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The Ethical Underpinnings of Feminist Foreign Policy

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Abstract

This thesis provides an ethical framework for the R-approach of Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) and elaborates on the critique of postcolonialism. The R-approach refers to ensuring Rights, Resources, and Representation for women across the globe. In this thesis, the works of several feminist moral scholars will be used as a toolbox to explain and justify each of the Rs separately. The critique of postcolonialism will be explained by referring to cosmopolitan principles and arguing that where these principles ought to be universalist, they might mostly be informed by Western perspectives, thereby failing to include important local perspectives.

This critique is responded to in two ways. Firstly, by further elaborating on the tension between feminist and traditional values by appealing to several feminist moral scholars. Secondly, by further developing the 4th R of FFP: Reality Check. Namely, one way in which a balance between feminist and traditional values might be found is to include the ethics of care aspects relationality, contextualism, and revisability into the definition of the 4th R.

Content

The Ethical Underpinnings of Feminist Foreign Policy

Introduction

Over the last century, there have been many milestones that have significantly contributed to decreasing gender inequality. Prominent examples include women getting the right to vote and, due to the contraception pill in the 1960s, gaining autonomy over whether and when to be(come) pregnant. In many countries, however, many forms of inequality are still present. Across the globe, women on average still earn less than men, with percentages ranging from 1.2% less in Belgium, and 31.2% in Korea (OECD, 2023). Additionally, there are still countries that do not attribute the same rights to women as they do men. The most prominent country in this regard is probably Afghanistan, where women are not just denied access to education, but are also banned from going to parks, gyms, and public bathing houses by themselves. (UN Women, 2023). Although significant steps have been taken to decrease gender inequalities worldwide, there is still much that needs to be done. One recent development that focused specifically on women begun in 2014 in Sweden: Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP). This policy focusses on decreasing gender inequalities on a global scale (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2022). After 2014 many countries followed Sweden in announcing their Feminist Foreign Policy (Thompson et al., 2021).

What does this policy look like? Although there are differences amongst countries about the specifics of FFP, most countries have adopted the R-approach, which focuses on securing *Rights, Resources*, and *Representation* for women across the globe. The 4th R, which has been added relatively recently, refers to *Reality Check*, which states that the implementation of all Rs must be done in a way that takes the local context into consideration (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2022).

Several academic papers concerning FFP have since been written. Most of these papers, however, have been written from an International Relations or political perspective, and few papers have been written about the ethics behind the actual conduct of the policy. In other words, an ethical framework underpinning FFP is currently missing from academic literature. This thesis attempts to fill that gap by providing an ethical framework for the current FFP practices.

The research question thus can be formulated as follows: *what are the ethical underpinnings for including Rights, Resources, Representation, and Reality Check, in Feminist Foreign Policy?*

In order to answer this question, different feminist moral theories will be used as a toolkit to explain the R-approach. This thesis is built up as follows. Firstly, the background literature of Feminist Foreign Policy will be elaborated on. This section provides the definitions that will be used in this thesis and briefly considers the history of FFP.
The following three sections will use the theoretical approaches of different feminist moral theorists as a toolkit in order to justify the first three Rs. In other words, these sections aim to elaborate on how these Rs ought to be understood so that its inclusion within FFP can be justified. The first section of Rights appeals to Okin and elaborates on the dichotomy between the public and private domain, illustrating how women's rights have typically not been taken into consideration, and providing a suggestion for how we can rethink our theories of justice. Another example in a different direction concerns the work of Young and the argumentation for providing certain oppressed groups with special rights. The last part of this section addresses how we should think of Rights in practice, namely, by thinking of rights in the language of capabilities, as is argued by Nussbaum.
In the section on Resources, again appealing to Young, I clarify how we ought to understand the concept of Resources, namely, rather than focusing solely on the distribution of material goods we should also consider the social structures and institutional contexts. In the second half, Nussbaum will be invoked to further contextualize the aspect of Resources by elaborating on the concept of equality of capabilities; resources that help women to establish themselves as ends. Lastly, in the section on Representation I will argue that, using Nussbaum's capabilities list, in order for women to have political representation they must be able to have the capability to take control over one's environment. Finally, the works of Young will be used to demonstrate how representation of minorities can take place in practice.

After the Rs have been explained, the fourth section of this thesis will discuss one of the criticisms that FFP faces, namely, a concern of postcolonialism. Thompson et al., (2021) formulates this concern as follows:

"*Some question whether Feminist Foreign Polices are just the latest postcolonial export of northern countries, well-intentioned perhaps but ultimately equally uninformed by the perspectives of those on the receiving end and removed even from the realities of their own domestic policies."*

(Thompson et al., 2021, p.5).

In the fourth section I will further define and elaborate on this critique by firstly identifying the relation between FFP and cosmopolitanism, in order to then clarify how one could come to a concern of postcolonialism.
The fifth section will address this criticism by referring to the last R of Feminist Foreign Policy: Reality Check. This R, unlike the other three, is not a separate aspect of itself but rather a way in which the other Rs are supposed to be actualized. Namely, by checking each R with the local context. In this section I will argue that if Reality Check were to be extended to include more aspects from the ethics of care, such as relationality, contextualism, and revisability, this last R could go quite a long way in addressing the postcolonial critique.
Lastly, the conclusion of this thesis consists of a summary of all the elements that have been mentioned.

One may wonder why it is important to create an ethical framework to begin with. The answer to this question is best expressed in a quote provided by Sandel (1984):

"Political philosophy seems often to reside at a distance from the world. Principles are one thing, politics another, and even our best efforts to "live up" to our ideals typically founder on the gap between theory and practice. But if political philosophy is unrealizable in one sense, it is unavoidable in another. This is the sense in which philosophy inhabits the world from the start; our practices and institutions are embodiments of theory. To engage in a political practice is already to stand in relation to theory.
For all our uncertainties about ultimate questions of political philosophy – of justice and value and the nature of the good life – the one thing we know is that we live some answer all the time."

(Sandel, 1985, p.81).

The first reason for why an ethical framework is relevant concerns the first sentence about "living up" to our ideals. Whilst it may be true that there is always a gap between theory and practice, having an ideal to reach for may already improve the actual practice. Moreover, providing a policy with an ethical framework can elevate the policy to its most ideal form,

thereby decreasing the risk of focusing solely on its practical outcomes. It is a lot easier to disregard a policy on the basis of practicalities but providing a policy with an ethical framework allows us to look at FFP in its strongest, most ideal, form. This is a necessary step in order to consider FFP in its fullest potential.

Additionally, as is stated in the second half of the quote, whilst we may not see the philosophical domain that is a part of a political practice, it is still present as practices and institutions have been built on theories. By engaging with political practice, we also engage with its underlying theories. And whilst we may not know all uncertainties and questions underlying political philosophy, our actual conduct is an answer to these underlying questions. Having an ethical framework can thus help us to reflect on our actions: are the answers that we are living the right ones?

Background Literature

Before delving into the aspects that contribute to the ethical framework of Feminist Foreign Policy, it is first important to make a few statements on definitional matters. The following section elaborates further on how FFP can be defined and what its history looks like.

Definitions

As has been stated before, there is relatively little literature available concerning FFP. In the papers that have been published, one could state that there are generally two ways of defining FFP. Given that the first definition is only used in academic contexts, this definition shall be referend to as the *theoretical definition*. The theoretical definition has been published by the International Centre for Research on Women in 2019 and was updated in 2021. The theoretical definition of FFP is as follows:

*"Feminist foreign policy is the policy of a state that defines its interactions with other states, as well as movements and other non-state actors, in a manner that prioritizes peace, gender equality and environmental integrity; enshrines, promotes, and protects the human **rights** of all; seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal and **male-dominated power structures**; and allocates significant **resources**, including research, to achieve that vision. Feminist foreign policy is coherent in its approach across all of its levers of influence, anchored by the exercise of those values at home and **co-created** with feminist activists, groups and movements, at home and abroad"*

(Thompson et al., 2021).

