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**SWEDEN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVE ON SECURITY**

Master's thesis (24 EAP)

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is a feminist discourse analysis of Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy. This thesis seeks to look into how the international relations (IR) feminist theory characteristics are translated into feminist foreign policy objectives and practice. The aim of this thesis is to study Sweden's feminist foreign policy compliance with the properties identified by IR feminist perspectives on security.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy characteristics are compared with the IR feminist theories. Therefore, an ideal type of entirely feminist discourse is created based on IR feminist theories. The aim of qualitative content analysis is to examine whether Sweden's foreign policy fits with entirely feminist discourse and to answer the posed research question: To what extent has Sweden implemented the IR feminist theory characteristics in its feminist foreign policy?

The IR feminist discourse analysis is performed on Sweden's feminist foreign policy for the years 2014-2018. The analysis is based on official documents, statements, articles, and speeches by policymakers on the subject—those related to the objectives and practical implementation of feminist foreign policy—to establish in what ways such discourse is present or absent.

The results show that Sweden's foreign policy objectives can be considered feminist according to the properties brought forward by IR feminist theories. However, based on the comparison with an entirely feminist foreign policy discourse, the results show that in some cases Sweden's feminist foreign policy practice is rather conveniently feminist.

## **Keywords**

Feminist foreign policy, IR feminist theory, Sweden

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Introduction.....	4
1. IR Feminist Theory .....	8
1.1 Feminism in International Relations .....	8
1.2 IR Feminist Theory .....	12
1.3 IR Feminist Perspectives on Security .....	17
1.4 IR Feminist Perspectives on Gendered Insecurities.....	20
2. Research Design.....	24
3. Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy .....	28
3.1 Sweden’s National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security.....	30
3.2 Implementation of the Feminist Foreign Policy in 2014 .....	32
3.3 Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy Objectives for 2015-2018 .....	37
3.4 Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy Implementation Method.....	40
3.5 Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy Achievements 2014-2018 .....	40
4. Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy Analysis.....	44
4.1 Sweden’s Feminist foreign policy objectives compliance with IR Feminist Theory.....	45
4.2 Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy in Practice.....	49
4.3 Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy Perspectives on Security .....	54
Summary and Conclusion .....	56
References.....	58

## **Introduction**

In October 2014, Sweden announced to be the first country in the world to form a world's first feminist government with the exclusive agenda of pursuing a feminist foreign policy. As this government later stated, "Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives. This is a human right and a matter of democracy and justice" (Government of Sweden, 2018). This bold choice of language suggested a radical policy change that started a new trend in the foreign policy world with other countries following Sweden's initiative soon afterwards.

The Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström has stated that "We see it as an objective in itself to achieve gender equality and human rights. However, we also see gender equality as an essential element in order to achieve other objectives, such as sustainable peace, security and development. Solutions where half of societies and populations are excluded are not sustainable solutions." Therefore, the feminist foreign policy entails applying "a systematic gender equality perspective throughout foreign policy... and is essential for achieving the Government's other overall objectives, such as peace, security, and sustainable development" (Government of Sweden, 2018a).

Since late 2013, "the international security environment has undergone a shift from the post-Cold War era" (O'Rourke, 2018) and the timing for Sweden to come up with a normative foreign policy (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016) raised concerns on countries' security. The unipolar superpower status of the United States for the past 20 to 25 years in the international system has been challenged. The new shift in the international security environment features a great renewed power competition with China and Russia (O'Rourke, 2018).

The new security environment has created new challenges for the small states in Europe, including Sweden. The timing for Sweden to formulate a feminist foreign policy was when relations between Sweden and Russia were at a low point as Russian jets repeatedly prodded Swedish airspace and there was a continuous massive hunt for a suspected Russian submarine in Swedish waters (Standish, 2016).

The feminist foreign policy agenda raised justified concerns in Sweden and abroad as the Swedish Security Service described Russia as the country's biggest security threat in its 2014 annual report (Standish, 2016). Many public doubts were raised about the reliability of the new normative foreign policy agenda, considering potential security threats, current events in the world

(especially the tension between Ukraine and Russia after “the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine in 2014” (Standish, 2016)), and Sweden not being a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

As in 2015, the Swedish government increased its defense spending by a billion dollars in order to address concerns about Russia’s provocations (Hudson & Eason, 2018), at the same time pursuing a feminist foreign policy, it raised justified questions about following a normative foreign policy agenda in the age of Putin and Trump (Standish, 2016). How could a feminist foreign policy help to end Russian aggression (Rotchild, 2014) and what is feminist foreign policy actually? (Alvan & Weldon, 2017).

