

Feminist Foreign Policy in Theory and in Practice: An Introduction

Stephenie Foster and Susan A. Markham
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Feminist Foreign Policy Analysis: A New Subfield

Karin Aggestam and Jacqui True (eds.)
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The Politics of Feminist Foreign Policy and Digital Diplomacy

Karin Aggestam, Annika Bergman-Rosamond, and Elsa Hedling
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Feminism has introduced new concepts, subjects, and approaches to International Relations (IR) since the 1980s to enhance its explanatory power and inclusivity (Tür and Aydın-Koyuncu 2010: 19). Feminist foreign policy (FFP) is a notable example, challenging traditional, male-centric “high politics” of security and diplomacy by placing gender equality, human rights, and the lived experiences of marginalized groups at the center of a state’s international agenda. As FFP has evolved over the past decade, research on its theories and methods has also advanced. From Sweden’s pioneering declaration in 2014 to Mexico’s groundbreaking adoption in 2020, countries worldwide have experimented with incorporating feminist principles into their diplomatic, security, and development agendas. Academic engagement with FFP has likewise increased, including insights from feminist IR theory, foreign policy analysis (FPA), and decolonial thought. Three recent volumes, Foster and Markham’s *Feminist Foreign Policy in Theory and in Practice* (2024), Aggestam and True’s *Feminist Foreign Policy Analysis: A New Subfield* (2024), and Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, and Hedling’s *The Politics of Feminist Foreign Policy and Digital Diplomacy* (2024), together outline the landscape of FFP as a policy framework, scholarly subfield, and area of critical debate. These three books

broaden the literature by providing a deeper understanding of how and why various gender and feminist approaches and strategies are implemented in practice. They offer complementary but distinct perspectives on the conceptualization, institutionalization, and transformation of FFP. Taken together, these books illustrate both the promise and the contested politics of feminist interventions in foreign policy.

Stephenie Foster and Susan A. Markham's book offers a practical introduction to FFP, authored by practitioners with extensive experience in United States (US) diplomacy and gender equality advocacy. Their main goal is to clarify the concept and provide policymakers and activists with a handbook-like resource for incorporating feminist principles into foreign policy. The authors define FFP as "an approach for government action that is based on historical events and movements, encompasses a set of key principles, has been adopted by a small number of countries, is currently being implemented in some ways by the US government, and could be further operationalized" (p. 2). This definition shapes the book's overall structure. Although titled "Feminist Foreign Policy in Theory and in Practice," its discussion of "theory" remains somewhat underdeveloped. While the authors repeatedly state that FFP is rooted in feminist theory, the text offers little detailed discussion of the theoretical traditions that inform feminist analyses of international politics. Instead, it mainly traces the rise of FFP through the historical development of feminist movements and policy initiatives. Furthermore, the practical focus is mostly US-centered, highlighting American policy frameworks, institutional experiences, and strategic considerations (Sundström 2025: 2). This book utilizes a multidimensional approach that integrates historical mapping of feminist movements, conceptual analysis of core principles, and comparative case studies to examine how FFP is theorized and operationalized globally, with a specific focus on the US. Accordingly, Chapter 1 explores the historical background based on United Nations (UN) treaties, conferences, and resolutions related to human rights, women's rights, and Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), with references to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Chapter 2 discusses the core principles of FFP in the context of gender equality.

In contrast, Chapter 3 covers the countries that have adopted FFP.¹ Chapter 4 examines the US government's role and influence in global economic and political affairs, emphasizing its shift from prioritizing women's leadership to stressing gender equality and equity, reflecting global feminist trends and shaping policy development. The final chapter offers policy recommendations based on previous and ongoing efforts by the US government and civil society.