Many countries that have adopted FFP have created a webpage on which they elaborate on what their version of FFP entails. Although there are differences amongst countries in how they define and execute FFP, most countries have adopted a R-approach which refers to Rights, Resources, Representation, and Reality-Check. The definition used by the Netherlands, for example, is as follows:

"Feminist Foreign Policy concerns the protection of human rights and the promotion of meaningful participation of women and LHBTIQ+ persons to decision making processes. The feminist foreign policy focuses on rights, representation, resources, and reality check:

- *Women worldwide must be able to call on their universal rights and must be free of violence (**Rights**).*
- *Women must be represented and participate in political decision making (**Representation**).*
- *There must be sufficient resources available to realize these goals (**Resources**).*
- *Circumstances worldwide differ and not every approach is equally effective everywhere. That's why the realization of these policy goals must always be approached in a way that fits the local context (**Reality check**).*

(Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2022).

There are some significant overlaps between the two definitions: for instance, both definitions specifically mention rights and resources. Representation, on the other hand, is not literally mentioned in the theoretical definition, but it could be argued that female representation is implied when referring to the disruption of male-dominated structures. Similarly, the theoretical approach does not make an explicit statement on Reality check, but given the aspect of co-creation, it could be argued that this element is still included here. In this thesis from here on out, the focus lies on the four Rs and thereby on the definition as it is provided by the Dutch government.

The usage of the words "rights", "resources", and "representation" throughout this thesis also requires a clarifying remark. Namely, when one of these words refers to its inclusion within FFP, a capital letter will be used to signify this. For example, when a sentence reads "…*resources are important [for women to have]"*, because the r of resources is not a capital letter, this sentence refers to resources in general. However, had the sentence read "*…and that is why Resources are important [to include in FFP]"* it refers specially to the Resources of Feminist Foreign Policy, one of the Rs from the r-approach.

Lastly, a remark on the scope of this thesis. It could be said that by using the definition of FFP as used by the Dutch government, FFP sounds more like a set of policy goals rather than a policy, thereby leaving it completely open how these goals are supposed to be achieved. The question of how these goals should be achieved is a very difficult one: how should, for example, the Dutch government make another state, such as India, care about women's rights? Moreover, taking this question further, one could wonder how – given that foreign policy is challenging – these challenges relate to other goals of foreign policy such as economic concerns or international

relations. Whilst these are interesting and important discussion to have, due to the scope of this thesis these questions will not be further discussed. This thesis will consider Feminist Foreign Policy as it is defined by the Dutch government and brackets the question about whether this is a policy or a set of policy goals, or how this policy relates to other foreign policy goals. Rather, the focus of this thesis will be on elaborating on an ethical justification of having these goals in the first place.

Feminist Foreign Policy: A Brief History

In 2014, Sweden was the first country to name their government a feminist one. In the years that followed, Canada (2017), France (2019), Mexico (2020), Spain (2020), Luxembourg (2021), the Netherlands (2022), Germany (2021), Chile (2022), Colombia (2022), and Liberia (2022) adopted a form of FFP (*Feminist Foreign Policies: An Introduction*, 2023).
Ever since the implementation of FFP, several conferences and consultations have taken place, whilst also contributing to the realization of certain sanctions (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2022). Moreover, it could be said that the Swedish legislative change on arms' sales regulations in 2017 was a success for FFP. Namely, both Canada and Sweden received a lot of criticism for endorsing FFP whilst still continuing to have ongoing arms trades with non-democratic countries known to abuse women's rights (Thompson et al., 2021). In response to this critique, Sweden created a legislative change to arms' sales regulations. To some, however, this example does not qualify as a success for FFP because arms sales to Saudi Arabia still rose two percent in 2018 over the previous year (Thompson et al., 2021).

In 2022 Sweden formed a new government and announced that they will no longer be adopting FFP (Walfridsson, 2022). The Minister of Foreign Affairs has stated that gender equality is a fundamental value for Sweden and its government. Sweden, however, will not be continuing with a feminist foreign policy because the label "obscures the fact that Swedish foreign policy must be based on Swedish values and Swedish interests" (Walfridsson, 2022).

Rights

In this section we shall look at the first R of Feminist Foreign Policy: Rights. Although most people have a general idea about what the term rights entails, it is challenging to provide a complete and sound definition. Therefore, rather than considering a definition of rights, a broad generalization of the term is more fitting:

"Rights are entitlements (not) to perform certain actions, or (not) to be in certain states; or entitlements that others (not) perform certain actions or (not) be in certain states."

(Wenar, 2020).

This section firstly aims to further elaborate on why it is important to include Rights within FFP. As Okin's public/private dichotomy will demonstrate, the human rights of women have often not been taken into specific consideration in theories of justice. One way in which we can address women's rights is by extending the scope of rights into the private domain. Another way, as will be explained further by Young, is to attribute special rights to oppressed groups. Lastly, in order to provide further context and insights into how we ought to consider the concept of Rights in practice, this section considers Nussbaum's language of capabilities.

Okin: The Public/Private Dichotomy

In the paper *Feminism, Women's Human Rights, and Cultural Differences* (1998), Okin states that over the last years, it has become increasingly recognized that taking women seriously as equal human rights claimants requires considerable further effort in rethinking the concept of human rights (Okin, 1998, p.34). She argues that both the early conceptions of "the rights of man" in the 17th century and the original conception of international "human rights" in the mid-twentieth century were created with households in mind that had men at their heads. Consequently, human rights were conceived as rights of such individuals against each other and, especially, against their government. It was, moreover, generally accepted that there existed a sphere of privacy, which was protected by rights from outside intrusion, but not necessarily governed internally. To provide an example that clarifies this latter remark, Okin refers to an example used by Locke concerning a father's decision about whom his daughter should marry. This decision is typically seen as a private matter, in which rights serve to protect the private

domain from outside intrusion. Okin points out that any rights the daughter herself may have regarding her future marriage go unmentioned, demonstrating that rights are not necessarily governed internally (Okin, 1998, p.34).
In other words, because human rights theories were created with the male head of the household in mind, a dichotomy between the public and private realm was implied. As a consequence, gender related forms of rights abuses were, for many years, not typically recognized as *human* rights abuses. For example, issues that were ignored concerned rape (marital rape and during war), domestic violence, reproductive freedom, the valuation of childcare and other domestic work as work, unequal opportunities for women and girls in education, employment, housing, credit, and health care, because they were considered to fall within the private domain. Another example that Okin uses concerns slavery, which has been generally recognized as a fundamental violation of human rights. Yet, parents giving their daughter in marriage in exchange for money or selling her to a pimp, however, has not been typically seen as an example of slavery (Okin, 1998, p.35).

Additionally, Okin points out that much earlier human rights thinking focuses on governments as violators of human rights, whilst in many countries – at least, during peace time – a woman's most dangerous environment is the home she lives in (Okin, 1998, p.36). Thus, as an implication, the public/private dichotomy leading to the assumption that the rights bearer is the head of a household who has a right to "his" privacy in his personal and family life, causes serious obstacles for the protection of women's and children's rights. Namely, promoting women's human rights clearly involves making changes in areas of life usually considered to be private, and calling for government accountability within these domains requires a considerable reorientation of human rights law.

Okin's arguments show us, that because theories of justice were created with a male headed household in mind, there have been implications for the recognition of women's rights as human rights. Firstly, because theories of justice considered rights to be necessary in order for men to be protected from other men in the public domain. As a consequence, it is not recognized that women's and children's rights also need protection in the private domain. Secondly, because

rights are considered necessary in order to protect from governmental violations of human rights, violations from other members of the family are often ignored.
Okin has argued that we ought to fundamentally rethink our theories of justice. Continuing on the aforementioned aspects, according to Okin this would refer to a theory of justice that extends the scope of individual rights in a way that includes the private sphere and offers protection from other members in the household. For example, by considering legislation about income division within the household or legislation concerning parental leave.

Besides providing one way in which we can rethink theories of justice, Okin's insights also demonstrate why it is important to include Rights within FFP. Namely, as this section has shown, using a male point of view as the norm has had implication for the recognition of women's rights. Including Rights within FFP would allow us to further consider what these implications might have been and gives us a chance to rethink theories of justice specifically keeping women in mind.

