies and agendas. The frequency in which economic issues, ideas, and values, are discussed clearly indicates that economic empowerment is one of the main pillars of Sweden's understanding of feminist foreign policy. If a topic is continuously reinforced, it clearly maintains importance to both state understanding and international perception.

Sweden has also emphasized a need to reform and decrease sexual or gender-based violence that occurs within their state and across borders. Sweden defines gender-based violence as including but not limited to “domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking for sexual purposes, exploitation of persons in prostitution, and harmful practices such as child, early and force marriage, honour-related violence and oppression, and female genital mutilation.”<sup>66</sup> The issue of gender-based and sexual violence was the second most frequently referred to goal within Swedish feminist foreign policy under economic equality. Sweden created a “10-year strategy on preventing and combating men's violence against women” in 2016, and “allocated more than 1.6 billion Swedish Crowns for the implementation of the action plan.”<sup>67</sup> Additionally, the state also noted that a need to decrease recidivism rates in persons that commit these crimes. Therefore, the government produced mandatory training on sexual and gender-based violence for students in “Law, Medicine, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Dental Care, Psychology, and Social Work.”<sup>68</sup> The state emphasizes it was the “first country in the world to introduce legislation criminalizing the purchase, and not the selling, of sexual service” as to try and combat sexual violence from

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<sup>66</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights 2018-2022.” Government of Sweden, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Gender Equality Policy in Sweden A feminist Government.” Government of Sweden, (2019), 16.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

various fronts.<sup>69</sup> Finally, Sweden also exhibits an inclination to prevent gender-based violence internationally by combating violence from terrorists and armed conflicts.<sup>70</sup> The state emphasizes the need for resolution and peacemaking in these areas, as well as describes Sweden's willingness to utilize the International Criminal Court for further prosecution.<sup>71</sup> Throughout Swedish discourse sexual or gender-based violence is seen as a priority not only domestically but internationally as the state continuously takes a hard stance in the eradication of such crimes. Sweden commonly has reiterated their hopes of fighting injustices such as sexual and gender-based violence and outlines a way for the country to be seen as a defender or protector in the international arena.

Sweden clearly outlines the need to increase the political participation of women both in domestic processes but furthermore in peacebuilding and security. During the infancy of Swedish FFP, political participation in Sweden was led by the Foreign Service in which they were to "actively increase the agency of women and girls. Including by promoting their rights and opportunities to form civil society organizations" and "act to enable more women to access political office."<sup>72</sup> Additionally, the state emphasizes how an even distribution of power and influence will benefit the domestic economy and assist women in having their voice be heard.<sup>73</sup> This commitment to this goal also includes reorganizing domestic organizational structures to encourage or enhance female leadership throughout the state. Sweden states this will be achieved by "actively nominating Swedish women to international positions" and pursuing "active organizational and human resources policies that create non-discriminatory organizational

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<sup>69</sup> "Gender Equality Policy in Sweden A feminist Government.", 16.

<sup>70</sup> "Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including areas of focus for 2016.", 6.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

structure and promote gender equality.”<sup>74</sup> By 2019 Sweden stated it “contributed to women’s political participation in several countries, has supported women and human rights campaigners. And has carried out active advocacy activities in connection to freedom of speech and opinion.”<sup>75</sup> Sweden’s later publications highlighted the work the state had done internationally utilizing examples with the International Gender Champions initiative in Geneva, developing countries, or the strengthening of protections for women journalists.<sup>76</sup> The state utilizes these foreign services to further highlight the goal of including women in peace building and security operations.

Women’s integration into peacebuilding and security measures are not listed in Chart 1 as the discourse did not specifically fall under the specifications of human rights throughout this analysis. Despite this, peacebuilding and security measures were commonly referred to in Swedish discourse and often related to the subject of women’s political participation therefore were tracked accordingly. In Sweden’s Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy in 2019-2022 the government specifically highlights women’s “participation in preventing and resolving conflict, and post-conflict peacebuilding” as one main goal for the policy.<sup>77</sup> Sweden establishes that the state will utilize their relationships with the European Union, United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to ensure a “gender perspective” is integrated into “peace support operations.”<sup>78</sup> Sweden asserts that gender equal societies have been found to be more peaceful and peace processes that

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<sup>74</sup> “Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including areas of focus for 2016.”, 17.

<sup>75</sup> “Handbook Sweden’s feminist foreign policy.”, 25.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>77</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. “Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022 including direction and measures for 2019.” Government Offices of Sweden, 7.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

include women within the dialogue have a higher chance of sustainability.<sup>79</sup> The state emphasizes the need to prevent conflict internationally and to contribute gendered analysis on global actors that may be unable to integrate this analysis themselves. By establishing the state as a resource for such countries, Sweden can aid in the dissemination of their own feminist foreign policy standards on a broader scale. Furthermore, aid from Sweden could be dependent on the other actor's application of gender-based reasoning. Sweden positions itself as not only a country that can provide aid to states during times of conflict, but also one that will utilize their policy agendas to further Swedish principles on a global scale. This strategy also aligns with other goals exhibited in Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

Climate protocols in Swedish discourse are applied with a gendered lens so to actively aid the most affected populations. Although discourse regarding climate protocols was not as commonly referred to, Sweden still advocates for a "gender equality policy" for all major "environmental climate funds that Sweden contributes to" including Green Climate Fund, the Climate Investment Funds, the Adaptation Fund, and the Global Environment Facility.<sup>80</sup> The state asserts that climate effects disproportionately impact women due to their lack of access to political and economic resources both domestically and abroad.<sup>81</sup> The absence of such resources makes women more susceptible to the ramifications of climate change, and in turn can lessen their ability to participate in the local or global economy. Women are often responsible for their family's food security and "play a key role in the use and administration of forest resources and water" thus making them "important agents" when it comes to combating climate change.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> "Handbook Sweden's feminist foreign policy.", 105.

<sup>80</sup> "Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including areas of focus for 2016.", 25.

<sup>81</sup> "Handbook Sweden's feminist foreign policy.", 85.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

Sweden aims to apply these assertions into the Paris Agreement and revise a “gender equality policy in the Green Climate Fund”.<sup>83</sup> By utilizing this research and discourse, Sweden can adjust climate protocol negotiations in international settings with feminist foreign policy goals in mind.

Finally, Swedish discourse refers to a “sub-goal” involving the power relations between women and other populations.<sup>84</sup> Power relations within Swedish discourse revolve around the unequal distribution or access to social, economic, or political resources, as well as what degree of influence varying populations have over such areas. Sweden states that an “assessment of power relations that exist for different groups” is essential to understanding how women can be more empowered within their communities.<sup>85</sup> This will aid in hindering the “systematic subordination” of women and further Sweden’s goal of equalizing power between both men and women.<sup>86</sup> Sweden views gender equality as something that can only be achieved by leveling the power imbalances between all populations. The state primarily utilizes discourse that suggest this goal is one that must be addressed domestically before utilization in a global context. Despite this, Sweden reiterates these imbalances may only be overcome if the groups with the most power are reeducated to see the importance of women’s roles in society.

The discussion on power relations also involves the role of others in feminist foreign policy. Others are most referred to as men, boys, LGBTQ persons, organizations, or political actors. Understanding what roles other populations are given within Swedish discourse is essential to comprehending how the state views feminist foreign policy and how it aims to

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<sup>83</sup> “Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2019-2022.”, 8.

<sup>84</sup> “Gender Equality Policy in Sweden A feminist Government.”, 10.

<sup>85</sup> “Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 including areas of focus for 2016.”, 16.

<sup>86</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs. “Sweden’s feminist foreign policy Examples from three years of implementation.” Government of Sweden, 3.

combat gendered-based inequality. If the state did not mention other groups besides women, the inherent inequalities between differing populations would not be addressed. This could lead to the assumption that inequality or empowerment is only a women's issue. Sweden clearly defines the inequalities between such groups by stating they will not leave behind the "poorest, most marginalized and excluded people- not least women, girls and LGBTI persons- in focus and underlines the importance of considering different interacting power structures and forms of discrimination."<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, the state reiterates the need for men and boys to be committed to combating gender inequality so to change archaic social norms that fall in line with gender stereotypical or patriarchal fallacies.