Sweden has been a leading advocate of feminist foreign policy and gender equality, yet controversially also one of the largest foreign aid donors and largest arms exporters in the world on per capita basis (Hudson & Eason, 2018), leading to further assessment of feminist foreign policy perspectives on security.

In the discipline of international relations (IR), security is generally associated with national security (Tickner, 2018) and according to realism theory, security is tied to the military security of a state (Mearshimer, 2001). States must rely on their own power capabilities and maximize their own power to achieve security in the “anarchic” international environment (Mearshimer, 2001). Feminist scholars have redefined IR theories in terms of “security” from the narrow concept of national security towards a more comprehensive vision focused on human security (Tickner, 2018).

One of the main authors of feminist IR, J. Ann Tickner, has highlighted that national security should be the highest good and that “security meant nothing if it was built on other’s insecurity” (Tickner 1992, p. 55). “Human security places people rather than states at the center of international security” (Tickner, 2018). Therefore, in feminist policy-making equality is often emphasized as “feminism is about smart policy which is inclusive, uses all potentials and leaves no one behind” (Chowdhury, 2019). Achieving inclusive security is important because “without peace, development is impossible, and without development, peace is not achievable, but without women, neither peace nor development is conceivable” (Chowdhury, 2019).

The aim of this thesis is to study the first four years of Sweden's feminist foreign policy perspective on security in compliance with the properties identified by IR feminist perspectives on security. IR feminist theory was chosen for this thesis because security is central for any foreign policy concept and it addresses peace and security from a gendered perspective.

IR feminist theory discourse analysis is performed on Sweden's feminist foreign policy for the years 2014-2018. The analysis is based on official documents, statements, articles, and speeches by policymakers on the subject—those related to the *practical* implementation of the feminist foreign policy—to establish in what ways such a discourse is present or absent. In particular, the focus is on how the IR feminist theory characteristics are translated into the feminist foreign policy in practice.

Using a deductive approach, I am comparing Sweden's feminist foreign policy aspects on security with the IR feminist perspectives on security. Therefore, an ideal type of an entirely feminist discourse on security is created based on the IR feminist theory. The aim of this analysis is to examine whether Sweden's foreign policy fits with the IR feminist theory in order to answer the posed research question:

To what extent has Sweden implemented the IR feminist theory characteristics in its feminist foreign policy?

The results of this analysis are important because they contribute to improving our understanding of what feminism looks like in foreign policy practices. A better understanding of the practical dimensions of the Swedish feminist foreign policy view on security can help to define the key characteristics of feminist foreign policy as a whole while also determining its limitations—in order to improve the effective implementation of a new type of feminist foreign policy that could be implemented by many countries.

This thesis additionally contributes to the feminist foreign policy analysis and feminist security studies. Even though a number of studies have already been conducted that analyze feminist foreign policy's intellectual background and practical implementation (Egnell, 2016) and question its true feminist stance using various feminist theories (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016; Wästerlid, 2017; Nylund, 2017; Alvan & Weldon, 2017), there are no studies available on analyzing the practical implementation of feminist foreign policy's security aspects' compliance

with the IR feminist theory. Continuous research on feminist foreign policy is necessary in order to address the successes and shortcomings of this new type of policy in order for other countries to implement a similar type of policy.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter describes the IR feminist theory's perspectives on security, the key authors, and their input into feminist thought. The second chapter describes the research design of the thesis, including its methodology and analytical framework. The third chapter provides an overview of Sweden's feminist foreign policy objectives. The final, fourth chapter includes an empirical analysis of the feminist foreign policy's compliance with the IR feminist theory based on the analytical framework presented in the second chapter. Finally, the last chapter of the thesis gives an assessment of the analysis, outlines the main conclusions, and answers the research question.

## **1. IR Feminist Theory**

The aim of this chapter is to give a comprehensive overview of the theoretical basis of the IR feminist theory perspectives on security, the further developments of this theory (including the main authors), and an assessment of their input into feminist thought.