Young: Special Rights

Besides extending the scope of individual rights into the private domain, another way to rethink theories of justice has been argued for by Young. In her paper "*Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship*" (1989) Young questions a fundamental principle in many theories of justice: the principle of equality. Young argues not just for equal rights for men and women, but for *special rights* for oppressed or disadvantaged groups (Young, 1989, p.251).
Young begins her argument by making an important observation: despite most people in Western societies having equal rights (on paper), inequalities nevertheless remain. According to her, many feminists argue that rights which have been universally formulated make them blind to individual characteristics such as race, culture, gender, age, or disability. As a consequence, this universalism contributes to oppression rather than undermines it. In other words, a strict adherence to a principle of equal treatment can, according to Young, tend to perpetuate oppression or disadvantages (Young, 1989, p.268). How can this be?
Young states that an equal treatment requires of everyone that they are measured against the same norms, but that there are no "neutral" norms of behavior and performance. Moreover, it

happens to be the case that the formulation of laws, policies, and rules of (private) institutions are based on the particular experience of privileged groups, as it is the privileged who set the norm. This makes it so that when a principle of equal treatment applies, the privileged are better off because it is easier for them to be measured against a norm that they themselves have set. According to Young, social and economic privilege can be described as follows:

"[That] the groups which have it behave as though they have a right to speak and be heard, that others treat them as though they have that right, and that they have the material, personal, and organizational resources that enable them to speak and be heard in public."

(Young, 1989, p.262).

When there are group differences in either capacities, socialization, values, or cognitive and cultural styles, one can only enable the inclusion and participation of all groups in both political and economic institutions by attending to such differences – instead of ignoring them. Therefore, rather than always formulating rights and rules in universal terms that are ultimately blind to all forms of difference, some groups sometimes deserve special rights (Young, 1989). Young then continues to provide several examples of contexts in which she deems the application of special rights to be relevant. For example, a right to pregnancy and maternity leave, physical disability, and being old, as they are all examples that challenge the paradigm of what is considered "normal" and "healthy".

Although both Okin and Young are in the same section of Rights in this thesis, it must be stated that there is a tension between the equal rights that Okin argues for, and the special rights that Young proposes. Young suggests that we should have special rights for women and other minorities whilst Okin argues that there should be equal rights for every individual. Addressing this tension goes beyond the scope of this paper, but I do want to acknowledge that this tension exists. This section on Young was included to demonstrate a way in which the works of the two authors can complement one another: with Okin first stating that we ought to rethink our theories of justice and Young providing a different manner in which to do that.

Nussbaum: The Language of Capabilities

Where the aforementioned sections have provided us with insights into how we can rethink our theories of justice in order to more adequality address the needs of women, Nussbaum's language of capabilities helps us to further contextualize these insights. This section will elaborate on what the inclusion of Rights within FFP *should* entail. In other words, Nussbaum can help us make sense of how we should understand the aspect of Rights in a practical manner, namely, by using the language of capabilities.

In the paper *Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice* (2003), Nussbaum further explores the relationship between capabilities and rights. Before we can further elaborate on this relationship and its relevance for FFP, it is important to first clarify briefly what the Capability Approach entails.

The Capability Approach is a relatively modern, yet widely used wellbeing theory that focuses on capabilities rather than utility or resources (Nussbaum, 2003; Clark, 2005). Amartya Sen, who laid the foundations for the Capability Approach, argued that in comparing the well-being of different people, not enough information is provided by only looking at their commodities or utility as has been argued by other theories of distributive justice. Instead, we must look at how well people are able to function with the goods and services at their disposal (Clark, 2005). Two significant terms within the Capability Approach are *Capabilities* and *Functionings*. The term capability reflects the ability of a person to achieve a given functioning. The term functioning refers to the achievement of a person: what she or he manages to do or be. It reflects, as it were, a part of the "state" of that person (Clark, 2005). Sen overall differentiated between commodities, capabilities (to function), functioning, and utility. These can be distinguished as follows:

Commodities → Capability (to function) → Function(ing) → Utility (or, happiness)

(Clark, 2005) p. 3.

Sen, like Adam Smith, begins from the statement that economic growth and the expansion of goods and services are necessary for human development. He does not, however, believe wealth to be the good that we are seeking, as it is only useful for the sake of something else. Instead, we ought to judge the quality of our lives by considering what people are able to achieve

(functioning). Sen then states that different people and societies typically differ in their capacity to convert income and commodities into valuable achievements. For example, a disabled person may require more resources (such as a wheelchair or a lift) to achieve the same things (moving from one place to another) as an able-bodied person. Similarly, a child has different nutritional requirements than a grown man, and so on. According to Sen, we thus must not look at the commodities an individual can successfully demand, but instead consider how well people are able to function with the goods and services they have (Clark, 2005).
Nussbaum has significantly contributed to the Capability Approach by going into its core concepts and identifying variations and limits of its concepts, especially capabilities (Guna Saigaran et al., 2015). Nussbaum created her own version of the Capability Approach, which was based on the Aristotelian idea of human flourishing and good life. Unlike Sen, Nussbaum provides an extensive, well-detailed list of human capabilities that is to be served to every human being in the world.

How can the Capabilities Approach provide further context for the aspect of Rights within Feminist Foreign Policy? Nussbaum's contribution relates to Okin's work in at least two important ways. Nussbaum, like Okin, agrees that many human rights approaches have been male-centred and, thus, often do not include fundamental entitlements, abilities, and opportunities which are fundamental to women in their struggle for equality (Nussbaum, 2003). Thus, among other capabilities, the capabilities list provided by Nussbaum includes health, bodily integrity, education, and other aspects of individual lives. Moreover, the Capabilities Approach allows for an individual perspective, thereby not solely focusing on the family as a unit, but also at its members individually (Guna Saigaran et al., 2015).
As stated earlier, Nussbaum has further developed the relationship between capabilities and rights. According to Nussbaum, capabilities and human rights lie very close to each other. Entitlements which are stressed in the human rights movement, such as political liberties, the freedom of association, the free choice of occupation, and a variety of economic and social rights, are also considered important by Nussbaum as they guard the protection of capabilities. Nussbaum would argue that although capabilities can be linked closely to rights, capabilities have a certain language that contributes important precision and supplementation to the language of rights. The idea of human rights is not a clear idea, as was also mentioned in the introduction

of the Rights section, as rights have been understood in different ways, resulting in difficult theoretical questions and philosophical disagreement. People differ about what the basis of a claim to rights is (rationality or sentience, or something different?), about whether rights belong only to individuals or also to groups, and the list goes on. According to Nussbuam, the Capabilities Approach has the advantage of taking clear positions in relation to these disputed issues, by stating clearly what the motivating concerns are and what the goal is.

In regards to fundamental rights; Nussbaum argues that the best way of thinking about what it is to secure them is to think in terms of capabilities. For example, the right to political participation, or the right of free speech are best conceptualized by thinking of them as secured to people only when the relevant capabilities to function are present (Nussbaum, 2003, p.37). To put it differently, to secure a certain right to citizens means putting them in a position of capability to function in that area. We ought to grant that a society is just only when the capabilities have been effectively achieved.

By defining the securing of rights in terms of capabilities, we make it clear that people in a certain country don't really have an effective right to, for example, political participation in the sense that is relevant for judging whether a society is a just one solely because the language exists on paper. In reality, the citizens of this country have been given a right only if there are effective measures to make people genuinely capable of political exercise. There are, for example, many examples in which women may have a nominal right to political participation but face serious threats when they leave their homes. This is an aspect which was also mentioned briefly by Young, when she stated that although we now have equal rights in Western societies, there are nevertheless inequalities. Thinking of rights in terms of capabilities gives us a benchmark as we think about what it really means to secure a right to someone, namely, it involves affirmative material and institutional support.
Another advantage of the Capabilities Approach is that, as it focuses from the start on what people are actually able to do and be, it becomes possible to address inequalities that women suffer inside the family. These may range from inequalities in resources and opportunities, to educational deprivations or a failure for work to be recognized as work. As has also been addressed by Okin, these aspects have been historically ignored by traditional rights talk. Rights

language is strongly linked with the traditional distinction between a public sphere, which is under the supervision of the state, and the private sphere, which must be left alone. The language of capabilities, on the other hand, is designed to provide people with choices and to communicate the idea that there is a difference between pushing people in a certain functioning or leaving the choice up to them (Nussbaum, 2003).