The strength of this book lies in its practical application: it explains the origins of FFP, identifies its core values such as human rights, equality, and inclusivity, and provides

1 The cases of Sweden (2014-2022), Norway (2016-), Canada (2017-), France (2019-), Luxembourg (2019-), Mexico (2020-), Spain (2021-), Germany (2022-), the Netherlands (2022-), Chile (2022-), and Mongolia (2022-), which have announced FFP, are examined. Other cases with a gender perspective are also mentioned, including Ireland, which released its Gender Equality Policy in 2004; Australia, which established the position of Ambassador for Women and Girls in 2011; Libya, which announced FFP in 2021 but experienced backsliding; Liberia, which expressed strong interest and political commitment to support the adoption of FFP; and Scotland, which announced in 2022 that it will develop a feminist approach to foreign policy.

case studies demonstrating how governments have integrated these principles into their aid, diplomacy, and security efforts. Furthermore, the book highlights the importance of feminist advocacy and movement-building in encouraging countries to adopt feminist policies, emphasizing that FFP did not develop solely from elite diplomacy but from decades of feminist activism. However, the practitioner-focused style also has its limitations. It offers less room for critical analysis of power dynamics and structural issues within FFP. For example, it does not analyze the structural factors that restrict feminist progress in global politics, such as neoliberal agendas, militarism, colonial legacies, transnational anti-gender movements, and authoritarian populism. This limitation also arises from the emphasis on practice rather than theory. A more thorough theoretical analysis that situates FFP within the broader context of feminist IR theory would clarify the normative principles guiding its policy advice and highlight the disconnect between theory and practice. This focus on practice instead of theory results in two main issues. First, it restricts the reader's ability to understand how feminist epistemologies and ontologies challenge mainstream assumptions in foreign policy analysis. Second, it narrows the analytical space for assessing how different feminist theoretical approaches could lead to diverse policy recommendations or critique current state practices. Although it is US-focused and policy-oriented, *Feminist Foreign Policy in Theory and in Practice: An Introduction* effectively emphasizes the importance of FFP, demonstrating how it can be put into action by providing a roadmap.

In that case, Karin Aggestam and Jacqui True's edited volume makes a disciplinary intervention by positioning FFP as a new and legitimate subfield of IR. *Feminist Foreign Policy Analysis: A New Subfield* represents a more ambitious intellectual effort resulting from a search for a new methodological framework to understand the gendered aspects of international politics. This framework integrates the interdisciplinary, multilevel methodological orientation of Feminist IR theory with the conceptually complex, actor- and institution-oriented approach of FPA. Unlike Foster and Markham's practitioner-focused introduction, this edited volume firmly situates FFP within the academic field of IR. By bringing together leading scholars in feminist IR, the book argues that FFP should be analyzed not just as a set of state practices but as a distinct analytical framework and subfield. The book, which centers on the key question "How can feminist scholarship advance the field of foreign policy analysis to understand contemporary foreign policy actions and challenges better?" (p. 1), clearly shows feminist and gender studies gaining momentum in the field of FPA. Additionally, the book aims to "provide the latest state-of-the-art in the study of gender, feminisms, and foreign policy, and to advance the emerging subfield of feminist foreign policy analysis (FFPA)" (p.1). This emerging subfield serves as a bridge between feminist IR theory and FPA, combining feminist critiques with complex analyses of foreign policy across areas such as trade, defense, the environment, disinformation, peacemaking, and development.

The book examines FFP through various theoretical lenses, including feminist IR, critical security studies, and decolonial theory, and explores how FFP relates to existing debates in diplomacy, peacebuilding, and global governance. The volume is organized into

thematic sections that collectively survey the landscape of FFP scholarship. Each of the 16 chapters investigates how gender influences foreign policy through different concepts and types. The opening chapter, written by the editors, focuses on changes and continuities in foreign policy, especially regarding gendered dynamics in global politics. Aggestam and True (2020) had previously contributed to the FFP literature with their article, providing one of the first systematic and comparative frameworks for understanding how foreign policy can be “gendered.” By framing gender as a crucial element of foreign policy processes, institutions, and outcomes, they clarified the multiple points where gender norms, power dynamics, and institutional practices intersect with foreign policy decision-making. This edited volume expands on their early work by exploring various related aspects.