Since Sweden's feminist foreign policy claims to apply a systematic gendered perspective throughout its foreign policy, including peace and security efforts (Government of Sweden), it presents an ideal case for investigating feminist foreign policy by using the approach of feminist IR theory. The feminist IR theory was chosen for this thesis because security is central to any foreign policy concept and its integration into feminist foreign policy as a whole needs further investigation.

This chapter begins with an overview of the history of women's movements and important milestones that led the way to the formulation of the IR feminist theory. Secondly, the IR feminist theory and its perspectives on security are described in a simplified typology format that acts as an entirely feminist discourse on security. In the final part, examples of gendered insecurities are explained to illustrate how women are situated in relation to a wide variety of security issues.

### **1.1 Feminism in International Relations**

The development of feminist theory is based on interrelationship and close links of intersection between women's activism and feminist scholarship. Almost 100 years ago women from both sides of World War I came together to design a postwar peace plan that nowadays is quite similar to United Nation Security Council Resolution 1325 called Women, Peace and Security. Since then women activists have raised the issue to get more attention to the gender issues and place them to United Nations agenda (Tickner, 2018).

In 1915 Women's Peace Congress was held at The Hague, Netherlands, which formulated a set of principles for a just settlement to World War I. These set of principles are still relevant in today's world. Since then peace and security were defined comprehensively, including the promotion of social justice and elimination of violence in all its manifestations at all levels of society. The principles that were adopted in 1915 meeting noted that women and civilians most likely suffer from violence in times of war and that there is need for women to participate in peacemaking. The main desire was not just the cessation of hostilities but to build "positive peace" that includes social justice (Tickner, 2018).

Since 1915 until the beginning of the Decade all the statements on women's conferences have adopted similarly broad definitions of peace and security which were culminated in UN Security Council resolution 1325 and the adoption of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in the beginning of the year 2000. Women's movements have agreed similarly that real security and justice could never be achieved without securing women's equal rights (Tickner, 2018).

In 1985 Women's International Peace Conference was held in Halifax, Canada. The participants from all over the world came together and defined security in various ways depending on the most immediate threats to their survival that included freedom from fear of war, unemployment and need for a safe working environment. Women from Global South defined the security in terms of structural violence associated with imperialism, militarism, racism and sexism (Tickner, 2018).

The breakthrough came in the late 1980s when feminist scholarship in IR began to address peace and security from a gendered perspective. About thirty years ago in 1988, J. Ann Tickner pointed out that "international relations is a man's world, a world of power and conflict in which warfare is a privileged activity" (Sjoberg, 2018). The feminist scholars started to analyze and explain the "deep structural reasons why women's activism, participation and knowledge about achieving peace and security have largely been ignored or not taken seriously by the international community". Feminist approach makes the observations about what is made visible (Sjoberg, 2018) by using multidimensional definition of security that includes the security of individuals, economics, states and environmental security and physical security (Tickner, 2018).

Feminist theories entered to the discipline of IR in the late 1980s and early 1990s and are often referred as the "third debate." The beginning of this third debate lie in the late 1980s, when many scholars in the discipline started to debate its ways of knowing and began questioning the epistemological and ontological foundations of a field that was dominated by positivist, rationalist, and materialist theories (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 207). Postpositivist scholarship started to question positivists' beliefs about the possibility of creating universal objective knowledge. Postpositivists question in "whose interests and for what purpose knowledge is constructed" (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 207). Feminists share the postpositivist commitment to examining the relationship between knowledge and power, pointing out the fact that most knowledge has either been created by men or is about men (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 207).

Conventional IR relies on generalized rationalist explanations of the state's behavior in an anarchic international system. Feminist IR theories focus on social relations, particularly gender relations rather than anarchy. In particular, for feminist IR theory, the international system is constituted by socially constructed gender hierarchies that contribute to gender subordination. Feminists reveal these gender hierarchies by examining international relations at the micro-level, attempting to understand how the lives of (marginalized) individuals affect—and are affected by—global politics (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 207).

Early IR feminists challenged the discipline by questioning the formulation of existing IR theories and emphasized the importance of women's experiences. Feminists claimed that the understanding of global politics might be improved if attention were paid to women's experiences. They further argued that gender analysis could show the differential impact of the state system and global economy on the lives of women and men. IR feminist critically re-examined some of the key concepts such as sovereignty, the state, and security (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 205) and sought to draw attention to women's invisibility, as less than 10 per cent of the world's heads of state are women. Feminists ask why this is the case and how this might affect global politics (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 219).