Overall, Swedish discourse emphasizes the state's pioneering efforts in feminist foreign policy implementation. Sweden views itself as the defender, advocate, and founder of feminist foreign policies specifically focused on human rights development. The Swedish documentation illustrates the primary concerns revolving around gender-based and sexual violence, economic inequality, political participation, and sexual and reproductive health. The states' proficiency in spreading awareness to feminist foreign policy through digital diplomacy both empowered the country's "self-narration" but further advanced perception of FFP worldwide.<sup>88</sup> Sweden was not only able to advance the understanding of feminist foreign policy globally, but further created an identity revolving around fighting for human rights domestically and internationally. The perception of the state can be seen as pro-women, pro-empowerment, and pro-equality. Thus, enabling the state to impart Swedish policies or ideologies on a myriad of international arenas that may have not been influenced otherwise.

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<sup>87</sup> "Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights 2018-2022.", 2.

<sup>88</sup> Aggestam, Rosamond, & Hedling, 322.

## 2. CANADA

Canadian feminist foreign policy began to take shape in 2017 with the publication of both the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defense Policy*.<sup>89</sup> The FIAP highlighted six main goals that prioritize “gender equality and human rights, economic growth, climate action, inclusive governance, and peace and security.”<sup>90</sup> The defense policy actually indicated the shift to an explicitly feminist foreign policy throughout the cover letter written by Minister Freeland.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, the state soon began the Elsie Initiative of Women, Peace, and Security and began advocating for the integration of women within peace making operations across the world. During its infancy period Canada continued to create new discourse and publications regarding the states' feminist foreign policy goals. In Canada's 2017-2022 Action Plan states its creation is in part to:

Support women's full participation in peace and security efforts, to prevent, address and fight impunity for conflict-related sexual violence, and to consolidate women's and girls' empowerment and advance gender equality, including in the world's most dangerous and complex conflicts.<sup>92</sup>

Much of Canada's initial discourse revolved around peace building and security operations and as the state's feminist foreign policy developed the topics themselves broadened. According to the United Nations Peacekeeping website, Canada is in the top 10 donors of peacekeeping operations. Canada has clearly invested in being seen as a leader in peacekeeping operations internationally. This is also reflected by the frequency peace building and security is mentioned throughout Canadian discourse. As a middle power, Canada has utilized their role and

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<sup>89</sup> Chapnick, A. “The origins of Canada's feminist foreign policy.” *International Journal*, 74(2), (2019), 202.

<sup>90</sup> Zhukova, Rosén Sundström, & Elgström, 198.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Global Affairs Canada. “Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022.” Government of Canada.

contributions in the United Nations to cement themselves with other powerful states that lead in UN funding. Canada can also justify this spending as peace building and security is one of the leading pillars of Canada's feminist foreign policy.

By 2019, Canada was comfortably and consistently referring to their feminist foreign policy as the foundation for many policy making decisions. The terms "feminist" and "feminism" "became enshrined with the national, and international, lexicon."<sup>93</sup> The utilization of this lexicon allows for Canada to pave out their identity as a benevolent actor in the international realm. The state as well as its leaders claim to be feminist and utilize feminism to advance Canadian backed policies domestically and internationally.<sup>94</sup> These developments aided the states' ability to combat international crises as seen in 2020 with the outbreak of COVID-19.

As the FFP developed, the state was well positioned during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the country's international assistance programs, global diplomacy, and vast peace and security policies.<sup>95</sup> Canada specifically recognized how COVID-19 disproportionately impacted women, girls, and minority populations and sought to find resolutions through their feminist foreign policy agenda.<sup>96</sup> Some of these key political frameworks include the "Feminist International Assistance Policy, the Cultural Diplomacy Strategy and the Road Map for a Renewed United States-Canada Partnership."<sup>97</sup> Canada emphasizes the need for international cooperation as it directly effects the health and security of all Canadians due to the impact of COVID-19.<sup>98</sup>

Canada views itself as a global leader in "health, security, prosperity, and values" and attributes

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<sup>93</sup> Chapnick, 192.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Smith, J., Herten-Crabb, A., & Wenham, C. "COVID-19 & feminist foreign Policy: Canada's comparative advantage." *Canadian Foreign Policy (CFP)*, 28(2), (2002), 170.

<sup>96</sup> Global Affairs Canada, "Canada Departmental Plan 2021-22." Government of Canada, (2021), 11.

<sup>97</sup> Global Affairs Canada. "Canada Departmental Plan 2022-23." Government of Canada, (2022), 2.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 3.

many of these advancements to the adoption and implementation of their feminist foreign policy.<sup>99</sup> The overarching objective of the state’s FFP is to foster a “effective and inclusive rules-based international system” that will “advance Canadian priorities and address global challenges that require shared solutions.”<sup>100</sup> This rules-based system is continuously mentioned in Canadian discourse as the state aims to create shared commitments between states in which all state actions align with a set of agreed upon rules or expectations. Canada accentuates its role as a cooperator and asserts the state’s position towards multilateral collaboration. Canada aims to create this system by highlighting the benefits of their own feminist foreign policy internationally, and thus demonstrating how the policy can be an asset to other inspiring nations.



Figure 2: Canada Word Cloud

<sup>99</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2022-23.”, 2.  
<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 4.

Table 2: Words & Frequency for Canada

Words	Number of Occurrences
Canada	1306
Global	979
International	926
Affairs	702
Women	532

Figure 2 represents the most utilized language in Canadian feminist foreign policy discourse. Additionally, Table 2 provides distinct insight into what terminology is being repeatedly applied into published materials. The vocabulary chosen by each state allows for analysis into what terms help the country allude to what policies, procedures, and definitions most benefit their own international or domestic goals. Canada in particular mentions global and international cooperation continuously, demonstrating to the world that Canada can be a useful ally when needing peace building, conflict resolution, or humanitarian aid, all situations in which the state outlined in their Action Plans. Canada also places great emphasis on human rights throughout the state's feminist foreign policy discourse.

As Chart 2 illustrates below, the majority of Canada's human rights dialogue was focused on economic equality, followed by gender based or sexual violence. The topics of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and political participation were nearly tied in the percentage each topic occurred in FFP discourse. Statements revolving around economic strategies, goals, or standards appeared 110 times throughout the study whereas the following

topic, gender-based violence, arose 68 times. Canada clearly identifies women’s empowerment with economic equality and utilizes this strategy throughout their feminist foreign policy.

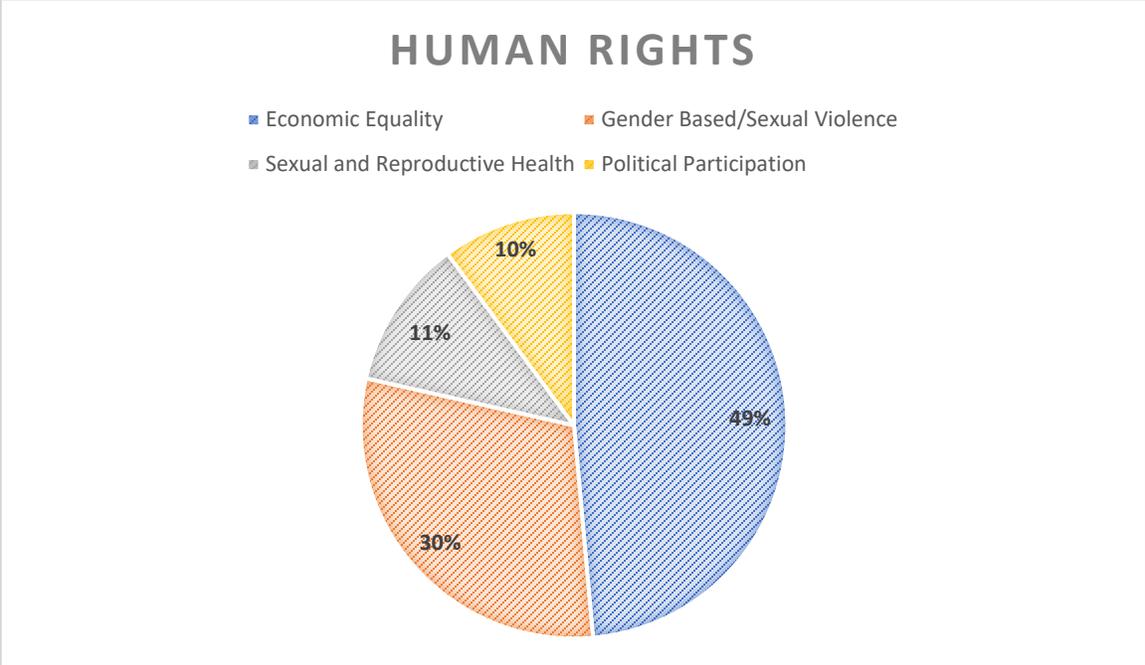


Chart 2: Depicts the percentage of each subcategory within Canadian discourse regarding the topic of human rights.