Chapter 2 by Fiona Robinson examines the potential of FFP to develop a new kind of ethical foreign policy. It shows how FFP can go beyond simple rights discussions to see ethics as rooted in complex moral relationships, using examples from Canada, Mexico, and New Zealand. In chapter 3, Columba Achilleos-Sarll questions how power is understood and analyzes FFPs of Sweden and Canada, revealing a neoliberal perspective of power as empowerment that limits challenges to the patriarchal system. Chapter 4 by Jennifer Thomson examines gender equality in foreign policy as a normative framework for understanding its changing nature, comparing how it is interpreted in the “Hillary Doctrine,” the United Kingdom’s (UK) Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, and Sweden’s FFP. In chapter 5, Daniela Philipson García and Victoria Scheyer discuss transnational feminist networks (TFNs), highlighting their role, particularly in the Global South, in establishing the foundation for FFPs. Chapter 6 by Katarzyna Jezierska and Ann Towns shows that while diplomacy remains mainly masculine, it has undergone significant change over 50 years, increasing women’s participation and advancing toward gender equality, despite setbacks. In chapter 7, Ekatherina Zhukova explores how foreign policy practices align with, support, or hinder feminist practices, seen as inclusive, dialogic, and collaborative forms of engagement. Chapter 8 by Klaus Brummer and Karen E. Smith examines how states lead on pro- and anti-gender foreign policies in the international arena. By defining key concepts like “feminist vanguards” and “reactionaries,” the chapter shows how gendered leadership practices are rooted in ideas about the state’s role and political structures. Chapter 9 by Khushi Singh Rathore presents feminist decolonial historiography as a methodological challenge to male-centered narratives in foreign policy and IR (p.120). Drawing from the foreign policy ideas of two of India’s earliest women leaders, this chapter promotes engaging with and transforming the field from a non-Western perspective, supporting the development of postcolonial knowledge within the emerging field of gender and foreign policy. In Chapter 10, Elsa Hedling explores “gendered disinformation” as a security concern and encourages reflection to foster a gender-aware approach to societal resilience against disinformation in foreign policy. Chapter 11 by Annika Bergman-Rosamond and Katharine A.M. Wright explores how a feminist perspective on just war can help resolve ethical conflicts when applying feminist principles to defense, using examples such as the recent Ukraine conflict. In chapter 12, Roberta Guerrina examines trade policy as another important yet underexplored component of FFP. It looks at the European Union (EU) as a

case study of gender mainstreaming in trade. Chapter 13 by Rebecca Tiessen examines the impact of feminist development policies, drawing on critical feminist analyses of current policies such as Canada's 2017 Feminist International Assistance Policy and Germany's 2023 Feminist Development Policy, as well as examples from Sweden and Australia. In chapter 14, Farkhondeh Akbari offers a three-part framework for understanding gender in peacemaking, emphasizing how gender and feminist ideas influence peace-related foreign policy. It begins with analyzing symbolic portrayals of women through their appearance, then examines women's political influence beyond mere presence, and finally assesses how peace policies incorporate feminist principles. Chapter 15 by Carol Cohn and Claire Duncanson places FFP in the context of the urgent planetary environmental and climate crisis. They advocate for a radical feminist rethinking of foreign policy that shifts security, development, and diplomacy toward planetary survival, care, interdependence, and justice, rather than focusing solely on national interests or incremental reform. The final chapter by the editors presents FFPA as an essential new subfield capable of analyzing and shaping foreign policy in a turbulent world. It promotes the expansion of feminist methodologies and emphasizes intersectional and decolonial feminist insights in foreign policy research and practice.

