

Feminist foreign policy as ethical foreign policy? A care ethics perspective

Journal of International Political Theory

2021, Vol. 17(1) 20–37

© The Author(s) 2019

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/1755088219828768

journals.sagepub.com/home/ipt

Fiona Robinson 
Carleton University, Canada

Abstract

This article argues that a liberal cosmopolitan approach to feminist foreign policy reproduces existing relations of power, including gender power relations and Western liberal modes of domination. I suggest that a critical feminist ethic of care offers a potentially radical and transformative account of ethics as a basis for a transnational feminism – one that reveals and troubles the binary gender norms that constitute the international and which exposes the ways in which patriarchal orders uphold political hierarchies that obstruct the building of empathy and repairing of relationship. To illustrate this argument, I address the recent diplomatic crises faced by Sweden and Canada in their relationships with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Policymakers and diplomats must aim to build understanding by recognizing the material and discursive factors that have constructed, over time, the relationships between Saudi Arabia and Sweden/Canada, as well as the ways in which patriarchal structures – across the globe and at multiple scales – hinder the possibility of attentive listening and connection across borders. It is only through the prism of this relationship – where difference takes on meaning – that the more complex role of Western states in the contemporary system of transnational militarism is revealed.

Keywords

Care, cosmopolitanism, ethics, feminism, foreign policy, post-colonialism

Introduction

In 2014, Sweden became the first state ever to publicly adopt a feminist foreign policy, with a stated ambition to become the ‘strongest voice for gender equality and full employment of human rights for all women and girls’ (Government of Sweden, 2016).

Corresponding author:

Fiona Robinson, Department of Political Science, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6, Canada.

Email: Fiona.Robinson@carleton.ca

In Canada, the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau has followed this lead, announcing a feminist international assistance policy in 2017 and referring explicitly to their foreign policy as ‘feminist’ in key foreign policy speeches and documents. As a result, there has been a spark of academic interest in feminist foreign policy over the past 3 years (Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond, 2016; Vucetic, 2017). Prior to 2015, there was certainly significant critical feminist work in the field of International Relations (IR) specifically addressing gender in foreign policy from feminist perspectives (Sjolander et al., 2003; Howell, 2005; Tiessen and Carrier, 2015; True, 2016). But it is only since 2016, responding to developments in the world, that scholars have become increasingly interested in analysing the meaning and implications of foreign policy that is explicitly named ‘feminist’.¹

A key article on the theory and practice of feminist foreign policy is Karin Aggestam and Annika Bergman-Rosamond’s (2016) ‘Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy in the Making: Ethics, Politics and Gender’ (2016: 323). In that article, the authors argue that inherent in the idea of a feminist foreign policy is a normative reorientation that is guided by an ethically informed framework based on broad cosmopolitan norms of global justice and peace (Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond, 2016: 323). The authors draw upon the ‘solidarist’ branch of the English School (ES) of international theory, which takes a ‘cosmopolitanism justice’ approach to international ethics. I argue that liberal cosmopolitan reproduces existing relations of power, including gender power relations and Western liberal modes of domination. While this cosmopolitanism is consonant with the ethical discourse that underwrites and constitutes existing feminist foreign policy, it will serve ultimately to undercut, rather than facilitate, feminist goals. By contrast, I suggest that a critical feminist ethic of care offers a potentially radical and transformative account of ethics as a basis for a transnational feminism – one that reveals and troubles the binary gender norms that constitute the international and which reveals the ways in which patriarchal orders uphold political hierarchies that obstruct the building of empathy and repairing of relationship. I argue that a feminist foreign policy can be a critical, ethical alternative to *realpolitik* (including ‘hyper-masculine nationalism’), but not if it defines itself as a return to the neo-liberal, interventionist governmentalities of post-Cold War liberal internationalism.²

The article begins by tracing the development of feminist foreign policy in Sweden and in Canada, focusing specifically on the diplomatic crises with Saudi Arabia faced by both countries. It then addresses the discursive positioning of ‘feminist’ public and foreign policy as ‘ethical’ and the implications of this for both feminism and ethics. This section also unpacks the notion of ‘ethical foreign policy’ and considers the relationship between this and feminism. Despite its widespread dismissal by foreign policy realists as ‘idealistic’, ‘ethical foreign policy’ has been an enduring idea in both academic literature and policy discourse for decades. I argue that the dominant understandings of ‘ethical foreign policy’ reproduce the binary and adversarial logics of ‘realism’ versus ‘idealism’, ‘universal’ versus ‘particular’ and ‘inside’ versus ‘outside’ (Walker, 1992). In equating ‘the ethical’ with the cosmopolitan ‘outside’, so-called ‘ethical foreign policy’ reifies and reproduces a world order that is upheld through a constellation of power relations, where global capitalism intertwines with patriarchy, racist logics and neo-colonialism. I suggest that this account of ‘the

ethical' as 'the universal' is ultimately antithetical to transformative feminist critique. What makes feminist ethics 'ethical' is not its positioning vis-à-vis the meta-ethical debate on 'universalism-particularism', but its ability to reveal the epistemic and physical violence that is inflicted through constitutive gender binaries. Positioning the ethics of universal global justice as 'feminine' or even 'feminist' is unsustainable, since 'justice' is constituted as a space of masculinity. As Charlotte Hooper has argued, masculinity is an incredibly resilient concept in terms of how it legitimizes the behaviour of both male and female actors. Masculinity, she argues, appears to have 'no stable ingredients and therefore its power depends entirely on certain qualities constantly being associated with men' (Hooper, 2001: 230). On this view, what is required is an approach ethics that does not rely upon gendered binaries, but instead has the resources to challenge them.