The economic goals outlined in Canada’s FFP include to eradicate poverty, achieve sustainability, and create gender equality through economic opportunity. Canada recognizes the importance of integrating women into the economy. “When women are able to develop their full economic potential-whether as agriculture producers, employees, entrepreneurs or business leaders-economies thrive and the benefits reach more people.”<sup>101</sup> This idea that women’s integration into economic models is a decisive indicator to the strength of a country’s economy is reiterated extensively throughout Canadian discourse. Canada views economic equality as the bottom-line for women empowerment and without this being realized an economy will never reach its full potential. The state mentions that to eradicate poverty “all girls, adolescent girls and

<sup>101</sup> Global Affairs Canada. “Canada Departmental Plan 2019-20.” Government of Canada, (2019), 15.

women must have equal access to quality education” and when they do “they help build an economy that works for everyone.”<sup>102</sup> Canada views its commitment to economic equality as a “legacy” and sees itself as a “leader” after investing in the states’ “G7 commitment to provide \$400 million to support Education for Women and Girls in Fragile, Conflict and Crisis Situations.”<sup>103</sup> The state strives to not only create economic equality domestically, but also asserts their feminist foreign policy can be a guiding light for other countries.

Canada’s economic goals include cooperating with partners around the world. The state indicates both developed and developing countries can become partners in this initiative with Canada to ensure women’s economic empowerment.<sup>104</sup> Global Affairs Canada will be actively searching for “inclusive innovative partnerships and finances that will help drive innovation, trade and investment...”<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, Canada aims to strengthen “key bilateral relationships, expanding cooperation with like minded partners and Canadian, international and multilateral organizations” as long as these relationships agree with and enhance core Canadian interests.<sup>106</sup> Canada’s feminist foreign policy aims to utilize these relationships to aid in reinforcing trade agreements and integrating women into such negotiations. Global Affairs Canada thus focuses intently on creating international relationships that can benefit their domestic population while in turn empowering women from other states. The goal of these agreements is to “reduce chronic poverty and gender inequalities” and “promote sustainable growth, economic inclusion and resilience.”<sup>107</sup> Canada’s economic policy is therefore not only benefitting women and marginalized populations, but also provides Canada with a unique foothold to identify

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<sup>102</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2019-20.”, 16.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2022-23.”, 5.

<sup>107</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2019-20.”, 16.

themselves as the leading economic force behind women's empowerment. Canada's clear emphasis on economic goals in state discourse ensures their positioning as one of the most unyielding defenders of women's economic equality.

Canada's feminist foreign policy also outlines the need to abolish gender-based and sexual violence to ensure women's equality throughout the state. The state aims to resolve these issues by coordinating "regular and meaningful engagement with diaspora and faith and belief communities, civil society actors, academics, the private sector and the broader international community."<sup>108</sup> Canada relates much of its discourse on gender-based and sexual violence on international efforts to aid women in conflict areas or "fragile" states in which women may face higher percentages of violence. For instance, Canada asserts that "sexual and gender-based violence is often used as a tactic of war. In various instances, women human rights defenders are harassed, detained, and murdered."<sup>109</sup> Instances of sexual violence can be considered war crimes, and Canada asserts it will utilize its position in the international community to prevent additional instances of gender-based and sexual violence from occurring.<sup>110</sup>

Additionally, Canada is aware that forms of violence against women still occur domestically and must be combatted just as fervently as crimes abroad. The state acknowledges a "disproportionately high rate of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls" within Canada.<sup>111</sup> The country also affirms that Indigenous women are discriminated against not only because of their gender but furthermore because of their race, economic status, and identity.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> "Canada Departmental Plan 2022-23.", 12.

<sup>109</sup> "Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022."

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

Out of all women murdered “between 1980 and 2012” 16% were Indigenous women despite their population only making up 4% of all women in the state.<sup>113</sup> Sexual and gender-based violence also effects non-Indigenous women within the state with a particular increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the social distancing and confinement during the pandemic gender-based violence rose within the state. Additionally, “harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting” heightened across the world.<sup>114</sup> To prevent the continual rise of gender-based violence Canada has made a “10-year commitment to improve the health and rights of women and girls around the world. This will reach \$1.4 billion annually, starting in 2023” with 700 million going directly to SRHR and the prevention of gender-based or sexual violence.<sup>115</sup>

Sexual and reproductive health rights are considered a priority for Canada’s feminist foreign policy and human rights agenda. The state aims to integrate SRHR into health systems across international borders and continue to fund global health rights through their 10-year commitment as previously stated. This is also implemented into Canada’s COVID-19 response in which the state aims to ensure “advances in sexual and reproductive health and rights, nutrition, maternal, newborn and child health, and fight other communicable diseases.”<sup>116</sup> In 2019 Canada was host to Women Deliver Global Conference in which Canada aimed to “strengthen global advocacy” and “influence policy, program, processes, and decisions that impact gender equality... including sexual and reproductive health and rights.”<sup>117</sup> Canada is able to use such forums as a way to promote and determine the next step in women’s empowerment

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<sup>113</sup> “Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022.”

<sup>114</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2021-22.”, 30.

<sup>115</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2022-23.”, 30.

<sup>116</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2021-22.”, 29.

<sup>117</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2019-20.”, 15.

and SRHR. By utilizing international conventions, agreements, and forums the state can use its feminist foreign policy to push forward ideals like SRHR and disseminate Canadian ideals or policy preferences. This not only can encourage other states to participate or implement SRHR legislation but its further aids in advancing FFP proliferation. Furthermore, this has domestic benefits as Canadian society can see the state advocating for their own rights on an international platform. Canada furthers this goal by asserting the state will work hand in hand with “Canadian organizations” which will “play a critical role in building local capacity and strengthening the ‘rights’ aspect of sexual and reproductive health rights.”<sup>118</sup> The state further suggests that these domestic advancements can only be done with the further integration of women in both politics and leadership roles.

The political participation of women in Canadian FFP discourse emphasizes the integration of women will lead to a more stable state and governance. Canada aims to advance women’s political participation by “integrating gender into all of its policy and diplomatic engagements” as well as promote more women into assuming “leadership roles in the UN and across the international peace and security architecture.”<sup>119</sup> The state will use gender analysis in all research and projects so that women’s equal participation in decision making measure can be accounted for.<sup>120</sup> Canada reaffirms that the state must ensure women’s participation domestically “both because this enables more women to deploy internationally” but also so that Canada can “lead by example.”<sup>121</sup> Canada believes that with the full participation of women in political

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<sup>118</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2022-23.”, 30.

<sup>119</sup> Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

processes programs, process, and sustainability measure will be improved.<sup>122</sup> This sustainability will not only impact domestic productivity, but it will further advance international progress. Canada aspires to ensure “a diverse range of women have an equal opportunity to engage directly in the development of proposed interventions and to assess the impact of proposed interventions on them.”<sup>123</sup> Thus, allowing women in leadership positions to have a more active, advanced, and meaningful impact on political policies and negotiations. This will also lead into women providing insight and participation in peace building and security measures.

Canada has a broad and extensive discourse throughout their feminist foreign policy that promotes women’s empowerment through peace building and security protocols. The entirety of the human rights section (including economic equality, gender-based and sexual violence, SRHR, and political participation) was referred to over 400 times throughout the studied discourse. In comparison, peace building and security was nearly referenced 200 times. No other topic that was not related to human rights came close to reaching this margin. Peace building and security is the most prevalent agenda in Canada’s feminist foreign policy after human rights goals.

Canada’s history with peace building and security under a feminist foreign policy notably began with the launch of the Elsie Initiative published in 2017. The initiative was launched with the intention to improve upon the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 which addressed the need for the enhanced involvement of women in peace operations to help achieve sustainable peace and negotiations.<sup>124</sup> The resolution determined doubling “the current rate of

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<sup>122</sup> Global Affairs Canada. “Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2010-2016.” Government of Canada.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Prime Minister of Canada. “The Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations.” Government of Canada, (2017, November 15). [The Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/2017/11/15/elsie-initiative)

women’s participation of 3.7 percent of military peacekeepers and 9.5 percent of police peacekeepers by 2020” was needed to ensure women’s meaningful participation in peace processes.<sup>125</sup> Despite this, Canada asserted that the number of women peacekeepers had only increased “by 0.2 percent.”<sup>126</sup> Therefore, the state launched the Elsie Initiative to “support the development of a systematic approach to deploy more women in peace operations” and provide “technical assistance support for countries that contribute peacekeepers to ensure the right conditions are in place for the deployment of women.”<sup>127</sup> Canada launched a global fund of \$15 million through the Elsie Initiative to provide support for women peacekeepers, as well as an additional \$6 million to current UN missions that are actively seeking to integrate women in peace building operations.<sup>128</sup> The state also asserts that through the Elsie Initiative, Canada and other international bodies can evaluate, assess, and adjust their processes so to better create a “comprehensive approach that could be fully integrated within the UN peacekeeping system.”<sup>129</sup> Thus, Canada has taken an active role in advancing peace building and security operations while integrating the states’ feminist foreign policy.