What sets this book apart is its focus on the comprehensive development of FFPA as a subfield (Limane 2025: 152). Aggestam and True aim to integrate feminist perspectives into mainstream FPA, challenging the discipline's longstanding masculine biases by positioning FFPA as a distinct subfield. The book demonstrates how feminist theory reshapes key IR concepts such as security, sovereignty, and diplomacy by exposing their gendered underpinnings. It highlights FFPA by identifying missing elements and biases that influence the discipline and offers detailed insights into the social, political, and economic forces driving foreign policy, as well as how decisions affect different groups. The primary contribution of this book is its conceptual unification. It elevates FFP from a political slogan to an area of academic inquiry that questions the state-centric and masculine foundations of IR. The editors and contributors stress that understanding FFP requires examining intersectionality, postcolonial hierarchies, and global inequalities, thus moving beyond Eurocentric and elitist views of feminist diplomacy. The volume also takes FFP's critiques seriously, including risks such as co-optation, tokenism, and the reproduction of colonial hierarchies under the guise of feminist branding. Its critical tone also highlights contradictions and the instrumentalization of feminist rhetoric by governments, raising questions about whether FFP always represents a genuine transformative effort or merely a branding exercise.

If Foster and Markham introduce FFP and Aggestam and True strengthen its academic foundations, Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, and Hedling innovate by exploring new areas, such as the intersection of feminist diplomacy and digital politics. *The Politics of Feminist Foreign Policy and Digital Diplomacy* addresses a crucial but underexplored question: how does digitalization influence the expression, implementation, and debate of FFP? In the digital age, feminist diplomacy is increasingly conveyed through online platforms, hashtags, campaigns, and digital events. This mediatization presents both opportunities and challenges.

On one hand, digital diplomacy allows feminist values to reach global audiences, amplify marginalized voices, and foster transnational solidarity.

On the other hand, it risks reducing FFP to mere branding efforts and exposing feminist diplomats to harassment, disinformation, and digital violence. The authors of this volume argue that feminist diplomacy is increasingly conducted in digital spaces such as social media, online platforms, and virtual diplomacy, and that these areas both empower and constrain feminist objectives. To illustrate how digital diplomacy is shaped within politics, the authors suggest: “In this book, we explore the dynamics constituting what we define as the ‘politics of digital diplomacy’. Rather than treating digital diplomacy as a communicative and apolitical practice, we conceptualise it as a profoundly political activity” (p.2). In this framework, the authors show how Sweden’s pioneering FFP was carried out not only through diplomatic channels but also effectively in digital spaces, shaping its global reputation.

The book is organized into six chapters, beginning with an introduction that outlines Sweden’s FFP as a strategic political effort aimed at “becoming the strongest global voice for gender equality.” The authors argue that Sweden’s feminist transformation required new tools for global visibility, which, in turn, strengthened and politicized its agenda. The second chapter introduces a conceptual triad (articulation, resonance, contestation) that explains the political dynamics behind normative shifts in foreign policy, with a focus on leadership, branding, and visibility. This framework is clearly rooted in agonistic political theory, and the authors frequently show how feminist norms diffuse through contentious, emotionally charged digital publics. Chapters 3-5 offer detailed empirical analyses based on interviews, document reviews, and social media data, focusing on “leadership,” “branding,” and “visibility,” respectively. These concepts are introduced to help us understand how and to what extent feminism and gender equality have become significant divides and sources of conflict in global politics on digital media platforms. In Chapter 3, the authors demonstrate how former Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallström acted as a “norm entrepreneur,” strategically promoting FFP online and influencing its international adoption. Chapter 4 illustrates how Sweden’s feminist identity was actively shaped through digital nation branding, particularly through hashtag feminism and campaigns such as #shedecides. The analysis of the 2017 Iran state visit also highlights the limits of branding: digital diplomacy can provoke backlash when credibility is called into question. Chapter 5 places visual politics at the heart of feminist diplomacy, from the “Swedish Dads” exhibit to the WikiGap campaign, which aimed to address gendered online invisibility. These examples show how FFP is enacted not only in ministerial documents but also through visual and symbolic means.