To illustrate this argument, the second part of the article addresses the recent diplomatic crises faced by Sweden and Canada in their relationships with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. While there are many other nation-states which might warrant attention here, Saudi Arabia represents, in many ways, a test case for feminist foreign policy. Saudi Arabia is well known in the West as a flagrant denier of women's rights; despite the recent overturning of the decades-long ban on driving for women, women remain subject to a system of male guardianship and women's and human rights activists in the country are imprisoned, and can be sentenced to death, for their actions. And yet, Saudi Arabia remains an 'ally' of the West – an importer of arms from many Western countries and a fellow fighter in the war against Islamic terrorism. Not surprisingly, many observers regard the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia as existing in outright contradiction to the aims of feminist foreign policy. While not denying this, I suggest that our attention should shift away from this contradiction – which again relies on binary logics and assumptions of essential difference between Saudi Arabia (authoritarian, backward and violent) and Sweden/Canada (democratic, progressive and peaceful). Policymakers and diplomats must aim to build understanding by recognizing the material and discursive factors that have constructed, over time, the *relationships* between Saudi Arabia and Sweden/Canada, as well as the ways in which patriarchal institutions and structures – across the globe and at multiple scales – hinder the possibility of attentive listening and connection across national borders and cultural/religious difference. It is only through the prism of this relationship – where difference takes on meaning – that the more complex role of Western states in the contemporary system of transnational militarism is revealed. Furthermore, countries such as Sweden and Canada must recognize that progressive change on women's and human rights in a country like Saudi Arabia can never be imposed by ethical or feminist Western governments. Countries espousing feminist foreign policies must refuse to buy in to an order of living that 'splits humans into the superior and the inferior' (Gilligan and Snider, 2017: 174).

The final part of the article sketches out the ways in which a feminist ethic of care can offer a different, and potentially more transformative, way of thinking about feminist foreign policy. Care ethics now includes a wide-ranging literature in a diverse array of disciplines, including IR.³ While there are a number of key authors who are widely recognized as the central figures in care ethics, my reading relies specifically on the work of

Carol Gilligan on moral psychology, ethics and politics. In contrast to much of the (very valuable) research which focuses on the concept of care and its application to women's labour, social policy and migration, Gilligan's approach focuses on the epistemic, psychological and political structure of patriarchy. This approach is committed to revealing the harms caused by absolutist, dualistic categories of all kinds, and emphasizes the *relationality* of moral agents, as well as the importance of *contextual* and *revisable* moral judgement. It sees all people as embodied and vulnerable and mutually interdependent. A feminist ethic of care is not something that must be rationally willed or imposed on others; rather, it is a feature of the human need for relationship that flows when men and women resist the grip of patriarchy. Only then do both men and women feel free to respond to others with careful attention, attentive listening and responsiveness, and to do so without losing or sacrificing themselves.

Insofar as it is committed to disrupting the binaries and dichotomies of patriarchy, it could be argued that a care ethics perspective challenges not only a particular view of foreign policy but also the *very idea foreign policy itself*. While I am sympathetic to this possibility, I will not pursue it here. This is because, I would argue that there is currently some discursive, political and ethical momentum behind the idea of feminist foreign policy, and that it is emerging at a time where the need for feminist mobilization – against the forces of patriarchy and populism – is more urgent than ever. Instead, I argue that feminist foreign policy is an idea that can be mobilized strategically and which can be tied to an understanding of ethics. I will argue, however, that what makes feminist foreign policy 'ethical' is not its commitment to acting decisively and with epistemological certainty on already-agreed-upon rational principles of human rights and universal justice; rather, ethical foreign policy that is feminist is about seeing global actors as constituted and sustained through relationships in specific times and places, and tracing how power, in its various forms, makes those relationships – in various, ever-changing contexts – oppressive or enabling.

Feminist foreign policy as ethical foreign policy

When the Swedish Social Democratic Party and Green Party formed a coalition government after the 2014 elections, they called themselves the world's first feminist government and have since then intensified Sweden's domestic gender mainstreaming. In October of the same year, Sweden became the first nation-state ever to adopt, publicly and explicitly, a feminist foreign policy. According to Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, Sweden's feminist foreign policy is about systematically and holistically implementing policies that contribute to gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights of all women and girls (Wallström, 2015). This is achieved through a focus on the so-called three 'Rs' – rights, representation and resources (Government of Sweden, 2016: 3).

The six focus areas for 2016 were as follows:

1. To strengthen women and girls' human rights in humanitarian situations;
2. To fight and prevent gender-based and sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations;

3. To promote women's participation as actors in peace processes and peace promoting measures;
4. To promote women and girls' participation in the work for economic, social and environmental sustainable development;
5. To strengthen women and girls' economic independence and their access to economic resources, including through productive work under decent living conditions;
6. To strengthen sexual and reproductive rights for girls and young people (Wallström, 2015).

These goals are reiterated in the new *Handbook: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy* (Government of Sweden, 2018). The *Handbook* also outlines methods for norm change and mobilization, as well as working methods within subsidiary areas of foreign policy – including peace and security, disarmament and non-proliferation, international development and trade.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy is framed as a natural extension of the work of a feminist government and a continuation of many years of national gender equality policy (Government of Sweden, 2018: 16). The general approach emphasizes gender equality and human rights; the *Handbook* states explicitly that 'those countries that have made reservations infringing women's and girls' rights should repeal these, as they contravene the purposes and intentions of the conventions' and that '(r)eligion, culture, customs or traditions can never legitimise infringements of women's and girls' human rights' (Government of Sweden, 2018: 21). While the policy covers many sub-areas of foreign policy, working to ensure representative and inclusive peace and security is a cornerstone of Sweden's feminist foreign policy (Government of Sweden, 2018: 63). To this end, a new national action plan on women, peace and security, the third since 2006, was adopted in spring 2016. It is aimed at 3 ministries and 11 agencies and has been drawn up in broad consultation with relevant actors in Sweden and with five conflict and post-conflict nations: Afghanistan, Colombia, DR Congo, Liberia and Palestine (Government of Sweden, 2018: 41). Disarmament and non-proliferation are a central pillar of the policy; in the *Handbook*, Sweden relies specifically on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in order to ensure that it is not contributing to gender-based violence around the world:

One important aspect of this work is the strict control exercised over the export of military equipment from Sweden. This takes place, for example, through Sweden applying article 7.4 of the ATT. The article was included in the treaty with the strong support of countries including Sweden, and requires state parties to take into account the risk of exported materials being used for – or facilitating – serious gender-based violence or serious violence against women or children. (Government of Sweden, 2018: 73)

Canada, under the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau, has become the second country to make an explicit commitment to feminism – in both domestic and foreign policy. Trudeau famously began his work as Prime Minister by forming Canada's first-ever gender-balanced Cabinet, providing the now well-known justification of 'because

its 2015!’ when asked why he chose to do so. Trudeau himself is a self-described feminist, provoking roughly equal measures of delight and disdain from observers both in Canada and around the world.