Outside of the Elsie Initiative, Canada consistently reinforces the advantages of including women in peace processes throughout their FFP discourse. Canada asserts that women “bring different perspective and priorities into conflict-prevention” and often “broaden the discussion beyond the interests of the warring parties, and advocate for a more equitable peace.”<sup>130</sup> Notably, many women “are courageous defenders of human rights and fearless negotiators for peace- and

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<sup>125</sup> “The Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations.”

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022.

yet are rarely positioned to prevent, manage and end conflict” and thus Canada aims to extend support to help women achieve these key roles.<sup>131</sup> Conflicts that are resolved with the help of women throughout peace processes find the peace is more lasting and sustainable.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, when women play an active role in conflict prevention or conflict resolution, the negotiations create “gender transformative solutions- and, ultimately, more inclusive, gender equal and peaceful societies.”<sup>133</sup> Additionally, women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict and this often leads to climate crises and food insecurity amongst the local communities. Thus, peace processes led by women also aid in deterring the effects of climate change within their countries.

Canada’s stance on climate change revolves around addressing the environment as a “core focus” and utilizes a gendered approach to understand how populations are disproportionately affected by the consistent changes in their surroundings.<sup>134</sup> Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy deems climate change and environmental sustainability are key subjects for their feminist foreign policy.<sup>135</sup> Canada also asserts that the states’ free trade agreements will be analyzed under a gendered lens and include “comprehensive, progressive chapters on gender, labour and the environment.”<sup>136</sup> This is also to provide assistance to countries facing humanitarian crises, natural disasters, or other challenges due to climate change.<sup>137</sup> Working

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<sup>131</sup> Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Global Affairs Canada. “Statement by Minister Joly, Sajjan and Ng on International Women’s Day.” Government of Canada, (2022, March 8). [Statement by ministers Joly, Sajjan and Ng on International Women’s Day - Canada.ca](#)

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Global Affairs Canada. “Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of International Development and Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade on International Women’s Day.” Government of Canada, (2021, March 8). [Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of International Development and Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade on International Women’s Day - Canada.ca](#)

<sup>137</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2021-22.”, 4.

bilaterally and multilaterally is key in the proliferation of Canada's ideals, policies, and feminist approach to climate change. Additionally, the state aims to work with "local communities, Indigenous peoples, women's rights advocates, and others to implement lasting solutions to respond to the climate crisis."<sup>138</sup> While doing so the state has also supported the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to aid in reviving the state's economy after the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining a "green recovery" plan.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, the discourse depicts how marginalized or at risk populations suffer from climate change and how their socio-economic standing in society must be improved in order to balance power and opportunity in the state.

The role of others and power relations within feminist foreign policy discourse highlights underserved populations such as women, LGBTQ2I, Indigenous groups, people with disabilities, and ethnic or religious minorities. Many of these communities intersect exasperating and already disproportionate amount of inequality or discrimination. Global Affairs Canada aims to "give priority to promoting and protecting the human rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups" as well as "build and maintain likeminded coalitions" that can help defend these groups.<sup>140</sup> Within the feminist foreign policy the state places great emphasis on both LGBTQ2I and Indigenous communities. For instance, Canada implemented LGBTQ2I international assistance program which aspires to "advance and promote human rights and improve socioeconomic outcomes for LGBTQ2I people in developing countries."<sup>141</sup> Canada furthers this commitment by stating the country will work together through multilateral forums to assert their expectations of diversity and inclusion as outlined in their feminist foreign policy. Additionally, the state will address "international human rights abuses and violations, including, where appropriate, through the

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<sup>138</sup> "Canada Departmental Plan 2021-22.", 27.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> "Canada Departmental Plan 2019-20.", 8.

<sup>141</sup> Global Affairs Canada. "Canada Departmental Plan 2020-21." Government of Canada, (2020), 10.

imposition of sanctions.”<sup>142</sup> Canada asserts a hardline approach when it comes to the inclusion and equal treatment of minority populations. In addition, Canada aims to strengthen their relationship by implementing the Action Plan on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.<sup>143</sup> By doing so the state hopes to “deepen its partnerships in the Arctic, defend Canada’s Arctic sovereignty and implement the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework” to help ensure “a future where Canada’s Northern and Arctic residents, especially Indigenous peoples, are thriving, strong and safe.”<sup>144</sup> Despite proposing various methods to combat the marginalization of these groups, Canada also acknowledges the need for communities that are in power to aid in equalizing inequalities within the state.

In relation with the role of others, power relations between various groups and communities within Canada are important to understanding the goals of Canadian feminist foreign policy. The state argues that unequal distributions of power and “discriminatory social norms” prevent women and girls from “influencing processes that profoundly affect them.”<sup>145</sup> As society reverts into these patriarchal and archaic social norms that enforce gender hierarchies, the marginalization and discrimination of women will continue and worsen.<sup>146</sup> Canada states “addressing the root causes of gender inequalities requires the transformation of power relations associated with discrimination, coercion and violence in Canada and abroad.”<sup>147</sup> Analyses between these disparities will aid in creating policies to combat further inequalities in power and help to empower women. Although Canada addresses the imbalances, the feminist foreign policy

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<sup>142</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2020-21.”, 10.

<sup>143</sup> “Canada Departmental Plan 2022-23.”, 2.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>145</sup> “Canada’s Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022.”

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

discourse does not mention the role of men and boys significantly, but simply acknowledges there are gaps between the power of men versus women. Finally, the state recognizes these shortcomings prevent women's full participation in peace building, economic opportunities, political participation, and uniquely in policing.

The idea of integrating women in policing and militarized forms of defense is a particular characterization of Canadian feminist foreign policy. Canada emphasizes the need to "recruit more women into the Canadian Armed Forces" and to highlight the WPS agenda throughout the country's Royal Canadian Mounted Police force.<sup>148</sup> Canadian women "accounted for 24% of Canadian police deployed to peace operations in 2015-2016 exceeding the UN goal of 20%."<sup>149</sup> Despite this, Canada aims to increase the number of women military members from 15% to 25% so that more women can be available for integration into international peace operations.<sup>150</sup> Canada states that in order to ensure the excellence of the Canadian military it must be diverse and inclusive enough to reflect the domestic population of the state.<sup>151</sup> Additionally, to improve the conditions for women in the military Canada launched operation HONOUR which aims to "eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behavior from the Canadian military."<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, the state believes by deploying a higher percentage of women police into conflict zones, sexual violence against women and girls may decrease.<sup>153</sup> Finally, the state asserts that

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<sup>148</sup> "Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022."

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> "Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2010-2016."

only through the integration of women into military and police forces can gender-equal societies be achieved both domestically and abroad.<sup>154</sup>

Overall, Canada's feminist foreign policy outlines a need for equality through human rights, peace building and security measures, climate protocols, redistribution of power relations, and integrated policing. Canada has made statements regarding its role as a leader, an example maker, and an explicitly feminist state. Canada not only wants to utilize feminist foreign policy to improve the lives of women within their country and abroad, but specifically mention that this strategy enables the state to influence pro-Canadian policies and ideals. Canada has utilized their FFP to host multilateral forums that promote aspects of feminist foreign policy agendas, but also use this as a tool to enhance their state perception abroad. Canada states a multitude of times that it can assist like minded countries, organizations, or groups that fall in line with Canadian ideologies. Ultimately, Canada can apply their feminist foreign policy throughout a myriad of multilateral negotiations while simultaneously improving the perception of the state as a benevolent actor. Canada has definitively created a position that not only proliferates Canadian policies, but also feminist ones.

### 3. FRANCE

France's first commitments to implementing a feminist foreign policy began on International Women's Day in March of 2019.<sup>155</sup> The country soon joined both Sweden and Canada as the only countries that had applied feminist foreign policies. The state was also "the first member of the United Nations Security Council's Permanent five members to take this step."<sup>156</sup> France has

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<sup>154</sup> "Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security – 2017-2022."