Across these chapters, the authors demonstrate that digital diplomacy does more than “communicate” FFP; it actively shapes it. Digital platforms influence how narratives are created, mobilize publics, and challenge global gender norms. The book ends by reflecting on Sweden’s abandonment of FFP in 2022 and highlights three research frontiers: (1) How digital information environments influence foreign policy shifts, (2) How digital diplomacy connects with activist traditions and alliances, (3) How credibility and ethical digital advocacy

matter in an era of disinformation. These insights position the book not only as a case study of Sweden but also as a foundational text for future research on digitalized normative foreign policy. The book's originality is in showing how digital infrastructures change FFP, a point often missing in earlier FFP research. The book highlights how digital diplomacy enhances visibility, mobilization, and transnational solidarity, while also exposing feminist actors to online harassment, disinformation, and polarized backlash. It redefines FFP as not just a matter of policies and institutions, but also of digital politics, where struggles over representation and legitimacy unfold in real time. This intervention is especially timely, as global politics is increasingly mediated through digital technologies.

Together, the three books illustrate the multidimensional nature of FFP. Foster and Markham highlight policy design and practical implementation; Aggestam and True establish a scholarly foundation and critically examine FFP as a subfield; Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, and Hedling push the debate into digital politics, revealing new opportunities and vulnerabilities. The complementarities are clear: the first book encourages and guides practitioners, the second solidifies FFP as a reputable academic discipline, and the third focuses on contemporary shifts shaping feminist diplomacy. At the same time, tensions between normative goals and critical doubts, as well as between Eurocentric cases and global perspectives, reveal the contested and evolving nature of FFP. Several key themes tie the books together. All three emphasize that FFP is more than a set of policies; it is a normative framework that challenges patriarchal structures in international relations. They all recognize the importance of feminist movements and advocacy in shaping FFP agendas and acknowledge tensions between ideals and practice.

This review aims to highlight four key aspects of FFP and compare the evidence across these three books: (1) understanding what we are referring to in practice when we mention FFP, (2) exploring challenges to implementing FFP within the context of *realpolitik*, (3) analyzing the growing influence of anti-gender politics and authoritarian populism, which threaten FFP's progress, and (4) examining how leaders shape FFP.

First, it is crucial to assess whether feminist approaches to foreign policy are evolving and, if so, what their practical impacts are. Foster and Markham demonstrate that feminist practices are slowly emerging. Even if not revolutionary, these steps create institutional pathways. Notably, the book emphasizes that FFP is not an all-or-nothing shift: partial practices still matter and can influence foreign policy cultures over time. This book's contribution is the most practical of the three, documenting specific practices governments already implement: gender mainstreaming in diplomacy, appointing gender advisors, integrating gender into aid and trade, using sex-disaggregated data, and institutionalizing WPS commitments. Aggestam and True's volume directly addresses emergence by establishing a new subfield, FFPA. It provides conceptual tools for recognizing and assessing feminist practices across sectors such as diplomacy, defense, aid, trade, environment, and disinformation. It highlights that feminist practices are inconsistent and often contested. Sometimes they are transformative; more often, they are co-opted or purely symbolic. The book's main strength is its ability to distinguish between gestures like "add women and stir" and genuine structural change. In chapter 7,

Ekatherina Zhukova suggests that foreign policy institutions should engage more in self-reflection about power structures and that foreign policy actors should foster more inclusive dialogue with non-elites in each area, allowing feminist practices to be truly transformative. Finally, Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, and Hedling emphasize that feminist practices are also performative and communicative. Sweden's FFP demonstrates how these practices develop not only through policy content but also through digital diplomacy, branding, and visual politics. The authors show that feminist practices have become more visible and widespread globally, with other countries adopting feminist branding and digital strategies. At the same time, these practices face backlash, highlighting their influence and vulnerability. This redefines the challenge: FFP is practiced, but today its practice also involves narratives, symbols, and global communication strategies. Collectively, these works show how FFP has evolved in practice over the last decade. However, the practices remain fragmented, experimental, and contested, shaped by both progressive actors and pushback from conservative and authoritarian forces.