In terms of foreign policy, the key document so far is Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, announced on 9 June 2017. This followed an extensive public review and consultations on the renewal of Canada’s international assistance policy and funding framework. In her foreword to the policy, Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development, states that ‘we need to make sure that women and girls are empowered to reach their full potential so they can earn their own livelihoods, which will benefit families as well as the economic growth of their communities and countries’. Taking a human rights-based approach, the government has pledged that, by 2022, 95% of our international assistance budget will be directed towards gender equality and women’s empowerment (Government of Canada, 2017).

While the policy has been generally welcomed by Canada’s development community, a number of questions have been posed about what this will mean in practice. Many of these questions were motivated by the announcement that there would be marginal (if any) new funding allocated to this policy. This was particularly difficult for some observers to accept, given that Canada continues to fall below the United Nations (UN) recommendation of 0.7% of GDP for foreign aid, and given the announcement, just 2 days earlier, of a 70% increase in defence spending. And while there have been some promising moves on behalf of the government regarding funding for local women’s groups and programmes promoting reproductive rights and access to family planning, including safe, legal abortion, there are still concerns about the ultimate effectiveness of so-called ‘top-down feminism’ in the context of development and its ability to engender real change.

In a 2018 speech, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland stated that ‘women’s rights are human rights, and they are at the core of our foreign policy. It is why, she continued, we are committed to an ambitious feminist foreign policy’ (Government of Canada, 2018). She also described the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, launched by Canada at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference in November 2017. The initiative aims at ensuring women can fully participate in peace operations around the world, but also that the right conditions are put in place for their sustainable involvement. Throughout the speech, Freeland emphasized the link between feminist foreign policy, democratic values and human rights.

It is clear that while the emphasis in feminist foreign policy for both countries is the inclusion and equality of women, in both cases, the notion of a feminist foreign policy is discursively constructed as ‘ethical’. As Wallström noted in a speech at the United States Institute of Peace, a feminist foreign policy seeks the same goals as any visionary foreign policy: peace, justice, human rights and human development. It simply acknowledges that we will not get there without adjusting existing policies, down to their nuts and bolts, to correct the particular (and often invisible) discrimination, exclusion and violence still inflicted on the female half of us (Wallström, 2015). Thus, women and ‘the feminine’ are positioned as the key to the realization of ethical or ‘visionary’ foreign policy goals – peace, justice, human rights and human development.

Karin Aggestam and Annika Bergman-Rosamond (2016) support this view in their timely 2016 article, *Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy in the Making: Ethics, Politics and*

Gender, in which they write that '(t)he declaration of a distinct feminist foreign policy signals a departure from traditional elite-oriented foreign policy practices and discourses toward a policy framework that is guided by normative and ethical principles' (2016: 327).

The authors rely on the 'solidarist branch of the English School' to conceptualize efforts to pursue an ethically informed feminist foreign policy (2016: 331). They argue that the relevant credentials of this approach are based on its provision of a 'progressive account of global relations and for normative considerations in global politics', because it 'takes account of states' endeavours to overcome the constraints of anarchy in a fashion conducive to both international order and justice' (2016: 331). Despite its status as an 'ethical' IR theory, the authors note that the ES is 'entirely void' of feminist insights about the gendered lives and stories of women in international society (2016: 332). Their aim, then, is to insert gender into this framework, so that it can then serve as an ethical foundation on which to build a feminist foreign policy.

The English School of International Relations Theory offers a critique of realism; against neo-realism, ES argues that there is a society of states at the international level and that the relations among states – including 'ideational' relations of an historical and or legal nature – shape conduct of international politics. The ES is generally understood to have two 'branches' – a 'pluralist' branch and a 'solidarist' branch. The former argues that, given the diversity in the world, a pluralist, tolerant, difference-preserving international society is the best that we can hope for (and the best model for sustaining order and achieving justice). By contrast, 'solidarists' follow Kant to argue for the possibility and desirability of a cosmopolitan global community guided by the principles and practices of international human rights, humanitarian intervention.

How does this approach fare as an ethical basis for a feminist foreign policy? Most glaring, of course, is the blindness of the solidarist branch of the ES to the constitutive and causal effects of gender in international politics. Its merit lies in its liberal cosmopolitanism, which can support what they describe as the 'broad cosmopolitan underpinnings of feminist foreign policy' (Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond, 2016: 332). They cite feminist international ethicist Kimberly Hutchings who explains, in a textbook chapter, that 'feminist justice ethicists seek to make the universal terms of traditional moral theory genuinely inclusive and universal' (Hutchings, 2010: 68, cited in Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond, 2016: 331). But as Hutchings' extensive corpus of work critiquing moral rationalism (including 'feminist justice ethics') shows, rationalist international ethical and political theory works because it tells us (White liberal citizens of Western states) so much of what we already know about moral agency and situations; moreover, what it *accomplishes* is to institutionalize hierarchical relations and patterns of inclusion and exclusion in the practice of ethical theorizing (Hutchings, 2013: 36).

The discursive and normative positioning of feminist foreign policy as 'ethical' foreign policy is not a difficult move to make. Gender binaries are constitutive of the language and practices of international politics. Because of the pervasiveness of gender binaries in Western thought, any association of foreign policy with 'morality' or 'ethics' is regularly – whether or not it is explicitly labelled 'feminist' – constructed as feminine. Paradoxically, however, at a different level, even ostensibly 'ethical' foreign policy – that elevates the importance of human rights over, for example, trade, or which subordinates direct

material gains to the need to ‘save’ strangers caught in humanitarian emergencies – is regularly constructed discursively through a protective, paternal masculinity. Thus, feminist foreign policy sits in tension with the gendered binaries that constitute foreign policy – while it is ethical and ‘soft’, and hence feminine, it is simultaneously protective and paternal – and hence masculine. These constructions are not essential or fixed but are instead fluid and open to rewriting and re-enactment.