To summarize this section, Okin has shown us why it is important to rethink existing theories of justice keeping especially women in mind. One way to do this is by extending the domain of rights from the public domain into the private domain. This way, women and children are protected in the private sphere and from other members of the household. Young also demonstrated a way in which we can reevaluate how we think of rights, namely, by arguing for special rights for oppressed groups in society. Young specifically questioned the difference principle, which lies at the heart of many theories of justice, stating that the principle of equality is blind to differences amongst groups. This blindness, however, creates a norm that is set to the standard of privileged groups – thereby decreasing the position of the oppressed even further. In order for oppressed groups to participate in and be included to political and economic institutions, some groups sometimes deserve special rights.

Lastly, Nussbaum helped to further contextualize the concept of women's rights with the Capabilities Approach. Although rights and capabilities are closely linked to one another, the language used with capabilities provides the language of rights with important precision and supplementation. Namely, it provides us with a benchmark by which we can assess what it truly means to secure a right to someone, by asking whether or not people have been put in a position where they have the capability to function in that area. Additionally, the Capabilities Approach leaves room for individual choice, allowing the realm of rights to also assess injustices within the family.

Understanding Rights in a way that keeps these scholars' insights in mind provides important supplementation and understanding to its inclusion within FFP. Namely, as this section has shown, there is a lot more substance to the inclusion of Rights than simply attributing rights to women across the world. There are relevant differences between the needs of men and women and the inclusion of Rights within FFP allows us to further analyze and understand what these differences are and how they can be addressed.

Resources

As with the term rights, the term resources can be understood to be very broad: it can include necessities such as food or shelter, but also more broadly includes the resource of medication, or access to healthcare or to education. According to the Oxford Dictionary a resource can be defined as follows:

"A useful or valuable possession or quality of a country, organization, or person."

(Oxford Dictionary, 2023).

Before delving into the theoretical aspects underlying the concept of resources, one may wonder why the inclusion of Resources is relevant to begin with. Here already, we may look at Nussbaum (1997) who states that conflicts of opportunities and resources happen in families around the world, and that women and girls are often the victims of these conflicts. For example, when food is scarce within a family, it is very often women and girls in particular who get less, become malnourished and die. When there is an illness, and only some of the children can see a doctor, it is often girls who are neglected. Similarly, when only some children can go to school, it is often the girls who are kept at home. Nussbaum goes on to elaborate further on statistics that show how girls and women are overwhelmingly more likely to be a victim of violence in the household, genital mutilation, and forced prostitution (Nussbaum, 1997, p.11-12).
These facts demonstrate why it is important to include Resources in Feminist Foreign Policy: because it is currently the case that many women and girls are being neglected and do not receive equal resources as other members of their family or community.
The following section will first address *what* the concept of Resources in Feminist Foreign Policy should consist of by using the works of Young. Then, the next section will consider *how* we are supposed to make sense of this concept in practice by using Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach.

Young: The Distributive Paradigm

Young's insights on resources are given in relation to a theory of justice that concerns itself with the distribution of resources: distributive justice. Distributive justice focuses itself on how the benefits and burdens of economic, political, and social frameworks ought to be distributed

amongst members of society (Miller, 2017). How these frameworks are structured is important because the distributions of burdens and benefits fundamentally influence people's lives. Theories of distributive justice focus themselves on questions concerning which frameworks and distributions are morally preferable. Examples of such principles are *Strict Egalitarianism,* which demands a strict, radical, equality, and Rawls' difference principle, which states that:

"Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: (a) They are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and (b), they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society."

(Miller, 2017).

According to Young, most theorists take it as a given that justice is about distributions. For them, all instances in which justice is at stake concern situations of persons dividing a stock of goods and comparing the size of the portions the individuals have. A model like this assumes that individuals lie as nodes, points on a social field, among whom larger or smaller bundles of social goods are assigned. These individuals are then externally related to the goods they possess, and from this point of view the only relation that seems to matter is a comparison of the amount of goods they possess. In other words, the distributive paradigm assumes social atomism, by implicitly assuming that there is no internal relation among persons in society relevant to considerations of justice (Young, 2012, p.18).

In the chapter *Displacing the Distributive Paradigm (p.15-p.38),* Young (2012) further clarifies this point by stating that she has two issues with such a distributive paradigm. Firstly, she states, it is a problem that the distributive paradigm tends to focus – when thinking about social justice – on the allocation of material things, such as resources, income, and wealth, or social positions, such as jobs. According to her, this focus is inclined to ignore the role that social structures and institutional contexts play in determining distributive patterns. In her analysis, she focuses especially on issues of decision-making power and procedures, division of labor, and culture. While she says that one might agree that the concept of distributions needs to be broadened by not only focusing on issues concerning wealth, income, and other material goods, but also non-material goods such as decision-making power or the structure of the division of labor, the broadening of this concept brings about the second issue Young has with the distributive paradigm. Namely, when extending the concept of distribution to nonmaterial goods, the concept

of distribution represents them as though they are static things, rather than a function of social relations and processes.
It is important to note that Young does not say that the distribution of resources is not important. In fact, she even says that "*any conception of justice must address the distribution of material goods*" (p. 19), because it simply is true that we live in a world where there are significant differences in the material goods individuals can access. The point, however, is that too narrow a focus on the distribution of material goods and resources restricts the scope of justice, because by focusing on this aspect one cannot bring the broader social structures and institutional contexts under evaluation.

This section has showed what a justified inclusion of the concept of Resources within Feminist Foreign Policy should entail. Namely, by thinking of the distribution of resources in a way that addresses the distribution of material goods, as well as acknowledges the role of social structures and institutional contexts – such as decision-making powers and procedures, division of labor, and culture. Additionally, when extending the concept of distribution to non-material goods we must try not to make distribution seem static: rather, we should see it as a function of social relations and processes.

Nussbaum: Special Resources

Now that Young has given us insights into *what* we should be thinking of when thinking about distributing resources, we may look to Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach to further contextualize these insights and consider *how* we ought to work with Resources in practice.
In the paper *The Feminist Critique of Liberalism* (1997), Nussbaum addresses the feminist critique on liberalism and argues that a form of liberalism can be defended against those charges. One of the elements of this paper that are of importance for our discussion on Resources concern her insights on the concept of the separateness of persons.
In liberalism, individuality plays a significant role. According to Nussbaum, this means that liberalism responds to the fact that each person has a path from birth to death that is not exactly the same as the path of another person. Every person counts as one and never as more than one, each can feel pain in their own body and if food is given to person A, this never ends up in the stomach of person B. To her, the separateness of persons is a fact of human life and by stressing

this aspect, liberalism emphasizes something that is both experientially true, and fundamentally important. Collectivities, then, such as a state or a family, consist of individuals who never fuse, who always have their separate bodies and voices, no matter how much they may love one another. This means that every individual remains separate, remains their own end. Viewing collectivities like this, shifts the central question of politics from: *"how is the organic whole doing?",* but rather, *"how are X and Y and Z and Q doing?"*

Shifting the central question of politics from the former to the latter creates a political goal that considers the lives of X and Y and Z and Q individually, where a larger amount of happiness for person X, who might be the ruler, never compensates for a larger amount of misery for person Q, who might be a poor rural woman (Nussbaum, 1997, p.11). Seeing things this way does not require us to state that X might not love Y intensely or hold that these four do not love each other deeply and keep each other's pleasure and pain in mind. What it does require is to concern ourselves with the distribution of opportunities and resources in a way that holds concern for how well each and every one of them is doing, seeing each and every one as an end, worthy of concern.

As the introduction of this section has demonstrated – women across the world are rarely treated as ends in themselves and instead are often treated as a means to the ends of others. The individual wellbeing of women has been rarely taken into account in political and economic planning, as women were often seen as parts of a larger unit – especially the family – and valued mostly through their contributions as reproducers and caregivers, rather than sources of agency and worth in their own right. In many cases for women across the world their separateness of persons was denied, leaving them unable to say: "*I am a separate person and individual. I count for something as such, and my pain is not wiped out by someone else's satisfaction"* (Nussbaum, 1997, p.12-13).