First-generation feminist IR scholars created theoretical formulations, which and second-generation scholars have applied to concrete situations in global politics (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 219). "First-generation IR feminist theory was primarily concerned with bringing to light and then critiquing the gendered foundations of discipline" (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208). Second-generation feminist IR theory scholars approached empirical situations with "gendered lenses" and began to develop their own research programs. In these programs, second-generation scholars used gender as a category of analysis in their studies of real-world events in global politics, incorporating feminist conceptual critiques into their analyses of specific situations. Second generation feminist scholars also studied the gendered nature of the global economy, foreign policy, and security by examining specific political and economic situations in concrete historical and geographic contexts (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208).

Second-generation IR feminist empirical case studies focused on understudied issues such as military prostitution, domestic service, diplomatic households, and home-based work that is mainly performed by women. Through these studies, feminists demonstrated how vital women are

to a range of key issues, from the conduct of states' foreign policies to the functioning of the global economy. "Since most women speak from the margins of international politics, their lives offer us a perspective outside the state-centric focus of conventional Western international theories and broaden the empirical base upon which we build theories". Feminist scholars suggest that if we put on gendered lenses, we get quite a different view of international politics (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 206).

While talking about gender perspective in foreign policy, it is important to define the meaning of gender. "Social scientists and development experts use two separate terms to designate biologically determined differences between men and women, which are called "sex differences", and those constructed socially, which are called "gender differences". Both define the differences between men and women, but they have very different connotations" (FAO, 2001).

Feminist define gender as a set of socially constructed characteristics describing what men and women ought to be by the characteristics associated with masculinity or femininity. Masculinity is often described with characteristics such as strength, rationality, independence, protector, and public. Femininity is described by the socially constructed characteristics such as weakness, emotionality, relational, protected and private. Individual men and women may not embody all these characteristics. The ideal masculine type (in the West-white and heterosexual) is sometimes referred to as "hegemonic masculinity." The above- mentioned characteristics may vary over time but are relational as they both depend on each other for their meaning and are also unequal (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 206).

In the public sphere these "masculine" characteristics are generally assigned a more positive value than the feminine ones. "The foreign policies of states are often legitimated in terms of hegemonic masculine characteristics. A desirable foreign policy is generally one which strives for power and autonomy and which protects its citizens from outside dangers." For example, since women are associated with the private sphere, it seems natural for women to be caregivers while men's association with the public space makes them "natural breadwinners" (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 206). "The association of men with war and women with peace reinforces gender hierarchies and false dichotomies that contribute to the devaluation of both women and peace" (Sylvester, 1987).

"Integrating the gender perspective in a policy means that equality between women and men, as the overarching principle, should be taken into consideration in all decisions, in each phase of the

policy-making process, by all the actors involved” (European Institute for Gender Equality). It is a strategy for making female as well as male concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and political programmes in order to achieve gender equality. The gender mainstreaming goal is to achieve gender equality (European Institute for Gender Equality).

In order to understand the feminist theoretical perspectives on international relations, it is important to look at their full range and variety. The next typology of theories gives an overview of the IR feminist theories that build on but also go beyond a variety of IR approaches such as liberalism, constructivism, critical theory, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism. IR feminists share an interest in gender equality that they prefer to call emancipation (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208).

## **1.2 IR Feminist Theory**

This following typology of feminist IR approaches illustrate the major goals of feminist IR and suggested that scholars and practitioners of international politics should ask gender questions and be more aware of the gendered implications of global politics. Based on IR feminist approach, scholars should ask to what extent their theories are constructed and whether they are mainly by men and from the lives of men? Practitioners should question how their policies impact women and whether a lack of women’s voices influences their policy choices (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208). Simplified typology includes feminist approaches to IR such as feminist realism, feminist liberalism, feminist constructivism, feminist critical theory, feminist poststructuralism and feminist postcolonialism.

### **Liberal Feminism**

Liberal feminism pays attention to the subordinate position of women in global politics and investigates the causes of their subordination within a positivist framework. Even though liberal feminism challenges the content—though not the epistemological assumptions of conventional IR—it still documents the various aspects of women’s subordination. One of the most important examples is that the liberal feminists investigate particular problems of refugee women like the income inequalities between women and men or disproportionate human rights violations such as trafficking and rape in war (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208).