Human rights, arms deals and feminist foreign policy

As ‘ethical’, feminist governments, Sweden and Canada have been outspoken critics of the unethical or barbaric acts of other states - to condemn, criticize or rebuke any policy or regime - that appears to contradict their own commitment to ‘justice and human rights’. This emerged clearly in the diplomatic crises with Saudi Arabia, faced by Sweden in 2015, and more recently, with Canada, in 2018. On 11 February 2015, Foreign Minister Wallström, speaking before the Swedish parliament, criticized Saudi Arabia’s human rights record; specifically, she criticized the public flogging of the blogger Raif Badawi and later described it as ‘medieval’. Wallström, whose government recognized the State of Palestine in 2014, had been asked to deliver a speech at an Arab League summit in Cairo in late March, but Saudi Arabia intervened, and Wallström was disinvited. On 9 March, Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassador to Sweden, saying that Wallström had ‘unacceptably interfered’ in the country’s internal affairs. The United Arab Emirates followed suit a week later. Wallström was also condemned by the Gulf Cooperation Council (which consists of Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE), The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which includes 57 countries, and the Arab League itself (Nordberg, 2015).

Complicating these matters is the fact that Sweden is one of Europe’s largest per-capita arms exporters. The day after Wallström was supposed to have appeared in Cairo, on 10 March, the government announced its decision not to renew a bilateral arms agreement with Saudi Arabia. This has been described as Wallström’s ‘feminist foreign policy’ in practice; not surprisingly, the move did not sit well with some of Sweden’s most powerful industrialists, who stood to lose significant income from a break in relations with Saudi Arabia (Nordberg, 2015). In an effort to reduce tensions and mitigate damage, 1 week later, a delegation of Swedish officials travelled to Riyadh, carrying letters from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and King Carl XVI Gustaf, explaining that Wallström had not intended to criticize Islam and offering official regrets for any misunderstanding. The Saudi ambassador to Sweden is now reinstated. As Jenny Nordberg describes in *The New Yorker*, Wallström’s political opponents came down hard on what they saw as a clumsy performance. Still, the Swedish foreign minister refused to back down, referring only to a misunderstanding, and stressing that no apology for her specific remarks had been, or would be, issued (Nordberg, 2015).

The diplomatic crisis with Canada was more severe and, at the time of writing, is ongoing. On 1 August 2018, Amnesty International announced that the Saudi government had arrested several female activists. One of these women was Saudi activist Samar Badawi, who is, in fact, the sister of Raif Badawi, the activist at the heart of the Swedish affair, who has been detained since 2012 for ‘insulting Islam’. Raif Bawadi’s wife and

children were made Canadian citizens in 2018. On 2 August, Chrystia Freeland, Canada's foreign minister, tweeted that she was 'very alarmed' to learn of the arrest and that Canada 'stands together with the Badawi family'. The next day, Canada's foreign ministry weighed in, writing on Twitter that Saudi Arabia should 'immediately release' Badawi and 'all other peaceful #humanrights activists'. On 5 August, in a string of 10 tweets, Saudi Arabia accused Canada of 'an overt and blatant interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom' and said its tweet broke the 'most basic international norms' of diplomacy. Within hours, the Canadian ambassador was expelled, and it was announced that Saudi Arabia was suspending 'all new trade and investment transactions' with Canada. On 7 August, Saudi Arabia was planning to withdraw all Saudi students it has been sponsoring at Canadian universities, colleges and schools – more than 15,000 people. On 21 August, following a few weeks of relative calm, when both countries grappled with the fallout, human rights groups said that Saudi Arabia was on the cusp of executing a female political activist for the first time (Baker, 2018).

Many have applauded Sweden and Canada for 'taking an ethical stand' on the policies of Saudi Arabia. Some are more critical, pointing out the inconsistencies between Canada's rhetoric – on Twitter and elsewhere – on women's rights and their continuation of trade relations with the kingdom. When Trudeau came to power in 2015, he failed to cancel a US\$15 billion deal, negotiated by the previous Conservative government, to sell light armoured vehicles (LAVs) to Saudi Arabia. The Liberals rapidly understood that because it was costly for a government seeking to brand itself as progressive and feminist to support selling weapons to a dictatorship, it was better to avoid bringing any attention to relations with Saudi Arabia (Juneau, 2018). As a result, the deeper trade relations expected by the kingdom never materialized, and relations have deteriorated ever since.

Arms deals have proven to be a thorn in the side of feminist governments – as they have in the past for all governments – in which leaders simultaneously support progressive foreign policy goals and export-oriented defence industries (Vucetic, 2017: 505). Indeed, this is the conundrum of post-Cold War liberal internationalism, where 'good governance' is oriented towards both individual (civil and politics) rights and trade. But the tension is particularly acute for feminist governments, given the potential for arms to be used to perpetuate gender-based violence. Vucetic (2017) articulates the received wisdom on this tension: 'if the Canadian government truly wishes to help build gender-equitable societies around the world, then a good place to start would be nixing massive arms sales to countries with lousy records on women's rights' (2017: 517).

In response to the increasingly evident human costs of the regulated and illicit global trade in arms, the UN ATT was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2013. It came into force in December 2014. In June 2013, more than 60 states signed the ATT. While Canada voted for the treaty in April 2013, it chose not to sign the treaty at the UN in June. In April 2017, a bill was introduced in the House of Commons that Canada would join the international ATT. Upon accession to the global agreement, which now involves 130 countries, Canada will be required to implement brokering controls on arms sales. The international standard on export assessment is set out in two articles in the ATT. First, the ATT obligates states to prevent the export of arms to another country if the transfer would be contrary to an arms embargo, other international law, or if the item would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the

Geneva Convention. Second, the ATT provides that states shall carry out export assessments and refuse to export if there is an overriding risk of undermining peace and security, commit serious violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law or transnational crimes. States are expressly required to take into account serious violations of gender-based violence or acts of violence against women when making the assessment (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), 2016).

