

**Workshop series Feminist Foreign Policy- Potentials & Reality**  
a cooperation project of VIDC Global Dialogue and WIDE

**Workshop 1: Feminist Foreign Policy from a Postcolonial Perspective**  
with Toni Hastrup  
Vienna, November 29, 2023, 9:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

The panel discussion on 28<sup>th</sup> of November 'Feminist Foreign Policy' was followed by the workshop on 29<sup>th</sup> of November 'Feminist foreign policy from a postcolonial perspective'. Where about 25 participants attended.

The workshop, centered on a thorough exploration and analysis of the concepts surrounding feminist foreign policy within the framework of postcolonial perspectives. The primary objective was to delve into diverse approaches to feminism and examine how it intersects with various dimensions, including crises, solidarity, and how feminist principles can challenge existing power structures and contribute to the establishment of a more inclusive and egalitarian global hierarchy.

**PRESENTATION TONI HASSTRUP: DOING FFP: FEMINIST ANALYSIS IN FOREIGN POLICY (PPP)**

The exploration of feminist foreign policy delves into its unique focus on international affairs, challenging the conventional separation between foreign and national issues. This examination extends to the evolution of feminist foreign policy, emphasizing the influence of opposing movements that shape global perspectives. A critical inquiry arises as to why the conceptual framework originating from the global north predominantly addresses issues in the global south, neglecting challenges within the global north. This prompts a questioning of the resulting policies and practices. Additionally, feminists challenge the perceived division between foreign and national, advocating for a more holistic approach. In academic circles, the assumption that the global north serves as the model for feminist foreign policy is scrutinized. Furthermore, the evolution of feminist foreign policy runs parallel to opposing movements, such as anti-gender movements, which currently exert influence on various states. This complexity adds a layer of difficulty for communities attempting to engage with feminist foreign policy in the face of contrasting ideologies.

**TYPES OF FEMINISM IN FOREIGN POLICY:**

The feminist foreign policy landscape encompasses various types of feminists: liberal, intersectional, and post-colonial feminism.

**Liberal feminism** is the version we tend to lean on most. It is characterized by principles of free trade, competition, equal opportunities for participation, and the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. However, the challenge arises in translating these principles into tangible outcomes, raising questions about the effectiveness of this approach.

**Intersectional feminism** asserts that feminism is incomplete without considering the interconnected nature of various identities. This notion calls for attention to be directed toward different aspects of identity, such as color, gender, class, age, nationality, and more. However, it is recognized as a problematic approach to understanding the complexity of these identities. The fundamental goal is to comprehend how oppressive powers intersect, shifting the focus from differences between identities to understanding how these powers operate. Intersectional feminism emphasizes that superiority is often defined by power, highlighting the need to challenge such dynamics. When identities are brought into focus, it is primarily to support minorities rather than perpetuate their marginalization. The essence lies in critically examining the systems of oppression that contribute to the marginalization of these individuals in the first place.

**Postcolonial feminists** rely on critically examining mainstream feminism, delving into the problems stemming from white feminism. Their critique extends to a lack of reflection on how certain feminist practices may undermine the lives of women in different spaces. They encourage a nuanced exploration of the boundaries between internal and external perspectives, challenging assumptions about the Global South only existing in distinct geographical locations like the Global North, as exemplified by Canada. Postcolonial feminists advocate for a broader perspective beyond traditional gender programming, urging society to recognize and address the complexities that extend beyond simplistic categorizations. Using Afghanistan as a case study, highlighting the complexities of engaging in dialogue with the Taliban, and acknowledging the challenges of providing better lives for women in the region. Despite the inherent difficulties, the workshop emphasized the importance of applying feminist foreign policy principles even in Afghanistan. This perspective encourages a commitment to feminist values and the pursuit of gender equality, even in contexts where obstacles may seem insurmountable.

#### **LOGISTICS FOR CHANGE MODEL:**

Exploring the connections between the concepts of feminist foreign policy with a postcolonial perspective. The "Logistics for Change" model was introduced, whereas the workshop provided a structured approach to understanding the fundamentals of power and oppression, with a specific focus on discrimination and exclusion.

Recognizing that meaningful change requires action, the workshop emphasized the importance of acknowledging and disrupting power and oppression through proactive engagement. The step-by-step guide outlined the path to understanding gender within the framework of feminist theory, extending the analysis to incorporate post-colonial and decolonial perspectives, by questioning whether the proposed approaches merely reform existing systems or bring about substantial changes. This serves as a dynamic process, fostering an ongoing dialogue around power dynamics and gender relations. The workshop stressed that feminism, uniquely positioned as an ideology

seeking its own obsolescence, demands a continuous and evolving commitment to dismantling oppressive structures.