Feminist liberalism is interested in including women in the legal and social structures of the international arena (Sjoberg, 2018) and they look for women in the institutions and practices of global politics. They observe the presence or absence of women—and the resulting effects. They examine how international policy-making is affected by the inclusion or exclusion of women. Liberal feminists question what a world with more women in positions of power might look like and believe that women’s equality can be achieved by removing legal and other obstacles that have denied women the same rights and opportunities enjoyed by men (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208).

For liberal feminists, gender is used as an explanatory variable in foreign policy analysis. According to Mary Caprioli and Mark Boyer (2001), there is a connection between domestic gender equality and states’ use of violence internationally. According to their measures of gender inequality, the results show that the severity of violence used by the states in international crisis decreases as domestic gender equality increases (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 209).

However, in general the postpositivist IR feminists are critical of liberal feminism, and view measuring gender inequality by using statistical indicators as problematic. Liberal feminists measure the gender inequality with the numbers of women in parliament and the years since women gained the vote. One of the criticisms made by the postpositivists is that the measures mentioned above are inadequate for understanding gender inequality, which is associated with gender role expectations that keep women out of positions of power, consigning them to certain socially accepted roles in public and private spheres. Postpositivists claim that gender inequalities also continue to exist even in societies that have long since achieved equality (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 209).

### **Critical Feminism**

Feminist critical theory explores gender significations in global politics (Sjoberg, 2018) and goes beyond liberal feminists’ use of gender as a variable and explores the ideational and material manifestations of gendered identities and gendered power in global politics. Critical feminist IR scholar Robert Cox (1986) portrays the world in terms of historical structures that are made up of three categories: material conditions, ideas and institutions and interact with the levels of production relations, the state-society complex, and historically defined world orders. While the

ideas are used to legitimate certain institutions, they are the product of human agents, there is thus always the possibility of change (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 209).

Sandra Whitworth, one of these critical theorists and the author of *Feminism and International Relations* (1994) that builds on Cox's framework and claims that understandings about gender depend only partly on the real material conditions of women and men in particular circumstances. Whitworth argues that gender is constituted by the meaning given to that reality, mainly about the ideas that men and women have about their relationship to one another. The effects of these changing understandings can be observed in policies at various times through history (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 209).

### **Constructivist Feminism**

Feminist constructivism focuses on the role of ideas about gender in global politics (Sjoberg, 2018) and emphasizes how ideas of gender shape and are shaped by global politics. One of the examples is Elisabeth Prügl's book "The Global Construction of Gender" (1999), which describes gender as an institution that codifies power at every level of global politics, from the home to the state to the international system. Prügl argues that gender politics pervade world politics, creating a set of linguistically based rules about how states interact with each other and with their own citizens. "Prügl and other constructivist feminists study the process whereby ideas about gender influence global politics as well as the ways that global politics shape ideas about gender" (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 210).

### **Poststructuralist Feminism**

Feminist poststructuralism explores how gendered meanings constitute global politics (Sjoberg, 2018) and focuses on the meaning that is codified in language and claim that the understanding of the reality is mediated through our use of language. Poststructuralists are particularly concerned with the connection between knowledge and power and claim that those who construct meaning and create knowledge gain a great deal of power. From a feminist point of view men are generally seen as knowers and that legitimate knowledge in social science is generally based on knowledge about men's lives in the public sphere—thereby marginalizing women in this sense (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 210).

Poststructuralist feminism is particularly concerned with the linguistic constructions that serve to empower the masculine over the feminine. In international relations, constructions have been important in how we divide the world linguistically and these distinctions have real world consequences. Feminist poststructuralists seek to expose and deconstruct these hierarchies through analysis of texts and their meaning. By deconstructing these hierarchies, it is important to construct a less hierarchical vision of reality (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 211).

In *Manly States* (2001), Charlotte Hooper questions the role of international relations theory and practice in shaping, defining, and legitimating masculinities. Her research shows that gender politics pervades world politics and that gender is a social construction that results from practices that connect arguments at all levels of politics and society—including the international (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 211).

Another milestone in poststructuralist research is Laura Shepherd's "Gender, Violence, and Security: Discourse as Practice" (2008), in which Shepherd investigates United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. She argues that the language of the resolution not only reflects reality but is constitutive of it, continuing to conclude that the resolution's discursive construction has influenced its implementation and determined its failure. One of the great examples is that the resolution is based on gender-based expectations that women are peaceful/passive in the resolution's justifications for including women in peace processes. "Shepherd's discourse-theoretical analysis of Resolution 1325 concludes that a reconceptualization of gendered violence in conjunction with security is necessary to avoid replication of the partial and highly problematic understandings of their relationship in Resolution 1325 and (therefore) in its implementation" (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 211).