While many in the international community applaud the ATT, others are more sceptical. Problems of implementation, a lack of transparency, lack of enforcement and the general weakness of the treaty itself are often cited. Of course, this is coupled with the fact some of the world's largest arms exporters – including Russia and China – have not signed the treaty. Others, such as the United States and Israel – have signed, but not yet ratified. Worse than this, however, is the possibility that the whole premise of the treaty is fatally flawed: specifically, the basic premise that only some weapons are 'bad', and others are either neutral or, possibly, good. Thus, paradoxically, the ATT could actually be used to justify increases in arms sales, if adequate evidence that they are being used 'in the right way' can be provided. Once this is understood, it becomes clear that a key effect of the ATT could be the legitimization of liberal forms of militarism exercised by major Western states (Stavrianakis, 2016: 841). In seeking to distinguish between 'moral' and 'immoral' weaponry, we fail to recognize the wider structural effects of militarism (Wibben, 2018). As Paul Kirby has put it, 'is there ever a conflict where arms flows could *not* be said to facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence – harms strongly correlated with, but not necessarily inflicted by, the deployment of weaponry?' (Kirby, quoted in Stavrianakis, in press: 25). Much like 'just war theory', which can be used to justify 'ethical warfare', the ATT diverts our attention from the structural nature of militarism, and its complex relationship with the structures and institutions of global capitalism, transnational structures of racism and with the liberal international order. Rather than pitting a feminist foreign policy – as a set of pre-formed moral principles – against 'arms deals' – immoral, self-interested policies on the part of states – feminist governments should interrogate the role of states – including their own – in supporting liberal militarism,⁴ and thereby contributing to its gendered effects.

I argue that the tweets and pronouncements of the Canadian and Swedish governments were misguided. The neglect of context and relational positioning, as well as the hubris of certainty and moral necessity, are in conflict with the general methods and aims of feminist ethics. To assert the backwardness and morally corrupt nature of Saudi Arabia is to position Sweden and Canada as superior, enlightened nations that 'treat' their women properly. This kind of framing contributes to the erasure of Saudi women's agency. As Victoria Heath argues in relation to the Swedish case, it is crucial for Sweden to understand the complicated and nuanced situation of women within the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and recognize the indigenous women's rights movements and the 'renegotiations' of gendered power relations that currently exist. Indeed, Heath points out that women's rights movements in Saudi Arabia are framed by a number of contextual factors:

- Women's rights as indicated by Islamic religious texts;
- Gender segregation and spatial allowances;

- Notions of ‘female nature’ and femininity;
- Saudi national identity and the Saudi state;
- Disentangling cultural tradition and the Islamic religion;
- Maintaining family as the ‘core’ of the community;
- The importance of promoting an ‘indigenous’ movement (not Western) (Heath, 2016).

Blindness to this context, and to the agency and diversity of women within Saudi Arabia, reveals both racist logics and a tendency towards ‘culture-blaming’ that depoliticizes social problems and diverts attention away from the ways in which practices are supported and sustained by the structure of the global economy. To imagine ‘culture’ as an isolated realm of values and practices, separate from other kinds of social relations, is inevitably to reproduce the dichotomies of ‘us’ and ‘them’, is blind to both historical and current relations and ultimately will hinder our ability to create a foreign policy that helps to create the conditions for long-term transformations in gender relations. Ethical stances which pit ‘barbaric’ cultures against enlightened Western morality are thick with neo-colonial logics and racial hierarchies that perpetuate, rather than transform, global inequalities. Rather than pitting ‘culture’ against ‘women’s human rights’, a feminist ethic of care would situate practices and traditions in a broader, relational geopolitical and geo-economic context. As Alison Jaggar (2005) argues, topics on the agenda of ‘intercultural dialogue’ about global justice for women (and men) in ‘non-Western countries’ must be questions about the basic structure of the global political economy, as well as the economic policies of those Western governments that directly and indirectly affect poor women’s lives (2005: 71).

My argument here should not be misunderstood as a defence of the Saudi regime or of their practices. Wallström’s mistake was not the withdrawal from the arms agreement, but rather the framing of this move within a wider critique of the ‘medieval’ and ‘barbaric’ practices of non-Western, non-liberal societies, and the tying of this to a general appeal to ‘ethics’ and justice, that is inherently linked to ‘feminism’. Likewise, Freeland’s demand of the ‘immediate release’ of political detainees in Saudi Arabia demonstrates a selectivity and targeting that uses moral judgement as punishment and which invites charges of hypocrisy. As a result, these actions, while ‘progressive’, are unlikely to be transformative in the direction of long-term feminist goals. As I will argue below, a more potentially transformative approach would have been to use the arms trade agreement to highlight a series of relationships, networking the global arms trade, transnational business interests, liberal militarism, systemic transnational racism and the structural causes of women’s oppression around the globe. In so doing, it would become possible to reveal the effects of patriarchy – not just in Saudi Arabia but in Western states as well – as a system of hierarchy that divides people and thwarts the possibility of empathy and connection.

Feminist care ethics and feminist foreign policy

In this final section, I want to suggest how an ethic of care might inform a feminist foreign policy in ways that allow it to challenge, rather than reinforce, gendered binaries between realism and idealism, order and justice and masculine and feminine. I suggest

that there are three attributes of an ethic of care that allow it to achieve this: relationality, contextualism and revisability.

As seen by Carol Gilligan, one of the first theorists of ‘care’ as a voice of resistance to dominant modes of ethical reasoning, the ethics of care sees people not as ‘standing alone’, but as gaining their selfhood through their relations with others. Self and other are different but connected rather than separate and opposed (Gilligan, 1993: 147). Morality, on this view, is about responding to the needs of others in ways that are characterized by attentive listening, patience and understanding. Universal moral principles of right – so rational, clean and appealing – give way here to the messy, relentless juggling act of navigating complex moral dilemmas and balancing the competing needs of real, embodied others. This means constant re-evaluation of beliefs and reflexivity regarding our own claims to knowledge. It is a feminist ethics, not because it ‘belongs’ to women or because it is anti-men or somehow against the ethics of justice, but because it demands a questioning of the script of patriarchy. As Gilligan puts it, in the culture of patriarchy, the different voice with its ethic of care sounds feminine. Heard in its own right and on its own terms, it is a human voice (Gilligan, 2011: 25).