How does this relate to our question of how we should apply the concept of Resources in practice? Nussbaum makes a similar observation about the law as Young has when she argued in favor of special rights, namely, that by creating laws which are "sex-blind" – and thus, neutral – one assumes that the social reality before us is a neutral starting point, thereby not recognizing how the status quo embodies historical asymmetries of power. This sort of neutrality makes it difficult to demand, for example, a pregnancy and maternity leave, as part of women's equality

of opportunity. Therefore, rather than referring to a formal notion of equality when it comes to resources, Nussbaum favors a form of liberalism that aims at creating *equality of capabilities.* This means that the aim is not merely to distribute some resources around, but also to see that these resources truly go to work in promoting the capacity of people to choose a life in accordance with their own thinking. In other words, to provide them with resources that help them to establish themselves as ends and not as means. In order to achieve this, Nussbaum states that, given the special hurdles women face on the way to becoming equal, one might even insist on providing women with special resources through education or other ways. This then ought to be seen as something to do in the name of equality itself, and not as a violation of equality.

This section has helped us to further understand the concept of Resources within FFP. Firstly, several examples from Nussbaum clarified why it was important that we consider the inclusion of Resources in the first place. To put it shortly: women and girls across the world more often than not get less than equal resources in their community or family.
The insights of Young have shown us what a just distribution of resources should include. Namely, it should consider both material goods and non-material goods such as the social structures and institutional contexts. Moreover, when we try to broaden the concept of distribution, we should attempt not to turn it into a static concept but rather consider it as a function of social relations and processes. To further contextualize these insights on distribution Nussbaum helped us to make sense of how we should think of Resources in practice. Nussbaum first argued that it is important for people to see themselves as ends in themselves and not as a means to someone else's end. She then argued that rather than merely distributing resources around, we ought to see to it that these resources are truly used as a means to promote the capacity of people to choose a life in accordance with their own thinking. Additionally, given the hurdles women face, one might argue for providing women with special resources such as education.
Thus, in other words, when it comes to the inclusion of Resources in FFP, we should not see this as merely distributing material goods abroad. The concept of Resources should be understood in a way that refers to material goods as well as the institutional context and social structures in which women abroad live. Moreover, we should do this in a way that always aims at creating

equality of capabilities and thereby see to it that these resources are used to promote the capacity of people to choose a life in accordance with their own thinking.

Representation

The following section will focus on the third R: Representation. As with the other two Rs, it is first necessary to provide a definition of (political) representation. Representation can be defined as follows:

"To represent is simply to "make present again." On this definition, political representation is the activity of making citizens' voices, opinions, and perspectives "present" in public policy making processes."

(Dovi, 2018).

Firstly, this section will elaborate on why political representation is important for women by arguing that it could be considered as a part of Nussbaum's conception of human flourishing. Moreover, in the second half of the section, the insights of Young provide an example of how representation of minorities can be achieved in practice.

Nussbaum: Control Over One's Environment

As was elaborated on earlier, Nussbaum has contributed significantly to the Capabilities Approach. The approach considers how well people are able to function in relation to the goods and services they have, with Nussbaum's contribution focusing on the Aristotelean idea of human flourishing and the good life. In the book *Martha Nussbaum and Politics* (2023) Robshaw summarizes the capabilities approach to be the result of following three propositions:

1. *All human beings have the right to flourish.*
2. *Human flourishing can be defined broadly in universal terms.*
3. *It is the task of the government to provide citizens with capabilities to flourish.*

(Robshaw, 2023, p.77).

Nussbaum, unlike Sen, provides a detailed list of what the capabilities required to flourish consist of. According to her, these are capabilities which all human beings should have, and, ideally, which all states should include in their constitutions. The list consists of ten capabilities, and the one that is relevant for this section concerns the 10th capability: *Control over one's environment.* There are two parts to this capability, the first part referring to political control:

being able to make political choices including freedom of association and free speech. The second part concerns material control: being able to hold property (Robshaw, 2023, p. 81). In other words, one of the capabilities that is required for a human to flourish concerns the capability to have control over one's environment, for example, by having political control. How does the 10th capability relate to political representation? In order to have political representation, it is necessary to political control in some form. For example, if a woman wants to join a political party or start her own, she must have the capability to take control over her political environment. If she cannot act on this capability and, therefore, is unable to have political control, female representation in the political domain is not possible.
To put it differently, in order for women to flourish they must have the capability to take control over their political environment. This capability is necessary, not only for the flourishing of women, but also in order for the political representation of women to become a possibility.

Young: Representation of Minorities

The previous section has shown why representation is important for women, and the following section will provide an example of how minorities can be represented in politics in practice. As we have seen in the section on Resources, Young argues that we should not focus on material resources as much and include institutional contexts. Within these institutional contexts, something that plays a significant role is the representation of the oppressed. Young provides an example of a private company closing and leaving half the city out of work. According to the community, they were not given any warning nor any form of compensation. The point here is not only that these people will lack money, but that the town citizens feel that no party should have the right to decide to decimate the local economy. In this case, justice does not concern itself with the distribution of material goods but rather the justice of decision-making power and procedures. The example clearly shows the importance of oppressed groups having decision-making power and being politically represented, it is a necessity to protect their local environments.

Young's (1989) argument regarding representation consists of two parts. Firstly, she argues that the inclusion and participation of everyone in public discussion and decision making requires mechanisms for group representation. Secondly, she argues that where there are differences in

capacities, cultures, values, and behavioural styles amongst groups, but also some privileged groups, the adherence to a strict principle of equality tends to perpetuate oppression or disadvantage. Note here that Young's second statement is the same one as the one we have encountered in the Rights section and shall therefore not be discussed again here.

The first part of Young's argument can be rephrased to the following principle: "*a democratic public, however that is constituted, should provide mechanisms for the effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged within it"* (Young, 1989, p.15). In other words, a democratic public should have mechanisms in place that allow for the effective representation and recognition of oppressed groups within in a society. She states that she only calls for the specific representation for oppressed groups, because those who are privileged are already represented. Young goes on to state that group representation implies institutional mechanisms, and public resources supporting the following three activities:

"(1) self-organization of group members so that they gain a sense of collective empowerment and a reflective understanding of their collective experience and interests in the context of the society;

(2) voicing a group's analysis of how social policy proposals affect them, and generating policy proposals themselves, in institutionalized contexts where decision makers are obliged to show that they have taken hese perspectives into consideration;

(3) having veto power regarding specific policies that affect a group directly, for example, reproductive rights for women, or use of reservation lands for Native Americans."

(Young, 1989, p.15-16).

In other words, Young provides a clearly defined list of three activities that allow for the group representation of oppressed voices. When it comes to FFP, using these three activities can help to make sense of what political representation for distinct voices could look like in practice. For example, by enabling local groups of women to self-organize and gain a sense of collective empowerment, or actively enquiring into how a certain group perceives a social policy to affect

them. Overall, Young's activities provide a direction in which the aspect of Representation could go.

Feminist Foreign Policy: a Critique

The previous sections have created a toolbox for how, on the basis of different moral philosophers, we ought to understand the different concepts of Rights, Resources, and Representation.

Now that an ethical framework for FFP has been created, we can address one of the criticisms the policy faces. This section will further elaborate on one specific argument against FFP: a critique of postcolonialism. Here again, most papers have been written from an International Relations perspective and, therefore, I was not able to find extensive literature that went in depth about what the argument entails specifically regarding FFP. The main article that mentions postcolonialism as an argument against FFP is the paper by Thompson et al. (2021) *Defining Feminist Foreign Policy.* They state that "… *some question whether feminist foreign policies are just the latest postcolonial export of northern countries, well-intentioned perhaps but ultimately equally uninformed by the perspectives of those on the receiving end and removed even from the realities of their own domestic policies" (p.5)*. Unfortunately, besides this sentence, the authors do not further elaborate on this remark. For that reason, this section will attempt to further build on this argument by drawing from cosmopolitan literature and connecting these insights to FFP and the postcolonial critique.

Feminist Foreign Policy and Cosmopolitanism

In order to understand the critique of postcolonialism we must first understand which principles can be used to justify the implementation of (feminist) foreign policy in general. In other words, on what grounds can one justify the implementation of foreign policy at all?