### **Postcolonial Feminism**

Some authors have looked into the limitations of feminism and asked just what the value is in adopting a feminist perspective on international relations". One of the critics of Tickner's work is that "feminists themselves are in danger of essentializing the meaning of women when they draw exclusively on experiences of western women" (Sjoberg, 2018). Feminist postcolonialism focuses on the intersection of colonial relations of domination and gender relations (Sjoberg, 2018). "Since Western experiences cannot be used to explain the problems of non-Western states", it is argued that the global application of a feminist approach would have its limitations as gender relations are

not the same everywhere (Fernández, Valdes, 2016). Therefore even if the feminist IR scholars are concerned with global politics, gender analysis must be conducted locally (Fernández, Valdes, 2016).

“Postcolonial scholars argue that, in international relations, constructions of “self” and “other” foster racial and cultural stereotypes that denote the other – in their case ex-colonial subjects-as inferior” (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 212). Postcolonial feminism makes similar claims about the way Western feminists have constructed knowledge about non-Western women. Chandra Mohanty (1988) critiques some Western feminists for treating women as a homogeneous category, arguing that ethnocentric universalism robs women of their historical and political agency. Postcolonial feminists are concerned that Western feminists assume that all women have similar needs, while in fact their realities are very different. Recent work on postcolonial feminist IR includes the writing of Lily Ling and Anna Agathangelou who have analyzed gender subordination and recognized that often these subordinates seek redress within their own cultural context, rather than through some universal understanding of women’s needs (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 212).

### **The Feminist Challenge to Realism**

The study of international relations has been characterized by various perspectives, i.e., ways of perceiving the world. One of the oldest and most prominent perspectives is realism, based on the concept of power, security, military capabilities, and nation states. This theory argues that states are concerned with the balance of power and compete among themselves to gain power at the expense of other states. The need to gain as much power as possible comes mainly from the imperatives of state survival in the international system. According to the theory of realism, great powers, which operate in an anarchic system, are the main actors in world politics. Therefore, security has been defined by the language of force and state interests; even the terminology of security has been dominated by realism (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Feminist realism is interested in gender, structure, and power (Sjoberg, 2018). Because of the lack of inclusion of gender, international relations have been often described as men’s control of power. In the 1980s, a new critical feminist theory emerged in the IR arena. Feminist critical theory explores gender significations in global politics (Sjoberg, 2018). According to mainstream feminists, realism has always exhibited gender bias, allowing only so-called “rational” masculine

influences. Women's ways of perceiving the world and society have been left out of analyses, and this has consequently had severe implications to their security. (Tickner, 1992).

Security is mainly understood within the language of insecurity and threats to the nation state. Even by the liberalist opponents of realism, the idea of an anarchic state system remains unchallenged. International politics is described by Joseph Nye as "anarchic in the sense that there is no higher government." Although for liberalists this will not lead to state aggression, this is checked by international organizations, it is nevertheless an acceptance of nation states as the main threat to security (Sheehan, 2005).

Since foreign and military policy-making has been largely conducted by men and the discipline that analyzes these activities tends more likely to be primarily about men and masculinity. National security continues to be an almost exclusively male domain. Even though most women support what they take to be legitimate calls for state action in the interests of international security, the task of defining, defending, and advancing the security interests of the state has been seen as man's affair. Therefore, while men have been associated with defending the state and advancing its international interests as soldiers and diplomats, women have typically been engaged in the "ordering" and "comforting" roles both in the domestic sphere--as mothers and providers of basic needs—and in the caring professions, as teachers, nurses, and social workers. The role of women with respect to national security has been defined as those who are being protected; women have had little control over the conditions of their protection (Tickner, 1992).

### **1.3 IR Feminist Perspectives on Security**

J. Ann Tickner is one of the main authors in feminist IR and has laid out a foundation for feminist IR in the twenty-first century; many other scholars have built on her work. In her book "Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security" (1992), Tickner draws attention to feminist engagement with security issues (Tickner 1992).