Relationality has been a key feature of the ethics of care since Carol Gilligan’s first edition of *In a Different Voice*. On this view, all selves are the product of relations, all the way down. The apparently autonomous self, so often seen in men and gendered masculine, is a product not of some essential feature of ‘manhood’ but of a response by men to conform to the codes of gender within patriarchy. Over the past 40 years, research into human psychology has undergone a radical shift towards accepting the interpersonal and relational nature of human development (Gilligan and Snider, 2017: 191). Recognizing this and accepting the relational voice not as morally or psychologically immature, but as a *human* voice that is thwarted by pervasive gender norms, is the first step towards reaching across divides of difference hierarchy and building real connection with others.

Relationality is not a static ethical concept or set of principles – like ‘rights’ or ‘justice’ – rather, it is a way of seeing the world that addresses not only ontology – the relational self – but also epistemology. Thus, knowledge is also understood relationally – we must ask who makes the knowledge claims and from what vantage point, what material circumstances and what degree of power (Minow, 1990: 178). As famously argued by Martha Minow, relationality is perhaps most significant in the way that it shifts our understanding of the problem of ‘difference’; seeing difference relationally means a shift from a focus on the distinctions between people to a focus on the relationships within which we notice and draw distinctions (Minow, 1990: 15). Thus, relational approaches, unlike, say, dominant liberal rights analysis, enquire into the institutional practices that determine a norm against which some people seem different, or deviant. To address relationships, Minow (1990) argues, is to resist abstraction and to demand context (1990: 216).

Clearly, there is a close connection between *relationality* and *context*. An ethic of care eschews universalizable moral principles that can be applied across time and space. By contrast, it demands attention to context – to the particularities of social location, historical background, structural conditions and relationships between relevant moral actors. In this sense, it is opposed to the logic of traditional moral theory,

which demands abstraction from context in order to gain objectivity. But this objectivity is elusive; more than this, it acts to create a dichotomy between those who are the knowers, keepers and enforcers of moral principles, and those who are compelled – sometimes through ‘foreign policy’ – to enact those principles. The morality of ‘arms deals’ cannot be assessed outside of the context of both the violent histories of colonialism and the liberal militarism that defines the contemporary world. Feminist foreign policy will not be transformative if it is reduced to enacting a set of moral principles, or seeking to protect, promote or empower women (often because this is, in the long run, good for ‘national security’ or ‘economic growth’). A foreign policy that works towards feminist goals is more likely to be a slow, plodding process which considers historical and contemporary relations between actors and recognizes the importance of context in making decisions and policies.

Finally, revisability refers to the requirement of epistemological humility – the need to embrace uncertainty and recognize that there are only better or worse courses of action at any given time and in any context. When ‘Amy’, one of Gilligan’s (1993) subjects, responds to a question posed regarding an abstract moral dilemma, she says, ‘Well, it depends’ (1993: 35). As Gilligan explains, when considered in the light of Kohlberg’s definition of the stages and sequence of moral development, her moral judgements appear to be a full stage lower in maturity than those of the boy. They appear to reveal an inability to think systematically about the concepts of morality or law and a reluctance to examine the logic of received moral truths (Gilligan, 1993: 30). But from the perspective of an ethic of care, Amy’s reluctance to make universalized judgements stems from a heightened perception of the role of context and the nature of relationships in moral judgement.

It is this willingness to live with uncertainty that defines feminist care ethics as critical and will allow it to be, potentially, transformative in the long term. As Kimberly Hutchings (2001) argues, ‘Critique is premised on the impossibility of a definitive answer to the conditions of its own possibility and can only content itself with the acknowledgment of the revisability of any grounds on which its specific claims are based’ (2001: 90). The implication of this is that we must let go of the idea of feminist foreign policy as ‘principled foreign policy’. Principles have an unmistakable allure; they work very well when we take what Raymond Geuss (2008) calls an ‘ethics-first’ approach to politics – where we attain an ideal theory of how we should act, and then, in a second step, apply that ideal theory to the action of political agents (2008: 8). But the dominance of this kind of thinking in the realm of ‘ethical foreign policy’ has led to a ‘hyper-rationalist’ (Rengger, 2000: 769) approach to the suffering of the peoples of the world, where ‘useful knowledge’ has blinded us to contingency, context, embodiment and emotion.

Revisability in ethics is not the same thing as moral relativism. As Susan Hekman points out, the category of ‘relativism’ is parasitic on its opposite, the possibility of absolute knowledge. Perspectival, connected, discursive knowledge does not obviate the possibility of truth, evidence or critical judgement (Hekman, 1995: 31). It does not mean that states cannot make judgements in their foreign (and domestic) policy about the allocation of resources towards programmes and policies that aim to increase the participation and representation of women in, for example, formal peacemaking and peace-building

processes. There is a requirement, however, to view each policy and programme on its own terms and in its own context and to recognize the ever-changing context of actors-in-relation across multiple, intersecting locations and scales – across racial, socio-economic and ethnic divides and from the household to the ‘global’ level.

Conclusion: Rethinking ethics in feminist foreign policy

I have argued that feminist foreign policy can and indeed should be ‘ethical’ foreign policy, but not where ethics is understood as a set of fixed, absolute principles based on Western liberal notions of human rights or ‘justice’. This, I have argued, is damaging for feminism in two ways: first, it reifies the gendered binaries between ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ in international politics; gendering ‘the ethical’ in this way means that it will always be played off the masculine, ‘real’ world of self-interest and destined to be dismissed as ‘soft’ and ‘feminine’. Second, it fails to recognize the way in which this approach to ethics is itself constituted through a patriarchal binary which associates masculinity with universality and objectivity, silencing alternatives or dismissing them as immature, particularistic or relativist. On this binary, ‘global justice’ (or ethical feminist foreign policy) is enacted by a series of powerful, Western states for the benefit of racialized Others; not only is this narrative partial and inadequate but it also serves to both produce and reinforce relations of domination. This kind of ethical foreign policy will ultimately harm, rather than help efforts to achieve global justice by delegitimizing local forms of knowledge in poor areas and undermining the mutual respect necessary for collaboration and deliberation (Kohn, 2013: 193).