The field of ethics is not foreign to the domain of foreign policy and in academic contexts this is referred to as *Ethical Foreign Policy*. Ethical foreign policy concerns itself with addressing competing beliefs within foreign policy and amongst foreign policy actors and gaining understanding of what it is to be ethical (Gaskarth, 2012). Ethics is relevant for foreign policy as policymakers have to decide between competing ethics and make ethical decisions when faced with dilemmas (Gaskarth, 2012). One particularly important theory for foreign policy concerns cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism refers to the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, are or should be part of one single community (Kleingeld & Brown, 2019).

There is great variation on views that could be considered cosmopolitan. To some extent, every cosmopolitan argues for some form of one single community that surpasses political affiliation. There are differences, however, when it comes to what it is that should be shared. For some, what should be shared is a moral community, meaning that living a good life requires serving the universal community by helping human beings as such, for example, by promoting the realization of justice or a guarantee of human rights (Kleingeld & Brown, 2019). Others believe that that which is shared is a political institution shared by all, a cultural expression appreciated by all, or an economic market which is open to all.

Among these variations, the most common form of cosmopolitanism is moral cosmopolitanism (Kleingeld & Brown, 2019). Fundamentally, moral cosmopolitanism focuses on helping human beings as such, insisting on the moral duty to aid foreigners who are suffering, or at the very least a duty to respect and promote basic human rights and justice. Within the domain of moral cosmopolitanism there is another variation between strict cosmopolitans and moderate cosmopolitans. Strict cosmopolitans maintain that the duty to provide aid does not come with an extra duty to help locals or other people with, for example, the same nationality. In other words, you as a person do not have more of a duty to provide aid to your neighbor than you do to someone on the other side of the globe. Moderate cosmopolitans, on the other hand, do recognize special responsibilities in relation to locals or compatriots, thus stating that there is a special responsibility to help your neighbor (Kleingeld & Brown, 2019). The version of cosmopolitanism that is referred to from here on out concerns the strict form of moral cosmopolitanism, which thus means that there is a moral responsibility to provide aid to other human beings across the world, with no special responsibility to locals or compatriots.

To relate this back to FFP, we may consider Rosamond (2013), who has done extensive research on the underlying cosmopolitan principles that are present in FFP. In her paper, Rosamond provides further insights into the concept of *gender cosmopolitanism* which refers to a dual protection of women both at home and abroad. She states that the prevention of gendered violence is a cosmopolitan obligation, and that gender cosmopolitanism is informed by an understanding of borders as social constructs whose juridical significance can be set aside in order to protect the needs of distant other women (Rosamond, 2013, p.320). In other words, the protection of women abroad is part of our cosmopolitan duty to provide aid because our moral

obligations are not determined by our understanding of borders. According to her, gender cosmopolitanism can be seen as an exercise in "feminism without borders" which actively tries to overcome the ethical prioritization of members of bounded political communities at the expense of women beyond those borders.

It seems relatively clear how the insights of (gender) cosmopolitanism relate to FFP. Namely, for one to accept FFP, one must, to a certain extent, accept these cosmopolitan claims. If you do not believe that your moral obligation to provide aid goes beyond a national border, it is hard to maintain that you should do anything for the wellbeing of women living across the globe. Given that FFP focuses on providing aid to women across the globe there is an implied moral responsibility to provide aid beyond the borders of your national country.

Feminist Foreign Policy and Postcolonialism

How do these insights relate to a critique of postcolonialism? Rosamond (2013) states that an often-cited argument against cosmopolitan logic concerns its risk of creating universalist claims. According to moral cosmopolitanism, all human beings are members of one universal moral order. Additionally, cosmopolitans argue that individuals, by using their capacity to reason, are able to arrive in a position on how to achieve a good life. All human beings are capable of having this ability, and this is partly what brings us together. The moral judgements that follow from this exercise appeal to humanity at large, thus making them universal claims (Rosamond, 2013, p.323). In this sense, a universalist claim means a claim that is applicable for all of humanity. The universal claim underlying FFP, for example, is the claim that women having Rights, Resources, and Representation is desirable for women worldwide.

Rosamond states that these universalist claims are often met with skepticism from other feminists. According to them, grand visions of joint universalist projects are simply put together by men for men (Rosamond, 2013, p. 324). Consequently, there is an implicit preference for male conceptions of justice that do not adequately consider the moral stories of women or their unique abilities to make moral judgements. An example of this has already been mentioned earlier, in the section on Rights, where Okin's public/private dichotomy was used to demonstrate the impact of using a male perspective as the norm and its consequences for women. Namely, that the private sphere was typically not considered a domain in which one's rights needed to be protected, because for most men this was the case. This example shows how an implicit male

conception of justice can overlook the moral stories and judgements of women. Thus, a universalist project that is run by men is at risk of considering their claims as universal when in reality it inadequately addresses the moral stories and judgements of women, making it a project for men rather than a project that is universally applicable.

It is within this context that we must place the critique of postcolonialism. To briefly summarize the conclusion of the previous section, I have argued that in order for one to endorse FFP, one must, to a certain extent, also accept the cosmopolitan statements upon which FFP is based. Then, by including Rosamond's article, I have showed how cosmopolitanism is informed by universalist statements and that when these universalist statements are created by men, there is a risk of overlooking the moral perspectives of women. The postcolonial critique is very similar to the latter argument, except that instead of arguing that the universalist claims are informed by male perspectives, one could argue that they are informed by Western perspectives. As a consequence, because the Western perspectives are considered universal, important non-Western or local perspectives may be overlooked. Postcolonialism in this sense thus refers to certain Western beliefs being dominant over the beliefs or perceptions of the local people FFP is supposed to benefit.

In the case of FFP, for example, we may enforce certain policies or measures that we believe to contribute to the wellbeing of women abroad but are perhaps not locally supported. For example, as Mikell (1995) writes in the paper *African Feminism: Toward a New Politics of Representation,* many African women felt angry at Western academics and activists for trying to include them into a movement they perceived as extremely individualist and defined by militant opposition and hostility to males. As a consequence, many African women do not subscribe to the Western idea of feminism. Author Emecheta states:

"*I have never called myself a feminist. Now if you choose to call me a feminist, that is your business: but I don't subscribe to the feminist idea that all men are brutal and repressive, and we must reject them. Some of these men are my brothers and fathers and sons. Am I to reject them too?"*

(Mikell, 1995, p.406).

The point here is that whilst Western people may believe that a certain kind of feminism contributes to the wellbeing of women, in this case, in Africa, those women themselves may find that particular form of feminism to be too individualistic and undesirable. In the case of FFP, this may result in Western policymakers trying to enforce a certain policy goal on the basis of a belief that is not locally supported.

Another example that also elaborates on this perspective comes from the TedTalk *The Dangers of Western Feminism to African Women* by Akob (2022). Akob states that:

"Mainstream, or rather, current Western feminist ideology is based on the concept of I; how can I free myself from oppression? African community ideology is based on we; how can we empower ourselves for the benefit of everyone? Ubuntu: I am because you are."

(Akob, 2022, 7:36).

These insights have complications for FFP. Let's look, for example, again at the section on Rights and the public/private dichotomy as explained by Okin. Okin's insights lead us to conclude that the rights of the individual must be extended even into the private sphere and must provide protection even against other members of the household. Needless to say, this is a highly individualistic account of rights and may thus not be desired in countries that are much more focused on communities. In fact, even stating that there is a dichotomy between the public and the private might be a very Western distinction to make.

Similarly, as is explained by Ake (1993), one cannot expect African democracies to look exactly like Western democracies. The way Western countries have created democracies concerns a fundamental liberal element, which offers a form of political participation. This form of political participation, however, is different from how participation is perceived in Africa, as it is much more linked to communality. Africans in general do not see themselves as self-regarding atomized beings in a competitive and potentially conflicting interaction with others. Instead, they perceive themselves to be a part of an organic whole (Ake, 1993, p.243). This is relevant particularly when it comes to the Representation aspect of FFP. For example, when arguing that women ought to form a group that needs to be represented, it requires of them to see themselves as separate entities within their communities. However, according to Ake, people in Africa participate not because they are individuals whose interests are different and need to be asserted, but rather because they are part of an organic whole. Instead of participation resting on the

assumption of individualism and conflicting interests, it rests on the social nature of human beings (Ake, 1993, p.243). In other words, while it may be true that women across the globe benefit from having rights, resources, and representation, the way in which this may be brought about can be fundamentally different from how Western scholars initially think these aspects should be brought about.