In the 1990s, feminists became to frame their concerns in terms of "security" (Tickner 1992). In the discipline of IR, security is generally defined as national security that is prioritized in many states in high levels of defence spending and favoring warfare over welfare. IR theory realism assumes that states exist in hostile international environment where conflict could break out at any time. In order to achieve states survival, it is essential to maximize its power, strength and

autonomy that is often associated with masculinity. Also, war making is often seen as men's business (Tickner, 2018).

R.W. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as a socially constructed cultural ideal that, while not corresponding to the actual personality of the majority of men, sustains patriarchal authority and legitimizes a patriarchal political and social order. "Socially constructed gender differences are based on socially sanctioned, unequal relationships between men and women that reinforce compliance with men's stated superiority" (Tickner, 1992, p. 6). These stereotypical gender images are visibly apparent in the realm of international politics where the characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity are projected onto the behavior of states whose success as national actors is measured in terms of their power capabilities and capacity for self-help and autonomy (Tickner, 1992, p. 6).

In order to understand IR feminism theory, it is important to define masculinity. Masculinity and international politics are often closely associated both are mainly characterized as "manliness," toughness, courage, power, independence, and physical strength. Manliness is often associated with violence and use of force – a type of behavior that is applauded if exhibited in the name of defending one's country (Tickner, 1992, p 6).

The definition of men and women is historically ascribed to biology. One of the aspects of criticism of gender is the confusion between sex and gender as different feminist approaches have different views on gender relations. IR scholars have often used gender as either a synonym of, or code for, women (Fernández, Valdes, 2016). For feminists, gender does not refer to the biological differences between males and females. Instead, the term is culturally shaped and defined by the characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity. The meaning given to a man or a woman varies across cultures and history. In many cultures gender differences signify relationships of inequality and domination by men (Tickner, 1992, p. 8).

Tickner questions how international relations might look if gender were included as a category of analysis and if women's experiences were part of the subject matter out of which its theories are constructed. Tickner states that until gender hierarchies are eliminated, hierarchies that privilege male characteristics and men's knowledge and experiences and sustain the kind of attitudes toward women in foreign policy, the marginalization of women in matters related to international politics are unlikely to change" (Tickner, 1992).

IR has focuses on the cause and consequences of war rather than the insecurities that people suffer as consequences of war during and after conflict. Often threshold of battle of deaths define war yet civilians suffer for a large proportion of casualties, especially women and children (Tickner 2018).

Feminist scholarship is using gender lens on addressing peace and security. Feminist have challenged core concepts in IR and the study of war and have highlighted women's role in peacemaking, war-fighting, and the in-between for decades. Feminist have investigated the degree to which women are made insecure during and after war by virtue of being women. Mainly the tasks associated with caring for children, the wounded, the sick and the elderly go up during the war and usually women take up these responsibilities. Women suffer to find resources to take care for their families during the conflict and after fighting stops (Tickner 2018).

Feminist question the essentialist association of women, peace and security, offer multilevel, multidimensional definition of security and advocate seeing women as agents in all aspects of peace building and peacemaking. For feminist involving women as security providers and peace builders is vital in order security for the whole society (Tickner, 2018).

IR feminist have noted that security and peace are gendered concepts as security has been often associated with the strong from of militarized masculinity and peace with femininity referring to women that are viewed as victims who need protection (Tickner 2018). Tickner argues that women have rarely been portrayed as actors on the stage of international politics, adding that there is a need to use a more inclusive approach to the way we think about international politics and how women shape foreign policy (Wibben, 2011, p. 5). Feminist claim that "true security cannot be achieved until unequal power structures of gender, race, and class are eliminated or at least diminished" (Tickner 1992).

Tickner highlights that national security should be the highest good and she stated that "security means nothing if it was built on other's insecurity". Tickner also stresses the need to examine power as it shapes gendered hierarchies (Wibben, 2011, p. 5). Tickner states that there is an existing belief that military and foreign policy are the arenas of policy-making that are least appropriate for women. Strength, power, autonomy, independence, and rationality, all typically associated with men and masculinity, are characteristics we most value in those to whom we entrust the conduct of our foreign policy and the defense of our national interests (Tickner, 1992).

By ignoring women's experiences contributes to their exclusion and to a process of self-selection that results in the over-representation of men in the foreign policy and in the academic field of international relations. Because of the marginalization of women in the area of foreign policy-making, stereotypes have emerged suggesting that international politics is a gendered activity in the modern state system. Since foreign and military policy-making has been largely conducted by men, the discipline that analyzes these activities is bound to be primarily about men and masculinity (Tickner, 1992, p. 5).