A feminist ethic of care does not offer a ‘feminine’ ethic that stands in opposition to liberal-internationalist principles of justice; the values and practices of care – listening attentively, responding with patience and openness to the other’s point of view – are not ‘feminine’ and ‘better’ ways of being, but the voice of struggle against the script of patriarchy. The voice of care is a voice that struggles to be heard within ethico-political cultures of patriarchy, which are constituted and supported by hierarchical and binary logics. The work of a feminist ethic of care is to reveal and challenge the way that patriarchy serves to institutionalize hierarchical relations in global politics while dismissing or ridiculing the capacity for attentive listening and empathy. As Gilligan and Snider (2017) argue,

Because empathy and mutual understanding impede the division of people into higher and lower, our capacity for relationship and repair has to be compromised or stunted to set in place or maintain an order of living that splits humans into the superior and the inferior, the touchables and the untouchables – whether on the basis of race, gender, class, caste, religion, sexuality, you name it – an order where some voices are amplified and find resonance, whereas others do not, as patriarchy privileges the voice of the father. (2017: 174)

Care ethics confronts, disturbs and challenges the binary between ‘relationships’ (gendered feminine) and ‘self’ (gendered masculine) that is created by a patriarchal system. It seeks not to valorize ‘women’s ways of knowing’ over men’s, but to resist the gender binary that constructs the system in the first place. As Gilligan (2011) argues, ‘as long as human qualities are divided into masculine and feminine, we will be alienated

from one another and from ourselves. The aspirations we hold in common, for love and for freedom, will continue to elude us' (2011: 178).

Despite the everyday meaning of the word 'care', care ethics does not prescribe 'caring for' those who are less fortunate, or less enlightened, than 'us'. On the contrary, care ethics describes a form of moral responsiveness that is curious about context and sees moral dilemmas and difference through the prism of relationship. It is sceptical of pre-formed, right answers about how to act in cases of competing moral demands, and instead accepts the inescapability of our mutual vulnerability – of our bodies, and our ways of knowing. It does not critique Western patriarchy in favour of other systems of domination, but instead challenges all forms of hierarchy which divide women from men and work against the possibility of relationship. It is, finally, a democratic ethic that presumes relational subjects engaged in ongoing participation in civic life as both givers and receivers of care (Tronto, 2013: 169). As Gilligan and Snider explain, *patriarchy is contingent of subverting the human capacity to repair relationship and thereby on a sacrifice of love*. Democracy, however, is contingent upon relationship: on everyone having a voice that is grounded in their own experience (Gilligan and Snider, 2018: 145, italics added).

Grounding feminist foreign policy in an ethic of care does not preclude, nor is it incompatible with, the so-called 'three Rs' of Sweden's approach to feminist foreign policy. Working towards the achievement of rights, resources and representation of women can and should be a goal for all policy departments – both domestic and foreign – of all national governments. Including women in formal and informal peace processes is important, but not only for the sake of women's representation, or for the 'women's voice' that they will bring, but because they can use their voices to speak to the importance of relationships for bringing about moral and political repair.

But feminist foreign policy must not be driven by shaming and punishing 'backward' countries while simultaneously seeking to empower their girls and women. While these are messages with attractive moral simplicity, they fail to reveal the roots of the problem of women's oppression. Policymakers must talk about gender in order to reveal how codes of masculinity and femininity maintain economic, social and political systems that reinforce men's material and cultural power over women. They must also have uncomfortable conversations about patriarchy – at home and abroad – and how it legitimates and enforces 'selfless femininity, and detached masculinity' (Gilligan and Snider, 2017: 192).

What I am arguing for here is special attention to the normative framing and frameworks which guide feminist policy – especially and particularly in the case of foreign policy. The making and implementing of foreign policy operate within a gendered frame in which masculinity serves to legitimize and uphold a wide range of behaviours and actions. Simply positioning 'feminine'/feminist foreign policy in opposition to these masculinities will fail to accomplish the radical transformation necessary to move towards a world which can no longer justify the exclusion of women from the formal processes of politics, and which begins to recognize both the oppressions faced by women – on the basis of gender but also as it intersects with class and race – as well as the value of the contributions of women to our collective livelihoods across the globe.

Notes

1. The 2018 conference of the *International Studies Association* included several panels on feminist foreign policy; at least three panels on this topic are scheduled for the upcoming 2019 conference. The unpublished conference paper ‘What is Feminist Foreign Policy? An Exploratory Evaluation of Foreign Policy in OECD Countries’ was presented by Christine Alwan and S Laurel Weldon at the 2017 European Conference on Politics and Gender in Lausanne, Switzerland. The Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, based in London, UK, now publishes both a non-refereed online journal as well as a print journal, *Disrupted*. <https://centreforfeminist-foreignpolicy.org/new-products/?category=Disrupted>. Finally, since 2015, numerous blog posts and articles have also been published on this topic; see, for example, Jacqui True ‘Why we need a feminist foreign policy to stop war’, 50:50, Open Democracy, 2015.
2. In late 2018, shortly after this article was accepted for publication, a new article on feminist foreign policy by Karin Aggestam and Annika Bergman-Rosamond (with Annika Kronsell) was published. In this article, the authors used a new theoretical approach, one which differed in important ways from the framework used in the 2016 article and which, most notably, engaged significantly with feminist care ethics. Because of the timing of the publication of this article vis-à-vis the production schedule of my own article, I am not able to address the new work by Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond and Kronsell here. However, I do wish to acknowledge their article and the theoretical advances made therein by the authors. Please see Aggestam et al. (2018)
3. For recent overview of care ethics in International Relations (IR), see Robinson (2018)
4. Stavrianakis argues that liberal militarism is characterized by a number of key features: the capital- and technology-intensive character of the preparation for and conduct of war; a strong commitment to military production across war- and peacetime and self-understanding as a primarily ‘economic, industrial and commercial power’; the distanced form of attacks on Southern populations and simultaneous containment of social conflict at home and policing of empire abroad, often featuring supposedly ‘small’ massacres; a universalist ideology and conception of world order; low levels of military participation by society; and a state–capital relation that is formally separate but organically related (Stavrianakis, 2016: 845).