<sup>155</sup> Pallapothu, V. "Policy Analysis: France's Feminist Foreign Policy." *The Gender Security Project*. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from <https://www.gendersecurityproject.com/post/france-s-feminist-foreign-policy>

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

outlined throughout the state discourse their commitment to “appointing female leaders, gender mainstreaming, gender-budgeting, gender-friendly language, and collaboration with civil society.”<sup>157</sup>

France uses both feminist foreign policy and feminist diplomacy as strategies to aid in the empowerment and equality of women. The state’s pledge to feminist diplomacy have been integrated into international forums, organizations, and multilateral communication. France hosted the Gender Equality Ministers meeting, launched the Biarritz partnership for Gender Equality, and aided in the creation of the Declaration on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.<sup>158</sup> France has utilized feminist diplomacy to reach outside of the “Global North”, including “India, Senegal, Australia, and Chile” which made commitments to advancing gender equality after participating in the Biarritz partnership for Gender Equality.<sup>159</sup> Additionally, in the year France announced their feminist foreign policy, the state was the host country for the Group of Seven nations (G7) which amplified the state’s ability to spread awareness of FFP proliferation.<sup>160</sup> G7 is known to wield great influence amongst the international community and thus allowed for greater discussion of FFP during 2019. The state has stated its commitment to advancing feminist foreign policies internationally and emphasized this intent by declaring their FFP during their G7 host year.

France also refers to the application of gender mainstreaming into the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) which promotes the interests of France around the world. The Ministry is responsible for the state’s strategies for “peace and security, climate change, the

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<sup>157</sup> Zhukova, Rosén Sundström, & Elgström, 198.

<sup>158</sup> Pallapothu.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

economy, and sustainable development.”<sup>161</sup> France has worked towards including women’s participation in the Ministry so that a gendered perspective can be found throughout all aspects and areas of the agency. Even the addition of a non-gendered or gender inclusive language has been included as French “is a gendered language in which words take on either a masculine or feminine form” therefore the state aimed to include both forms as to minimize any patriarchal norms.<sup>162</sup> This highlights the states commitment of including feminist reforms even throughout the state discourse.

France’s *International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022)* outlines the states main objectives and procedures needed to implement their FFP. The strategy states “France’s action is based on three main principles: a comprehensive approach, a rights-based approach, and a gender-based approach (gender mainstreaming).”<sup>163</sup> The comprehensive approach “covers all of France’s external action and is consistent with the global accountability framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” which aims to foster cooperation internationally.<sup>164</sup> France aims to utilize the comprehensive approach so to include gender in all “French diplomatic priorities and all political, economic, soft diplomacy, cultural, educational and development” protocols.<sup>165</sup> Additionally, the Ministry intends for this to aid the state’s gender parity goals by furthering the equality between both men and women.<sup>166</sup> The rights-based approach is focused on “the respect for women’s rights, gender equality and the rejection of any gender discrimination” for all external action or policy implementation.<sup>167</sup> This approach is applied into

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<sup>161</sup> Pallapothu.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).” (2018), 13.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 13.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 14.

France's FFP to integrate "norms, rules and international principles of human rights into the humanitarian and development policies and processes on violence against women" so that women and girls find empowerment through knowing their rights.<sup>168</sup> Additionally, the state emphasizes how this approach can be influential in changing social norms, socioeconomic conditions, or communities in their entirety.<sup>169</sup> Finally, the gender-based approach is aimed at "strengthening the equality between women and men in society by integrating gender into public policies."<sup>170</sup> This gender mainstreaming is focused on incorporating a gender equality perspective into all levels of policy creation so that no processes lack this gendered lens. Gender mainstreaming will be utilized with a cross-cutting focus which would "systematically verify the impact on women and men" from policy decisions, and a specific focus that "support actions that promote gender equality and improve women's rights."<sup>171</sup> These strategies highlight France's method of feminist foreign policy implementation. These three key approaches are the ways in which the Ministry aims to evaluate, analyze, and achieve a successful FFP. This vital piece of documentation is the state's guiding force to feminist foreign policy application.

Figure 3 below illustrates the most used vocabulary in French feminist foreign policy discourse. The word cloud highlights common terms and provides insight into what terminology is being emphasized throughout French feminist foreign policy discourse. Additionally, Table 3 indicates the specific words that are reiterated throughout the analyzed documentation. Gender, Women, and Equality are the top three most frequently utilized words. France's discourse focuses much on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. These goals are

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<sup>168</sup> "France's International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).", 13.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.



of feminist foreign policy ideals. The state utilizes this word to show their commitment to accomplishing the goals outlined in their feminist diplomacy or FFP. Through humanitarian aid, multilateral agreements, or international forums France has shown their dedication to integrating feminist foreign policy principles throughout all aspects of state operations.

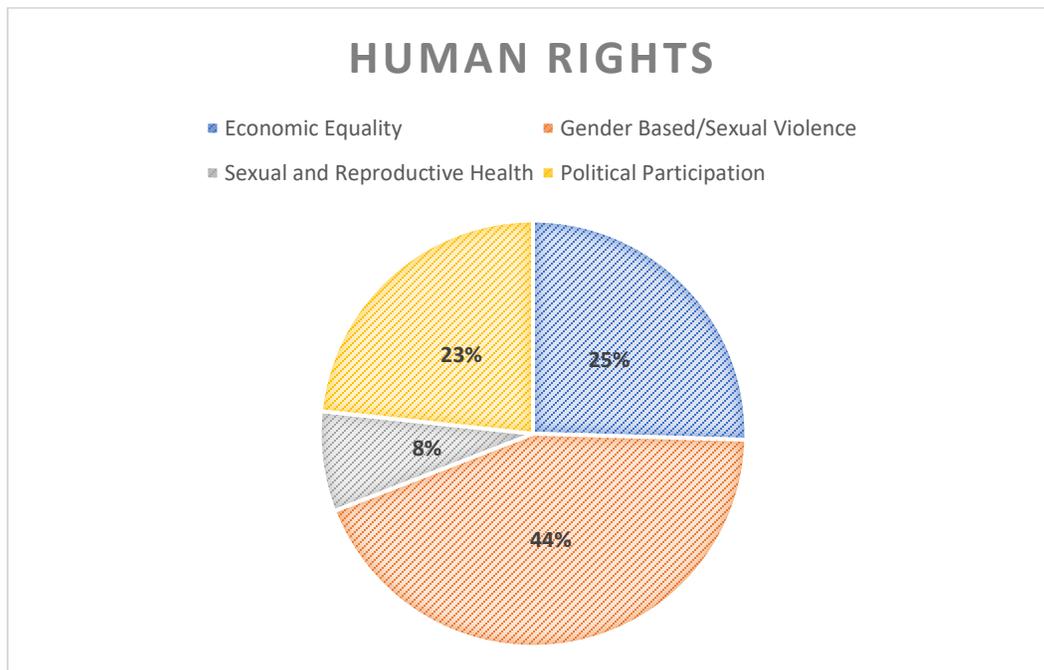


Chart 3: Depicts the percentage of each subcategory within French discourse regarding the topic of human rights.

As seen in Chart 3, France’s human rights agenda is focused on combatting gender-based and sexual violence. The state asserts that this goal can be reached by integrating the “rights-based approach” which “integrates the norms, rules and international principles of human rights into humanitarian and developmental policies and processes on violence against women.”<sup>172</sup> This approach is intended to both understand cultural differences, and still promote French human rights ideologies. The rights-based approach also “increases the responsibility of humanitarian aid stakeholders to promote participation and inclusion” which should assist in addressing

<sup>172</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 14.

violence against women.<sup>173</sup> Gender-based and sexual violence had long been a debate in French politics as the state has been publicly combating the prevalence of such offenses since the 1980s.<sup>174</sup> In 2014, “France ratified the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and passed the Law for Equality between Women and Men to bring French law into line with it.”<sup>175</sup> France has then utilized these commitments to reintegrate “structural analyses of violence against women” to aid in achieving gender equality.<sup>176</sup> France, more so than Sweden or Canada has emphasized this as a fundamental goal throughout their foreign policy discourse.

The following value that is most referred to in French feminist foreign policy documentation is economic equality. France intends to achieve more equitable standards by supporting women entrepreneurs, developing occupational and equal pay between women and men, and promoting sustainable development.<sup>177</sup> The state also asserts that economic equality cannot be achieved without the recognition and of “unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household.”<sup>178</sup> Equalizing the amount of unpaid care within the state would aid in providing women equal footing in the economic realm. By bolstering women’s economic freedom, the state can diversify their domestic economy. Furthermore, France mentions the need to promote economic equality internationally, with a focus in Africa.<sup>179</sup> To

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<sup>173</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 14.