To summarize, this section has first elaborated on the relevance of cosmopolitanism for Feminist Foreign Policy and has explained its tendency to end up with universalist claims. I have then argued how the universal claims underlying FFP are informed mostly by Western perspectives and that, as a consequence, this may overlook the moral stories and judgements of local women. This could be seen as postcolonial, as the Western ideas are dominant over the ideas and perceptions of local women FFP is supposed to benefit.

Postcolonialism: A Response

The previous section has demonstrated a significant argument against the justification of Feminist Foreign Policy: a critique of postcolonialism. This section will provide a response to this critique from within the FFP framework, namely, by elaborating on the 4th R: Reality Check. This section will first elaborate on the tension between (Western) feminist values and briefly explores how this tension relates to the ethical framework of this thesis. The second half of this section begins by explaining what the 4th R currently means and concludes by providing a suggestion on how to further establish the 4th R in a way that more adequately addresses the postcolonial critique. Namely, by more directly including elements from the ethics of care: relationality, contextualism, and revisability

Tradition and Feminism

As the aforementioned section has demonstrated, there seems to be a tension between values that are argued to be feminist values on the one hand, and traditional values on the other. This tension is something that the philosophers used in this thesis were very well aware of. For example, let's look again at Okin's private/public dichotomy in relation to the postcolonial critique. As has been stated earlier, arguing to extend individual rights into the sphere of the household may be considered too individualistic and, therefore, undesirable in some cultures. What this example demonstrates is a tension between feminist values on the one hand, and traditional values on the other. In one of Okin's lectures, a statement is made that addresses this tension:

"There is a real tension between feminist values on one hand, and the value of respecting the values of other cultures on the other hand. The reason is; in cultures in general, western, or non-western, the tradition has always been to be not particularly feminist. Traditions tend to be oppressive for women."

(Okin, 2022, 5:44).

The quote demonstrates that whilst there may be a tension between feminist values and traditional values, this need not necessarily mean that we ought to prefer traditional values solely because they are traditional. There are many traditions which are harmful to women and should not be accepted solely on the basis of being traditional. One example concerns the tradition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which concerns the procedure of partial or total removal of

the external female genitalia or other injuries done to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (WHO, 2023). The procedure is part of a tradition that believes that FGM is necessary for women to ensure their chances of marriage, because men refuse to marry intact women. Additionally, FGM is seen as a way to control women's sexuality and is considered to enhance beauty and cleanliness (*The reasons given for FGM: culture and tradition*, 1998). The procedure is very painful and can lead to, amongst other effects, fever, shock, and sometimes death (WHO, 2023). FGM is a clear example of a tradition that is harmful for women, and – because FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and adolescence –an example of the benefit of extending human rights to the private domain.

Nussbaum, too, has elaborated further on the tension between feminism and tradition. She states the following:

"Depressingly many traditions have portrayed women as less important than men, less deserving of basic life or of fundamental rights that are strongly correlated with quality of life such as the right to work and the right to political participation. Sometimes, as in the case of Metha Bai, these traditions are resisted by the women themselves. Sometimes, on the other hand, they have become so deeply internalized that they seem to record what is "right" and "natural," and women themselves frequently come to endorse their own second-class status."

(Nussbaum, 1996, p.202-203).

What Nussbaum points out here is that there are many traditions who (have) portrayed women as less than men. Sometimes, this is fought against by the women living in these cultures, but it also happens that women have deeply internalized the beliefs from their cultures and that they themselves have accepted they are worth less than men. The Capabilities Approach actively tries to stimulate women in seeing themselves as ends. For example, as was stated in the section Resources, Nussbaum argued for equality of capabilities, meaning that resources were not merely distributed around but rather that resources were used to promote the capacity of people to choose a life in accordance with their own thinking. Nussbaum further demonstrates this with an example from a rural village in Bangladesh, India, where a group of women are involved with a literacy project. Before the project, none of the women were able to find work outside their home, but after the project – despite the continued opposition of local mullahs – literacy helped

some of the women to move into skilled jobs such as tailoring. It also stimulated them to see themselves as ends, where one of the women said "*When I sit with the books, I do not feel sad, I feel more a person"* (Nussbaum, 1996, p.202). After having defined herself primarily in relation to other for the majority of her life, she was now starting to form hopes and projects for her personal future.

Lastly, Okin too, remarked on the tension between traditional cultures and feminism. When elaborating on why defenders of group rights, of which political representation is an example, have neglected tension between feminism and group rights, she states:

"Here I think the problem arises from what I have come to view as an excessive amount of deference to differences among women on the part of some feminist scholars, coupled with what sometimes becomes a hyperconcern to avoid cultural imperialism that leads, at worst, to a paralyzing degree of cultural relativism. Neither of these tendencies is confined to feminists who confront the issue of cultural differences, of course. However, they are particularly crippling to feminism, because so many of the world's cultures are highly patriarchal. That this is so is confirmed by the fact that ''But this is our culture'' is a response so often given by male elites around the world to justify the continued infringement of women's rights."

(Young, 1998b, p.665).

Young identifies a "hyper concern" of some feminist scholars to avoid cultural imperialism to such an extent that it leads to cultural relativism. As a consequence, it becomes nearly impossible to say anything about the wellbeing of women living in another culture, because, although these cultures are highly patriarchal, stating that that "this is just the way their cultures are" is all encompassing. This comes at the expense of women's rights, for example, when a culture traditionally does not allow women to participate in politics, giving way to tradition comes at the expense of women's rights.

There is a lot more to be said about how the philosophers of this thesis would respond to the postcolonial critique. Elaborating on each R and all its facets individually goes beyond the scope of this paper. This section, however, briefly demonstrated that each of the philosophers was aware of the tension between feminism and tradition and showed how their theories dealt with it.

Okin's quote showed how tradition can be harmful to women and the FGM example clearly demonstrated how the extension of individual rights into the private domain would contribute to the wellbeing of women. Nussbaum's quote identified that women living in cultures where they are seen as less than men have sometimes resulted in women having internalized these beliefs themselves. The Capabilities Approach can significantly contribute to women seeing themselves as ends. Lastly, Young's quote showed how a fear of cultural imperialism can lead to cultural relativism, after which stating that "this is the way our culture is" becomes all-encompassing at the expense of women's rights.

The 4th R: Reality Check

The previous section has showed that the philosophers used in the ethical framework of this thesis can address the postcolonial concern. There is, however, another way in which the postcolonial concern can be addressed that comes from the FFP work itself. Namely, by elaborating on the 4th R: Reality Check. The 4th R was implemented at a later stage than the other three and rather than being a separate aspect of itself, the 4th refers to how the other three Rs are supposed to be conducted. The Dutch government has defined the 4th R as follows:

"Circumstances worldwide differ and not every approach is equally effective everywhere. That's why the realization of these policy goals must always be approached in a way that fits the local context."

(Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2022).

Thus, the 4th R provides some guidance into how the actualization of Rights, Resources, and Representation of women ought to be conducted. Namely, by approaching each of these R in a way that fits the local context.

When it was first pleaded by academics to include a 4th R in the FFP scope, this R did not only stand for Reality Check, but also for Research. Research, as is argued by Aggestam et al., (2019), would ensure that FFP is based on evidence and informed by facts and statistics about girls' and women' everyday lives. In other words, the 4th R would include an element of investigation about whether FFP is making the right differences on the right grounds. Although this element of Research is not explicitly included in the definition provided by the Dutch government, one could argue that it is implied when stating that each R ought to fit in the local context.

How does the inclusion of the 4th R relate to the postcolonial critique? Firstly, by acknowledging that not every approach is equally effective across the world, space is created for applying different methods in different places. Secondly, by stating that each R must be approached in a way that fits the local context, it is explicated that one must first understand what the local context is before blindly enforcing a certain policy goal. In other words, the 4th R allows for local differences and urges policymakers to take these into consideration when attempting to enforce the policy goals of FFP. This goes a long way in addressing the postcolonial critique, not because it solves the tension between feminist values and traditional values, but rather because it aims to take into account *both* the local dynamics as well as the aspects of FFP.