Second, a significant challenge in implementing FFP is figuring out how to do so within the framework of *realpolitik*, where national interests, security concerns, and power struggles take center stage. Sweden's pioneering FFP experiment served as a key test case, as all three books emphasize. Foster and Markham point out that when Wallström announced this policy in 2014, concerns arose about how FFP might impact Sweden's diplomatic relations, as it was viewed as "idealistic, naïve, and potentially even dangerous – in the *realpolitik* power struggles between nations" (p. 58). The book discusses criticism of Sweden's role as a major arms exporter, especially for selling weapons to authoritarian countries like Saudi Arabia and for arms used in Yemen. It states that despite Sweden's decision in 2015 to end military cooperation with Saudi Arabia over human rights, the policy was quickly reversed when Swedish officials traveled to Riyadh to reassure Saudi leaders, after which arms sales resumed. While the book highlights critiques of Sweden's role as a major arms exporter, it merely reports these feminist and civil society criticisms without fully engaging with them or offering a substantial argument about the limitations or contradictions of Sweden's approach. However, the authors also explore the broader definition of security in FFP and endorse an intersectional view of power, including gender, race, class, sexuality, and other social identities (pp. 40-45). In this framework, they mention recent debates on how a truly transformative FFP would reinterpret the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Aggestam and True's edited volume includes a specific chapter on defense and military affairs, discussing how countries like Sweden, Luxembourg, and Germany might integrate defense into their FFP approaches. Chapter 11 examines Sweden as an interesting case because the introduction of FFP coincided with Sweden's gradual increase in the national defense budget and the securitization of its borders (pp. 157-158). The authors explain that Sweden's FFP (2014–2022) notably excluded defense and military policy, a gap that contributed to the gendered silencing of FFP during the country's NATO accession process and resulted in the conservative-led government's formal abandonment of the feminist label in 2022. According to the authors, this silencing should not be mistaken for an attempt at demilitarization but rather seen as an apparent reluctance to include defense within the FFP

framework. Through the examples of the US-led withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Gaza war, and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the chapter contends that geopolitical factors must be considered when applying feminist perspectives to defense practices. This point prompts us to question why countries with FFP have not entirely embraced feminist approaches to military issues. Lastly, Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, and Hedling demonstrate that power today also flows through narratives, branding, and digital diplomacy; realpolitik itself has become partly symbolic. The book examines Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Sweden's subsequent NATO membership application as evidence of the dominance of national security interests in neighboring regions, which caused Sweden to shift away from its normative commitments and values. The authors highlight the rising trends of anti-gender politics within a context of securitization, militarism, populism, and gender backlash. They stress that the changing geopolitical landscape does not mean security concerns overshadow normative values; instead, these issues are deeply interconnected (p. 96). Together, these three books suggest that FFP persists in realpolitik not by ignoring it but by altering its terms: redefining security, embedding equality in institutions, exposing contradictions, and increasing visibility in global politics.

Third, backlash against advances in women's rights is a major concern, especially as the implementation of FFP coincides with the rise of anti-gender politics and authoritarian populism. Two books acknowledge anti-gender movements and campaigns. Foster and Markham only note that FFP has faced resistance in many states and institutions, citing Sweden's withdrawal from the FFP label in 2022 as an example of how political backlash and conservative governments can weaken feminist commitments. However, they do not mention anti-gender movements as a threat to FFP. Aggestam and True's volume is the most explicit about the rise of anti-gender politics. In their introduction, the editors argue that gender is now a significant fault line in global politics. They highlight a "dual trend": on the one hand, the diffusion of FFP norms; on the other, the spread of anti-gender foreign policies that contest human rights and women's equality. Analyzing this dual trend is more difficult than it appears because some foreign policy leaders and states use progressive gender equality rhetoric to further regressive neoliberal, neocolonial, and anti-gender agendas (p. 4). The book explores how gender and FFPA can help explain these complex dynamics. Several chapters analyze how authoritarian, nationalist, and far-right actors mobilize against feminist agendas, often co-opting gender discourses for racist or exclusionary purposes. For example, they point to anti-gender campaigns in multilateral fora and the way leaders instrumentalize "family values" to resist feminist initiatives. The importance of this threat is not only descriptive but theoretical: they argue that without analyzing anti-gender backlash, we cannot properly assess whether feminist practices are emerging or being hollowed out. Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, and Hedling's book links anti-gender backlash directly to digital politics. Because FFP is often promoted via digital diplomacy and social media, it becomes obvious and thus vulnerable to contestation. They show how Sweden's feminist branding provoked online resistance and ridicule from conservative and authoritarian actors, illustrating how digital arenas have become