<sup>174</sup> Allwood, G. “Gender-based violence against women in contemporary France: domestic violence and forced marriage policy since the Istanbul Convention.” *Modern & Contemporary France*, 24(4), (2016), 379.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

<sup>177</sup> Le Drian, J. Y., & Schiappa, M. “International Women’s Day - Feminist foreign policy.” *Libération*. (2019, March 8). <https://onu.delegfrance.org/Feminist-foreign-policy>

<sup>178</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 16.

<sup>179</sup> Le Drian, & Schiappa.

ensure this development France stated a “compilation of laws” would be presented at a meeting with the G7 countries in which states will commit to incorporating “at least one of the laws in the compilation into national legislation.”<sup>180</sup> The state maintains the idea that “laws are made to produce effects” and is the first step to incorporating gender equality measures abroad.<sup>181</sup>

As economic equality increases, the ability of women to participate in politics and leadership positions also rises. France’s understanding of political participation includes women maintaining positions in diplomacy, management, department heads, directors, and other high-ranking positions.<sup>182</sup> France asserts that to achieve political participation the state must set an example through their “internal practices.”<sup>183</sup> By doing so, “in the past five years, the number of French ambassadors has doubled, with 52 of them now representing France abroad.”<sup>184</sup> Additionally, “26% of France’s ambassadors are women (compared to 11% in 2012)” and “25% of directors and heads of department are women (compared to 22% in 2012).”<sup>185</sup> France included statistics like these to illustrate the state’s commitment to equal political participation, and highlight the country’s advancements in this field. Furthermore, the state does not fail to emphasize the need to revolutionize institutional inequalities that hinder gender parity. France recognizes this disparity particularly in conflict zones, stating:

Whether they stem from patriarchal social structures, a lack of understanding of the challenges associated with the role of women in conflict or a lack of political will, they lead to the same outcome: Women’s participation is hampered by a lack

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<sup>180</sup> Le Drian, & Schiappa.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> France ONU, “Gender equality: a priority for France.” (2020, October 11). <https://onu.delegfrance.org/Gender-equality-a-priority-for-France>

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Le Drian, & Schiappa.

<sup>185</sup> “Gender equality: a priority for France.”

of willingness or negligence on the part of warring parties to take their situation and their demands into consideration.<sup>186</sup>

France connects both their peace and security and political participation goals through their commitment to the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. As shown in the above statement, France is utilizing its position to highlight inequalities in political participation both domestically and abroad. Thus, furthering their feminist foreign policy standards internationally.

Key pillars of France's feminist foreign policy standards for gender equality include access to sexual and reproductive health rights, improving education for both girls and boys, broader forms of vocational training, and developing "infrastructures that facilitate access to rural areas."<sup>187</sup> France emphasizes the need for sexual and reproductive health rights, but both Sweden and Canada referenced this goal more frequently in FFP discourse. This could be due to France having less feminist foreign policy discourse in comparison to Sweden and Canada, but the state still reasserts the need for advancements in SRHR. For example, France states that the French Development Agency (AFD) would manage FFP budgets for the state, and in 2018 the AFD had financed "more than half" of the projects that focused on gender equality worldwide.<sup>188</sup> Thus, illustrating "France's strong commitment to this issue." Additionally, in 2018 "France was voted champion of the 'She Decides' initiative for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls."<sup>189</sup> Despite having fewer mentions of SRHR, France accentuates the state's accomplishments in this area.

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<sup>186</sup> France ONU. "The full participation of women will help build a more just and equal society." (2020, June 1). <https://onu.delegfrance.org/The-full-participation-of-women-will-help-build-a-more-just-society>

<sup>187</sup> "France's International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).", 9.

<sup>188</sup> Le Drian, & Schiappa.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

Disregarding human rights, the most prevalent category in French FFP discourse is peace building and security. France bases much of its peacebuilding and security protocols on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda created by the UN Security Council. As a great power, France has not shied away from asserting themselves as a leader in the international realm. If France can utilize the WPS agenda to guide and encourage other states, they can further this perception of leadership globally. France also recognizes that conflicts disproportionately impact women and stresses the need to “increase women’s participation in peace building efforts.”<sup>190</sup> Despite women making up more than half of the world’s population “only 2% of mediators, 5% of witnesses to and signatories of peace agreement and 8% of negotiators were women between 1990 and 2017.”<sup>191</sup> Additionally, as stated by UN Women, peace processes are more likely to reach sustainability by 35% when women are included in such negotiations.<sup>192</sup> French FFP regularly refers to the WPS agenda, and focuses on integrating women into UN peacekeeping operations. France asserts that “since their creation in 1948, peacekeeping operations have evolved to be more representative of the populations they serve, with women playing an increasing role.”<sup>193</sup> Thus, French discourse reiterates the need for the increased participation of women, and how the WPS agenda can aid in ensuring sustainable peace and gender equality.

France also argues that gender equality cannot be achieved without combating the effects of climate change. Both gender equality and the effects of climate change are intimately linked. The state highlights that:

Greater gender equality and women’s empowerment are key elements in curbing climate change. Several studies have shown the differentiated implications of

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<sup>190</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 22.

<sup>191</sup> “The full participation of women will help build a more just and equal society.”

<sup>192</sup> France ONU. “France is mobilized for the implementation of the “Women, Peace, and Security” Agenda.” (2023, March 7). <https://onu.delegfrance.org/france-ismobilized-for-the-implementation-of-the-women-peace-and-security>

<sup>193</sup> France ONU. “Women in Peacekeeping.” (2022, March 17). <https://onu.delegfrance.org/women-in-peacekeeping>

current climate change trends on humans. Climate variations affect women in a specific way, especially in the Global South, because they contribute significantly to the food security, agriculture, forestry, healthcare, and energy sectors.<sup>194</sup>

To combat these disproportionate effects on women, France asserts the need to “mainstream gender” in climate change policies and legislation.<sup>195</sup> Strategies to achieve mainstreaming include increasing women leaders in climate funding governmental bodies, promoting women and women’s organizations to implement climate policies, and including expertise from women for environmental conservation.<sup>196</sup> The climate initiatives of France closely involve increasing the political participation of women, to ensure a gendered perspective is included in the decision-making process. France consistently reiterates that women are both “key players” and the “first victims” of climate change.<sup>197</sup>

Finally, France also mentions other integral players within the state’s feminist foreign policy discourse. Specifically, France references efforts that must be made by men and boys. Such as, “...changes in attitudes and behaviors across society. This means involving and engaging boys and men in the process, in order to make them active stakeholders in changing and improving the condition of girls and women.”<sup>198</sup> France asserts that men have an equal responsibility to ensuring the success of gender equality. Just as women are plagued with societal stereotypes, men benefit from gender-based social norms that often “free them of ‘reproductive responsibilities and tasks’ especially in both the household and parenthood.”<sup>199</sup> Additionally, this discussion in French discourse also pertains to power relations, as women’s and men’s status

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<sup>194</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 18.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>197</sup> France ONU. “Women, key players in the fight against climate change.” (2019, August 29).

<https://onu.delegfrance.org/Women-key-players-in-the-fight-against-climate-change>

<sup>198</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 16.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 8.

perpetuate power imbalances throughout society.<sup>200</sup> To combat these inequalities in power, France implemented “a comprehensive, critical analysis approach to social relations and change” which works to understand inequality “in both the Global North and South by taking into account the universal aspect of unequal power relations between men and women.”<sup>201</sup> France aims to utilize gender analysis, structural, and social changes to prevent further imbalances of power and embolden men to participate in the fight against gender inequality.

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<sup>200</sup> “France’s International Strategy on Gender Equality (2018-2022).”, 15.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

## V. ANALYSIS

The intention of this analysis is firstly to understand how states define feminist foreign policy, and secondly to investigate if their interpretation reflects the identity of the country itself. The case studies outlined the core values, goals, and discourse utilized by Sweden, Canada, and France within their feminist foreign policy documentation which aids in analyzing the patterns and differences between state interpretation. The main categories found within each feminist foreign policy that was analyzed, include human rights, peacebuilding and security, climate initiatives, power relations, and the role of others. Fundamentally, these subjects highlight the backbone of feminist foreign policy as each state has built upon these principles in state discourse. This analysis will compare the above categories between each state, and then determine how these discrepancies between policy creation align or unaligned with the states perceived identity.

Table 4: Percentage of topics discussed within the Human Rights category for all Case Studies.