ORCID iD

Fiona Robinson  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8867-674X>

References

- Aggestam K and Bergman-Rosamond A (2016) Swedish feminist foreign policy in the making: Ethics, politics and gender. *Ethics and International Affairs* 30(3): 323–334.
- Aggestam K, Bergman-Rosamond A and Kronsell A (2018) Theorising feminist foreign policy. *International Relations* 32(4): 1–17.
- Baker S (2018) The full timeline of Canada and Saudi Arabia’s feud over jailed human rights activists, *Business Insider*. Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/timeline-of-canada-saudi-arabia-diplomatic-feud-over-human-rights-2018-8> (accessed 24 August 2018).
- Geuss R (2008) *Philosophy and Real Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gilligan C (1993) *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*. 2nd edition. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan C (2011) *Joining the Resistance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilligan C and Snider N (2017) The loss of pleasure or why are we still talking about Oedipus? *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 53(2): 173–195.
- Gilligan C and Snider N (2018) *Why does Patriarchy Persist?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Government of Canada (2017) *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, #HerVoiceHer Choice*. Ottawa: Global Affairs Canada. Available at: <https://international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/iap2-eng.pdf>
- Government of Canada (2018) Speech by the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2018/02/speech_by_the_honourablechrystiafreelandministerofforeignaffairs.html (accessed 8 February 2018).
- Government of Sweden (2016). Available at: <http://www.government.se/4ad6e7/contentassets/b799e89a0e06493f86c63a561e869e91/action-plan-feminist-foreign-policy-2015-2018>
- Government of Sweden (2018) *Handbook: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*. Available at: https://www.government.se/4a4752/contentassets/fc115607a4ad4bca913cd8d11c2339dc/handbook_swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf
- Heath V (2016) Sweden's feminist foreign policy and Feminism in Saudi Arabia, presentation for the 9th annual workshop, Women in International Security – Canada, Halifax. Available at: <https://globalboutique.wordpress.com/2016/07/01/swedens-feminist-foreign-policy-and-feminism-in-saudi-arabia/>
- Hekman SJ (1995) *Moral Voices, Moral Selves: Carol Gilligan and Feminist Moral Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hooper C (2001) *Manly States: Masculinities, International Relations and Gender Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Howell A (2005) Peaceful, tolerant and orderly? A feminist analysis of discourses of Canadian values in Canadian Foreign Policy. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 12(1): 49–69.
- Hutchings K (2001) The nature of critique in critical international relations theory. In: Jones RW (ed.) *Critical Theory and World Politics*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, pp. 79–90.
- Hutchings K (2010) Ethics. In: Shepherd LJ (ed) *Gender Matters in International Relations*. New York: Routledge, pp. 61–73.
- Hutchings K (2013) A place of greater safety? Securing judgement in international ethics. In: Beattie AR and Schick K (eds) *The Vulnerable Subject: Beyond Rationalism in International Relations*. London: Palgrave, pp. 25–42.
- Jaggari A (2005) Saving Amina: Global justice for women and intercultural dialogue. *Ethics & International Affairs* 19(3): 55–75.
- Juneau T (2018) Saudi Arabia just expelled the Canadian ambassador in Riyadh. Here's why. *Washington Post*, 7 August.
- Kohn M (2013) Postcolonialism and Global Justice. *Journal of Global Ethics* 9(2): 187–200.
- Minow M (1990) *Making all the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion and American Law*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Nordberg J (2015) Who's afraid of feminist foreign policy? *New York*. Available at: <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/swedens-feminist-foreign-minister> (accessed 15 April 2015).
- Renger NJ (2000) Political theory and international relations: Promised land or exit from Eden? *International Affairs* 76(4): 755–770.
- Robinson F (2018) Care ethics and international relations: Challenging rationalism in global ethics. *International Journal of Care and Caring* 2(3): 319–332.
- Sjolander CT, Stienstra D and Smith HA (2003) *Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Foreign Policy*. Toronto, ON, Canada: Oxford University Press.
- Stavrianakis A (2016) Legitimising liberal militarism: Politics, law and war in the Arms Trade Treaty. *Third World Quarterly* 37(5): 840–865.
- Stavrianakis A (in press) Controlling weapons circulation a postcolonial militarized world. *Review of International Studies forthcoming*. Available at: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/76017/1/Controlling%20weapons%20circulation%20-%20SRO%20accepted%20version.pdf>

- Tiessen R and Carrier K (2015) 'The erasure of "gender" in Canadian foreign policy under the Harper conservatives: The significance of the discursive shift from "gender equality" to "equality between women and men"'. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 2(21): 95–111.
- Tronto J (2013) *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality and Justice*. New York: New York University Press.
- True J (2016) Explaining the global diffusion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. *International Political Science Review* 37(3): 307–323.
- Vucetic S (2017) A nation of feminist arms dealers? Canada and military exports. *International Journal* 72(4): 503–519.
- Walker RBJ (1992) *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallström M (2015) *Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the United States Institute for Peace 29 January 2015, Government of Sweden*. Available at: <https://www.government.se/speeches/2015/01/speech-by-the-minister-for-foreign-affairs-at-the-united-states-institute-for-peace/>
- Wibben A (2018) Why we need to study (US) militarism: A critical feminist lens. *Security Dialogue* 49(1–2): 136–148.
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (2016) The Swedish Arms Trade and Risk Assessments: Does feminist foreign policy make a difference? Available at: <https://ikff.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/swedish-arms-trade.pdf>

Author Biography

Fiona Robinson is a professor of Political Science at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Her research and teaching focuses on critical, feminist and normative theory in International Relations; she is particularly well known for her work on the ethics of care in global politics. She is the author of several books and articles on feminist ethics relating to globalization, human rights, political economy and security. Her 2011 book, *The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security* (Temple University Press) was awarded the inaugural J Ann Tickner Book Prize from the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California.