battlegrounds for pro- and anti-gender norms. The authors argue that the politics of visibility cuts both ways: digital diplomacy amplifies feminist foreign policy, but it also gives anti-gender campaigns a platform to undermine it. The edited volumes by Aggestam and True, and by Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamon, and Hedling demonstrate that anti-gender movements are not merely minor obstacles but crucial forces shaping the course of FFP. Any thorough analysis of FFP must therefore account for this backlash: both as a threat to policy implementation and as a key arena in which the battle over norms and values in international politics unfolds. It is necessary to connect political trends to foreign policy and to examine how FFP interacts with internal insecurities, since feminists argue that state-centric analyses ignore the relationship among different levels of insecurity analysis (Atmaca and Gözen-Ercan 2018: 31).

Fourth, all three books emphasize that political leaders are central to the articulation of FFP. Foster and Markham view women's leadership as a key operational driver and emphasize that political will at the highest levels is essential for integrating feminist principles into government institutions. They cite Sweden's Margot Wallström as a prime example of a leader who incorporated feminist principles into official state dialogue. The approach to foreign policy of former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who argued that women and girls are key to US foreign policy and national security interests, is also considered a milestone in shaping FFP. Aggestam and True's volume includes an entire chapter on leadership, demonstrating how leaders influence both the content and visibility of feminist policies and how their personal commitments interact with institutional constraints. Importantly, they note that leaders can also instrumentalize or co-opt feminist language for other political purposes (e.g., legitimizing neoliberal reforms or military interventions). Therefore, leadership is not only about promoting feminist norms but also about shaping how those norms are framed, contested, or diluted. Finally, Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, and Hedling's book presents leadership as part of the politics of FFP in the digital age, examining how leaders express feminist commitments, attempt to make them resonate globally, and face opposition. Sweden's FFP is used as a key example: Wallström's leadership provided credibility to the agenda, while later leaders had to manage resonance (e.g., with Canada and Germany) and opposition (e.g., backlash over Sweden's state visit to Iran or conservative resistance online). The book thus sees leadership not only as policymaking but also as narrative performance in a digitally mediated global arena. Together, the books emphasize that FFP cannot be reduced to abstract principles or bureaucratic processes: its success or failure often relies on the agency of political leaders, both in advancing feminist commitments and in navigating the contestation they inevitably trigger.

In conclusion, these three books collectively demonstrate that FFP is no longer just a small experiment but a lively, debated, and evolving field of theory and practice. As countries and international groups address inequalities, digital transformations, and geopolitical conflicts, FFP stands at a crossroads: will it remain a rhetorical promise, or will it guide global politics toward more inclusive and equitable directions? Taken together, these books mark a significant turning point in feminist IR. They provide accessible introductions, firm foundations, and

innovative developments of FFP, ensuring its continued relevance for both scholarship and practice. They remind us that FFP is not only about rights, resources, and representation but also about reexamining the very structures, narratives, and technologies that shape global politics. Two key issues stand out for future research: (1) Global South perspectives: FFP scholarship is still mainly focused on European and North American cases. More focus is needed on the Global South, where feminist actors are redefining foreign policy under very different conditions. (2) Intersectionality in practice: Although intersectionality is mentioned across the literature (e.g., Enzo and Sanca 2022; Akgemci 2024), its real-world application to foreign policy is still underdeveloped. Future research should explore how race, class, sexuality, and indigeneity influence feminist diplomacy. As the field develops, these three books will remain essential references for scholars, practitioners, and activists committed to building a more just and feminist world order. These works serve as both pioneering contributions to the literature and sources of inspiration and guidance for future efforts.

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