<b>Human Rights Comparison</b>				
<b>Country</b>	<b>Gender-Based Violence</b>	<b>Economic Equality</b>	<b>Political Participation</b>	<b>Sexual and Reproductive Health</b>
Sweden	0.223	0.235	0.095	0.130
Canada	0.169	0.274	0.057	0.064
France	0.264	0.154	0.141	0.046

The above table indicates the percentages in which each feminist foreign policy mentioned the above categories throughout the analyzed discourse. The total number of each subject was divided by the sum of human rights statements to find the percentage each topic was

represented throughout the documentation. Additionally, some statement merely quoted “human rights” but were still accounted for. These vague statements were also not categorized within the above sections but as general human rights discourse. As shown, Sweden leads in mentions of sexual and reproductive health rights, Canada focuses more so on economic equality, and France clearly highlights gender-based and sexual violence as well as political participation. These sub-categories will be the initial points of comparison for human rights.

Sweden’s persistent dedication to human rights and gender equality stemmed much from the international community’s perception of Sweden far before the state itself began implementing real feminist policies. After the end of World War II “Sweden has consistently been depicted as one of the world’s most ‘modern’ states” and as the “‘moral ideal’ for other states to emulate.”<sup>202</sup> Prior to the mid 1990’s gender equality was not specifically a Swedish ideal, but after the state’s inclusion into the European Union (EU) in 1995 it became distinctly Swedish.<sup>203</sup> For instance, “prior to 1995, gender equality was only mentioned three times in the Swedish government’s annual foreign policy declarations” but since 1995 “it has been discussed in every such declaration.”<sup>204</sup> The state utilized the “pre-existing ideas about Sweden” to develop this modern, progressive, and gender forward image for their country.<sup>205</sup> After the admittance in the EU, the organization published a report comparing the gender equality of member states which highlighted Sweden’s proficiency and utilized the state as an example and leader for the entirety of Europe.<sup>206</sup> This publication along with the United Nation’s creation of the Convention of Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women allowed Sweden to grab onto the

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<sup>202</sup> Jezierska, K., & Towns, A. “Taming feminism? The place of gender equality in the ‘Progressive Sweden’ brand.” *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 14(1), (2018), 58.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

gender equality momentum.<sup>207</sup> Thus, gender equality from a human rights perspective was not only a moral objective but a strategic decision for Sweden that further enforced their perception as the moral ideal for the international community. This aligns with the country’s later decision to create a feminist foreign policy. As more states have progressed in their gender equality agendas, Sweden found an opportunity to continue leading in this field by being the first ever state to implement a feminist foreign policy. This decision had decades of precedent as a global leader in gender equality to justify this leap into pioneering new foreign policy legislation.

Table 5: Frequency each topic was referenced in all Case Study discourse.

Comparison of Reoccurring Categories in Case Study Analysis						
Country	Human Rights	Peace Building and Security	Climate Initiatives	Power Relations	Role of Others	Policing
Sweden	692	86	18	21	67	3
Canada	401	197	52	7	45	47
France	389	100	31	3	26	14

As the above chart shows, Sweden utilized human rights terminology more frequently than many other feminist countries. This can also be due to the state having years’ worth of more in depth FFP documentation but still serves as a reminder of the state’s commitment to pursuing their moral superpower ideology. The state also has fewer mentions of peace building and security, climate initiatives, and policing than the additional states. Human rights are therefore a

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<sup>207</sup> Jezierska & Towns, 58.

practical and tactical area for Sweden to primarily focus its feminist foreign policy. Thus, the state can continue their legacy of gender equality captaincy.

In contrast, Canada lacked the international perception that it was a gender equality powerhouse, but instead focused on security, autonomy, and prosperity after the end of WWII.<sup>208</sup> In the late 1940's, "the process of planning for the new post-war international order" impassioned the state to "fully integrate its responsibilities for the security of the state and of Canadians" while encompassing national interest.<sup>209</sup> Thus, three primary interests were formed:

(1) Security meant active engagement in the international realm on the side of liberal democracies, and the maintenance of the resilience of the institution of liberal democracy at home; (2) Autonomy meant the recognition of Canada's independent standing on the world stage, as well as the legitimacy of its political leadership (which necessitated some degree of national unity); (3) Prosperity reflected the importance of economic growth to the attainment of interests numbers one and two, which implied support for a transparent global economic regime to facilitate international trade.<sup>210</sup>

These priorities created in 1948 can still be seen reflected in Canada's current feminist foreign policy and discourse. Canada by far had the highest frequency of peace building and security measures, economic equality protocols, and policing initiatives. Peace building reflects the immense emphasis the state has utilized within their FFP to be seen as an enforcer of democracy throughout the world. This aligns with the previous security objective and autonomy as the state can utilize their dominance in peace building to reinforce the political power of the country. Canada utilizes these security measures to promote multilateralism and cooperation between great powers and small powers allowing them to further progress their position in the international community. Their aim to improve prosperity is also clearly outlined in Canada's

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<sup>208</sup> Chapnick, A. "Much ado about very little: Canada's national interests in history and practice." *International Journal*, (2022), 520.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 519.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 520-521.

FFP as one of their primary human rights objectives. Canada's emphasis on economic equality furthers their national objectives as well as enhancing the state's long term domestic goals. In addition, Canada referenced policing more so than Sweden or France accentuating the state's physical power both at home and abroad. These goals can be seen shaping Canada's identity as a strong but morally progressive state.

Canada's "secondary interest" in their foreign policy implementation was "Canada's international reputation."<sup>211</sup> "Critics would later belie the 'crusading, moralistic, save-the-world undertones of such emphasis, while defenders took pride in how Canada had 'defined its national interests more broadly, less selfishly, than many others.'"<sup>212</sup> This seem to suggest "status-seeking" is being used as a "significant factor determining state behaviour, including a state's foreign policy overtures, and that status mattered to all states, regardless of their hierarchical ranking in international politics and size."<sup>213</sup> This form of status seeking can be utilized by making a lesser power useful to great powers "in matters of international peace and security" or by being "acknowledged as a *good power*."<sup>214</sup> Canada's traditional 3 objectives can play into these status seeking avenues through the state's feminist foreign policy. As Sweden leaned into their already established position as a leader for gender equality, Canada utilized their national goals to influence their feminist foreign policy implementation. The state could find a niche position as a global defender through FFP legislation that further allowed them to enhance their involvement in peace keeping and security procedures around the globe. Furthermore, their contributions to the UN allow them to justify their role in such operations as they maintain their

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<sup>211</sup> Chapnick, 521.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Park, A. & Jakstaite-Confortola, G." Small State Status-Seeking: Lithuania's Foreign Policy Status Aspirations." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 73(7), (2021), 1280.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 1281.

position in the top 10 donors worldwide to PKOs. Therefore, Canada's feminist foreign policy enhanced, enforced, and advanced Canada's national goals and international position.

France, unlike Sweden and Canada, has had an immense legacy as a great power throughout the history of the world. Sweden and Canada can often be categorized as middle powers, but France has taken significant measures to uphold the legacy of a great power nation. France states their foreign policy is "founded on several centuries of diplomatic tradition and some fundamental principles: the right of peoples to self-determination, respect for human rights and democratic principles, respect for the rule of law and co-operation among nations."<sup>215</sup> Additionally, the state aims to "preserve its national independence while at the same time working to foster regional and international solidarity."<sup>216</sup>

In 1945, France was determined to ensure peace and security, strengthen democracy, and establish a resilient economy for all of Europe.<sup>217</sup> Regarding human rights and humanitarian action, France "has participated directly in many UN peacekeeping operations... supports the action of the UN in the area of development aid" and "played a vital role in the development of humanitarian action and international humanitarian law."<sup>218</sup> France's most commonly referred to topics within the state's feminist foreign policy were peacebuilding and security as well as human rights, specifically gender-based and sexual violence prevention. Peace building and security relate to France's long history of participating in peace processes as a global power, but the state is not necessarily perceived as a defender of human rights due to its past colonialism. "Domestic violence was brought onto the French public and political agenda by feminist activists

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<sup>215</sup> Embassy of France in Muscat. "France's Foreign Policy." Ambassade de France en Oman. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://om.ambafrance.org/France-s-Foreign-Policy>

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

in the 1980s” and yet “raising awareness of domestic violence has been a long process.”<sup>219</sup> French legislation against gender-based violence has been driven both by “civil society organisations” but also from the “United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Women’s Lobby and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.”<sup>220</sup> Therefore, French initiatives on the prevention or elimination of gender based violence satisfies many groups, organizations, and international community members. France itself has played a key role in pursuing this agenda such as co-presenting the “resolution to eliminate violence against women” in the UN General Assembly.<sup>221</sup> The pressure both domestically and internationally to combat gender-based violence has created a clear anti-violence position in France’s feminist foreign policy. France therefore needs to translate this priority across international platforms.