Acknowledging the inherent resistance within existing systems, the workshop acknowledged the non-linear nature of change. This perspective was underscored by reflecting on the challenge of addressing racism in Germany and the imperative to recognize and rectify the genocide against marginalized communities. The workshop thus urged participants to confront and navigate the complexities of reforming systems ingrained with resistance, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future. Further examining the political landscape, the workshop scrutinized the shift within the European Union towards right and far-right ideologies. Specifically, it pointed out Germany's paradoxical stance in endorsing feminist foreign policy while engaging in pinkwashing—overlooking far-right anti-refugee movements. This led to a critical inquiry into the sincerity and gravity of their proclaimed commitment to feminist ideals.

Addressing the role of change agents, the workshop questioned the authenticity of claiming feminism in the face of persistent violence against native women. It emphasized the importance of addressing historical issues as a foundational step before championing feminist causes. The workshop urged a proactive approach, urging participants to actively call out instances of injustice in Germany, asserting the right to vocalize concerns as an essential element of advocacy. The United States is also a standing example as a country far removed from embracing feminist foreign policy, evident in its substantial military expenditures and the symbiotic relationship with weapon companies that depend on communities engaged in both work and investment within these sectors.

#### **WORKING GROUP, SESSION HIGHLIGHTS:**

In working groups, the participants were asked to discuss the following questions in the areas of transportation, food, peacekeeping, and the COVID pandemic: (1) Which questions should be asked in feminist analyses of the specific policy area? (2) Which power structures should be taken into consideration? (3) What could be a chance or a challenge for the implementation?

#### **Transport:**

1. Mobilities – how is urban space, and public transport catered to particular identities?  
Is public transport, and city infrastructure accessible and available to all?  
How are gender-nonconforming/LGBTQ+\* concerns represented and integrated into these structures?  
Transport of goods: what are the implications/capitalist infrastructure? Who benefits, and who bears the dangers?
2. Environmental eco-feminism  
Responsibility for climate change: Global North produces more CO<sup>2</sup> and Global South will suffer the most from this.
3. Chance: Public; Challenge: Funding

#### **Food:**

1. How are the power structures defined and shaped within the global food system? Production, resources, distribution, pricing, trade system  
How are hierarchies discriminative?

- Who are the marginalized?
2. Global food market – big players – monopole (Nestlé etc.)
    - Supply chain vs. profit chain
    - Colonial structures & dynamics
    - Gender security issues & pay gap
    - Capitalism
    - Violent conflict
  3. Capitalism – land grabbing – cash crops
    - Climate change (+/-)
    - Global inequality

### **Peacekeeping**

1. Who defines the mission? (selection, criteria, participation of local communities, leadership, incorporating experiences of former missions)
  - Who loses? Who profits?
  - Feminist awareness
2. Military-industrial complex
  - Infrastructure (water, transport, electricity)
  - Resource distribution
  - Patriarchal, capitalist, colonial powers
3. Chance: security for the community safety
  - Challenge: acceptance of the mission

### **COVID pandemic:**

1. How can vaccine distribution be done fairly?
  - Is there a specific focus on gender medicine?
  - Who is doing and funding the research in the development of vaccines and pharmaceutical products and how is the outcome distributed?
2. Infrastructure for vaccine production
  - Traditional medical knowledge vs. modern Western medicine
  - Trade system and trade organizations
  - Distribution of vaccines (globally & internally)
3. Resistance within power structures

### **KEY APPROACHES FOR CHANGE:**

- Feminists do not see a division in what is foreign and what is national.
- We need to exercise caution – it is important to be reflective on costs and benefits.
- Hold accountable states that say they practice feminist foreign policy but on the other hand, violate several other human rights.
- Focus on identities to support the minorities not to undermine them.
- Think about the systems of oppression that marginalize communities in the 1<sup>st</sup> place.
- See beyond gender programming.

- Through action, power and oppression can be recognised and disrupted.
- Ask questions and collectively come up with answers for change.
- Think through how power exists in your context and identify people you can engage in with you.
- Make it a process not an event.
- Recognise your right to keep being vocal.
- 'We don't only want to sit at the table we want a new table'.

*Report compiled by Toqa Eissa.*

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