Ethics of Care

Although I believe that the 4th R goes a long way in addressing the postcolonial critique, I would like to provide a suggestion as for how the 4th R can be developed further. Namely, by explicating *how* the local context is supposed to be included and arguing that this should be done by including elements of the ethics of care discipline. To be more precise, I will argue that the 4th R should be extended in a way that embodies the ethics of care aspects relationality, contextualism, and revisability, in order to find the right balance between feminist values on the one hand and traditional values on the other.

According to Gilligan, one of the first scholars in ethics of care, the ethics of care sees people not as individuals "standing alone", but rather as gaining their selfhood through their relations with others (Robinson, 2019, p.31). Morality according to this view is about responding to what others need in ways that are characterized by attentive listening, patience, and understanding. When it comes to the first aspect, relationality, this refers to the view that all selves are a product of relations with others. Relationality is not a static concept, unlike, for example, concepts such as justice. Instead, it is a way that addresses both ontology – the relational self – and epistemology. The latter means that knowledge too is understood relationally, meaning that we ought to ask ourselves who makes the knowledge claims, from which perspective, which material circumstances, and what degree of power (Robinson, 2019, p.31). Another benefit of approaching things from the basis of relationality concerns the fact that it shifts our understanding of the problem of differences. Namely, seeing difference relationally means that we shift from focusing on the distinctions between people and rather focus on the relationships within. Thus, relational approaches enquire into the institutional practices that determine a norm against which some people seem different. As Minow (1990) states; "*to address relationships is to resist abstraction and to demand context"* (Robinson, 2019, p.31). Including this aspect in FFP would urge policymakers to approach the policy goals from a relational perspective; critically assessing their own relations with locals and asking themselves how their knowledge relates to the relations they have. Where did they get their knowledge from, who are the women that have informed them? What do their lives look like and which challenges do they face? Rather than solely looking at the statistics of a location, policymakers ought to invest in their relationships with locals in order to gain a better understanding of what is needed in the local

context. For example, rather than solely doing desk research from Europe, it should be supported that policymakers visit the locations their policies are about and interact with local women in order to develop a relationship.

As Minow's quote shows, there is a close relation between the first aspect of relationality and the second aspect of contextuality. Rather than creating universalizable moral principles that hold true across time and space, an ethic of care demands attention to context: to the particularities of social location, historical background, structural conditions, and relationships between relevant moral actors (Robinson, 2019, p.32). In this way, an ethic of care differs from traditional moral theories which demand abstraction from context in order to gain objectivity. This objectivity, however, can be said to create a dichotomy between those who are the knowers, keepers, and enforcers of moral principles, and those who are compelled to enact those principles. For example, as Robinson states, the morality of "arms deals" cannot be assessed outside of the context of both the violent histories of colonialism and liberal militarism. According to her, a version of FFP that works must become a slow, plodding process which considers both historical and contemporary relations between actors and recognizes the importance of context. Including contextuality in FFP would allow for a structured way to include the voices, insights, and perspectives of local women. It would allow to further make sense of Rights, Resources, and Representation in a way that is appropriate and actually contributes to the wellbeing of local women.

Lastly, the aspect of revisability refers to the requirement of epistemological humility. In other words, the need to embrace uncertainty and recognize that there are only better or worse courses of action to undertake at any given time and context (Robinson, 2019, p.32). Robinson refers to "Amy", one of Gilligan's subjects, who is asked to respond to a question regarding an abstract moral dilemma. Amy responds to this dilemma by saying "Well, it depends". From the perspective of ethics of care, this response shows how Amy's reluctance to give a universalized judgement stems from a deep understanding of the role of context and the nature of relationships in moral judgement. Precisely this willingness to embrace uncertainty defines an ethic of care. It allows for us to let go of a sole focus on principles and allows more space for contingency, context, embodiment, and emotion. Including revisability provides a systemic way to ensure

nuance to the other three Rs. Namely, rather than believing that Rights, Resources, and Representation all ought to work in exactly the same way across all locations and time, there is space to say that whether and how each of these Rs work "depends" on the location of implementation.

Thus, to summarize, in this section I have argued that the 4th R should be extended in a way that embodies the ethics of care aspects relationality, contextualism, and revisability, in order to find the right balance between feminist values on the one hand and traditional values on the other. The 4th R could then be defined as follows:

"Circumstances worldwide differ and not every approach is equally effective everywhere. That's why the realization of these policy goals must always be approached in a way that fits the local context. In order to verify whether this is the case, policymakers will consider the aspects of relationality, contextualism, and revisability."

Most likely, there will always remain a tension between cultures and between values. Therefore, the best way to find out whether the wellbeing of women is improving is to actively include them by listening to their stories and perspectives. I believe that by extending the 4th R to include relationality, contextuality, and revisability, the 4th R, in addition to the other Rs as I have explained them in this thesis, goes a long way in addressing the postcolonial critique.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided the ethical underpinnings of the R-approach of Feminist Foreign Policy and elaborated on the critique of postcolonialism. The first section concerned the aspect of Rights and argued why women's rights are important to include. I have used the work of Okin to argue that historically, theories of justice implied a male head of the household and thereby created a dichotomy between the public and private sphere. As a consequence, the domain of rights only limited itself to the public domain, despite most women facing abuses of their rights in the private sphere as well. In order to address this, we must rethink our theories of justice – for example – by including the private sphere as a domain in which individual rights need to be protected. Another example of how we can rethink our theories of justice concerns the implementation of special rights, as is argued by Young. According to Young, rather than always formulating rights and rules in terms of universality and blind to all forms of difference, some groups sometimes deserve special rights. For example, a right to pregnancy and maternity leave. Lastly, the Rights section demonstrated how Rights are to be understood in a practical sense by referring to Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach. When it comes to Rights in FFP we should think of them in terms of capabilities; securing citizens to a right means putting them in a position of capability to function in that area. For example, to say that one has a right to free speech must mean more than only having this right on paper. Rather, citizens have this right only when they have the relevant capabilities to function. To summarize, this section has shown that we ought to rethink our theories of justice and provided two ways in which one can do that: by including the private domain into the realm of rights or by providing special rights to women. Additionally, Rights ought to be understood in terms of capabilities in order to assure that rights are not just present on paper.

The second section, Resources, included a discussion on the distributive paradigm and argued that the inclusion of Resources should not just focus on material goods, but also acknowledge the role of social structures and institutional context, as is also argued for by Young. Moreover, when we do extend the concept of Resources to not only include material goods, we must attempt not to make distribution seem static: rather, we should see it as a function of social relations and processes. Lastly, in accordance with the Capabilities Approach, this section argued that we ought not to merely distribute some resources around but see to it that these resources

contribute to promoting the capacity of people to choose a life in accordance with their own thinking. In order to achieve this, one might insist on providing women with special resources that help them overcome the special hurdles they face.
The third section, Representation, referred to Nussbaum's Capabilities list and concept of human flourishing. In this section, I have argued that in order for women to flourish and, therefore, be able to take political control, political representation must be a possibility. Additionally, I have argued that Representation can be realized through three activities, which have been identified by Young in order to create effective representation and recognition of oppressed groups.

The fourth section further elaborated on a critique against FFP: postcolonialism. In this section I have argued that in order for one to accept FFP, one must, to a certain extend accept the cosmopolitan principle of having a duty to provide aid. Additionally, this section has shown how cosmopolitanism leads to universalist claims, and that in practice these claims are often not universalist but instead are informed by privileged groups.
The postcolonial critique thus refers to the concern that instead of universalist claims being actually universalist, they are mostly informed by Western perspectives. Consequently, because the Western perspectives are considered universal, important non-Western or local perspectives may be overlooked. Postcolonialism thus refers to certain Western beliefs being dominant over the beliefs or perceptions of the local people FFP is supposed to benefit.

The fifth and final section responds to this critique in two ways. Firstly, by elaborating further on the tension between feminist values and traditional values by using the philosophers of the ethical framework. I have shown that these philosophers were very well aware of this tension and that they were able to address it in a way that kept the ethical framework of this thesis in tact. Secondly, I have responded to the postcolonial critique by further elaborating on the 4th R of FFP: Reality Check. After having first elaborated on what the 4th R is currently defined as, I then continued by arguing that if the 4th R were to include the ethics of care aspects relationality, contextualism, and revisability, right balance between feminist values and traditional values may be found.

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