The acknowledgment of France’s past in colonialism within their feminist foreign policy is critically underwhelming. France’s feminist foreign policy must be examined as to prevent a “neo-colonial agenda in the name of women’s rights, more notably under the banner of Françafrique in countries formerly colonized on the African continent.”<sup>222</sup> France’s history of utilizing the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) as a “politico-economic tool of French neocolonial policy in Africa” as it maintains “effective veto power on monetary decisions” and generates capital by African economies to “benefit French interests.”<sup>223</sup> These factor work against France’s international image, and can constitute doubt regarding the state’s intentions

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<sup>219</sup> Allwood, 379.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Hollington, V.C. “Decolonising French Feminism: A Work in Progress.” *The Governance Post*. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://www.thegovernancepost.org/2020/04/decolonizing-french-feminism-a-work-in-progress/>

<sup>223</sup> Taylor, I. “France à fric: the CFA zone in Africa and neocolonialism.” *Third World Quarterly*, 40(6), (2019), 1065.

abroad. The launch of their feminist foreign policy could theoretically aid in dispelling this notion as a symbol of morally good intentions abroad.

France's feminist foreign policy is therefore "externally-facing action, including diplomacy with all countries France engages with, not just emerging economies or aid recipients."<sup>224</sup> The FFP reflective of the legacy in peace building as it aims to be implemented in all "political, economic, soft diplomacy, cultural, educational and developmental cooperation and actions."<sup>225</sup> Additionally, France's feminist foreign policy includes an "accountability framework which progress is to be tracked" which unlike Swedish and Canadian policies incorporates "objectives and metrics" as well as "mandates annual evaluation of progress against the strategy."<sup>226</sup> Sweden and Canada do have departments dedicated to analyzing the progress of their feminist foreign policy but do not make as specific statements as France. "For example, the strategy set out to increase bilateral and programmable ODA that contributes to gender equality from a baseline of 30 percent in 2018 to a total of 50 percent in 2022, with benchmark targets for each year."<sup>227</sup> Thus, this process could be aimed at providing transparency within French feminist foreign policy and therefore promote trust within the policies ambitions.

France is a victor of World War II, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, one of the few nuclear powers in the world, a founder of NATO, and a member of G7. These accolades place France in a unique position in the international community, and yet France has been the only superpower to adhere to a feminist foreign policy. By establishing themselves as a participant in feminist foreign policy implementation they are taking note of the perceptions

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<sup>224</sup> Thompson, L., Clement, R. "Is the Future of Foreign Policy Feminist?" *Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, XX(2), (2019), 84.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Thompson & Clement, 84.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

surrounding both Sweden and Canada. These states launched their FFP's prior to France's adoption, and the utilization of policy aids in their representation globally. France can therefore utilize feminist foreign policy to promote a morally good perception internationally and create distinction between its own country and the other global superpowers. Feminist foreign policy could be a tool to reshape colonial perceptions of France and exemplify how the country is willing to change to progressive frameworks unlike other great powers.

These comparisons highlight the priorities of state identity and varying definitions of feminist foreign policy. Sweden's feminist foreign policy reinforces its international image of a moral superpower while highlighting the need to defend human rights. Canada utilized feminist foreign policy to adhere to security, peace building, and economic equality while promoting their identity as a security driven peacemaker. France has created the first feminist foreign policy utilized by a global superpower which bolsters their position among other great states and aids in shifting their identity away from a historically colonial power. Each country emphasized core values related to human rights, peace building and security, climate protocols, power relations, and the role of others. These are the defining characteristics of feminist foreign policy.

The differences in discourse allow for individuality within policy creation and reflect the underlying intentions of each country. This diversity in policy displays what identities each state believes themselves to possess. Furthermore, the variation between what each state has emphasized throughout their policy reflects what the country wishes to project to the world. The identity and branding of states effects policy creation and implementation. Feminist foreign policy is undoubtedly essential to women's empowerment, but also a tool that can aid in altering the perception of the international community. The analysis indicates that feminist foreign policy creation is utilized to promote state goals internationally, meaning the country can utilize the

policy to shape their role in international relations, and additionally promote morally good principles domestically and abroad. The way each policy takes shape is dependent on how and what the state wishes to be recognized as within the international community.

The above-mentioned conclusions aid in understanding how states define feminist foreign policy and the importance FFP's can have in developing state identity. Countries that have not yet adhered to a feminist foreign policy can analyze how current FFP states have utilized it to their advantage. If feminist foreign policy is applied as a tool to evolve state identities, the policy can still benefit the most marginalized populations if countries are held accountable to their commitments. As more states join into this practice they will undoubtedly be compared to their peers in terms of efficacy. The definitions of these policies will also evolve, but the standards set to include human rights, peacebuilding and security, climate protocols, power relations, and the role of others will lay a solid foundation for future policy creation.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This analysis was conducted with the purpose of understanding state interpretations of feminist foreign policies and how these aligned with the evolution or consistency of state identity. Documentation for each state was pulled from governmental websites as to accurately understand what each country wanted to represent to the public both domestically and internationally. The documents that are most promoted within these easily accessible spheres would inherently allow comprehension of the states most prioritized discourse. Each document was reviewed and categorized into unique subsections for data analysis and thematic grouping. This process determined human rights and peacebuilding and security were the most referred to goals for feminist foreign policy implementation. The following categories included climate protocols, power relations, and the role of others in FFP application. Human rights were a clear leader in FFP discourse, and the sub-categories most frequently discussed included gender-based and sexual violence, economic equality, political participation, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. These goals and values are the backbone to Sweden, Canada, and France's feminist foreign policy definitions.

Additionally, the study found how feminist foreign policy implementation aids in shaping each individual country's identity, or how the state's identity thus altered feminist foreign policy interpretation. Sweden, Canada, and France all had domestic ambitions that modified their foreign policy translation. Many of these aspirations coincided with how the state wished to be seen by the international community. Sweden continued their legacy of moral superiority, Canada reaffirmed their commitment to security and economic prosperity, and France utilized FFP to assert themselves as a benevolent superpower. These perceptions are entwined with the

states own understanding of what their country is and stands for. Additionally, feminist foreign policies can therefore be a tool to further these individualistic initiatives.

This study is not without its limitations, as the discourse is far more extensive than what documentation was used for this analysis. Due to Sweden revoking its feminist foreign policy during this study all documentation on the governmental website was removed limiting the research to twelve documents for each case study. For a more comprehensive understanding of feminist foreign policy discourse, a more wide-reaching policy analysis would be needed. Additionally, the incorporation of more states that have committed to implementing feminist foreign policies would allow for a more diverse analysis. Mexico, Spain, Luxembourg, Germany, Chile, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Libya have all either adopted or signaled to adopt feminist foreign policies.<sup>228</sup> With these countries included into the study the interpretation of feminist foreign policy may have had additional categories or themes.

Finally, the future of feminist foreign policy is expansive, but can quickly be dismantled by domestic politics. Since Sweden's adoption in 2014, a myriad of states have implemented FFP's or indicated interest in feminist foreign policy creation. The ability to aid in state perception and identity is an enticing tool for any aspiring nation or great power. These factors will aid in the proliferation of feminist foreign policies as state perception can shift to benefit those that comply with FFP ideals. It is important to note, that feminist foreign policies can easily be overcome by domestic politics. As can be seen with Sweden, the pioneer of the policy was suddenly extinguished after the election of the new prime minister Ulf Kristersson and

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<sup>228</sup> UN Women. "Feminist Foreign Policy: An Introduction." Retrieved April 2, 2023, from [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Brief-Feminist-foreign-policies-en\\_0.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Brief-Feminist-foreign-policies-en_0.pdf)

foreign minister Tobias Billström who declared the policies reversal.<sup>229</sup> Despite this, all foreign policies can be subject to change based on shifts in domestic politics. Feminist foreign policy benefits from the fact that the reversal of such policies may not be seen as morally good decisions for the country, therefore possibly deterring future reversals.

Overall, feminist foreign policy definitions as outlined by Swedish, Canadian, and French discourse revolve around key ideals. Human rights, peacebuilding and security, climate protocols, power relations, and the role of others in achieving gender equality. Additionally, the self-perceived identities and goals of these states have influenced their foreign policies. The perception of how they wish to be seen and how they see themselves undoubtedly trickles into feminist foreign policy creation and implementation. Thus, future states that wish to apply feminist foreign policy agendas will have a foundational categorizes to aid in its definition, and a tool to promote their perception within the international community.

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<sup>229</sup> George, R. A., “Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy Can’t Be Undone.” *Foreign Policy Magazine*. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/11/18/sweden-feminist-foreign-policy-billstrom-gender-equality/>

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