#### **1.4 IR Feminist Perspectives on Gendered Insecurities**

Feminists use a multidimensional definition of security that is not tied to conventional notions of national security. IR feminist scholarship has defined, analyzed and helped to understand the structural gendered insecurities that we all face and obstacles achieving peace and social justice (Tickner, 2018).

Tickner states that it is important to look at the flip side of "security" and pay attention to the insecurity. She characterizes insecurity to be gendered and claims that "women are more likely to be in insecure positions in global politics, and that women's insecurity is often shaped by negative treatment because of their gender" (Sjoberg, 2018).

Gendered structures of inequality have effects on women's physical, economic, and economical insecurities that various feminist scholars in IR have been analyzing and explaining these structures using a gendered lens. Women face multiple insecurities that are variously situated by race, class and geographic location (Tickner, 2018).

Tickner has provided some evidence of insecurities that show how women are situated across a wide variety of security issues. Tickner gives the examples that show how associations with femininity signify devalorization in many security discourses. These insights have been used, built on (Sjoberg, 2018) by IR feminist scholars.

Following examples are divided into thematic categories and they illustrate various gendered insecurities.

## **Full enjoyment of human rights**

“Feminists believe that real security or positive peace cannot be achieved without gender justice and the empowerment of women” (Tickner, 2018). Feminists have pointed out that the guns, bombs, and fists are not the only threats to women’s security. More likely threats to women’s security comes from members of their own households or representatives of their own states and from inadequate access to nutrition, health care, and birth control (Sjoberg, 2018). Exposing the myth of masculine protectors and feminized victims could be achieved through empowerment of all individuals, both women and men, in all their various roles as security providers (Tickner, 2018).

## **Physical, psychological and sexual violence**

United Nations has recognized the issue of rape in war and sexual and gender-based violence being a serious problem. In 1990, beginning of the Bosnian wars it was estimated that at least twenty thousand women were raped. In ethnic wars rape is used to undermine the identity of entire community and therefore rape is not just accident but part of military strategy. Women’s physical security is threatened more generally in militarized societies (Tickner, 2018).

Feminist have drawn the attention to the fact that war do not end when the fighting stops. Studies have shown that after conflict is over the death rate of women is higher than men. The result of war is usually large number of refugees. Most often women and children make up almost 70 percent pf the refugee population, yet refugee camps are often run by male workers. In refugee camps women often have no control over resources like food and health services (Tickner, 2018).

On of the example how individuals’ security was compromised in the name of national security. Feminist have also pointed out that also insecurities of women exist due the presence of militaries and not because of actual warfare. Kathrine Moon carried out research about prostitution around US military bases in South Korea in 1970-s. In that case prostitution camps were organized by Korean government aimed at inducing the US military to stay in Korea. Prostitution became a matter of high security politics and often the health of the sex workers was monitored as national security concern. Women’s security was sacrificed for the security of the state (Tickner, 2018).

## **Participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding**

Feminist have drawn attention to how global politics that marginalize women (Sjoberg, 2018). The rationale for war has been centered on the myth that the vulnerable people, including women and children need protection. Often military recruitment uses the motivator for the young male fighters the need to protect “women and children”. Judith Stiehm (1983) has claimed that the concept of protection is needed to justify the military violence. Further investigation on the myth that explains who protector is and who is protected shows the real victims of violence. The contradiction on this myth is that if men are the protectors, in that case they are protecting women from other men. The myth of protections also shows the women are engaged in the provision of security in multiple ways (Tickner, 2018).

Men have been as agents in the provision of national security and women have been associated with notion of peace that lacks agency. It is often claimed that women are peaceful than men and less prone to conflict. “Feminist scholars have suggested that in male dominated societies the association of women with peace reinforces gender hierarchies and false dichotomies that contribute to the devaluation of both women and peace”. Women have constituted the majority of peace activists that draw on maternal imagery. Women continue to play central role in disarmament campaigns that often draw on maternal imagery to make their case. There are projects like Reach Critical Will (Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom) that aim to include women in disarmament discussions and investigate the gendered aspects of impact of weapons and disarmament processes (Tickner, 2018).

Feminist believe that the use of maternalism that celebrates women’s maternal and peaceful roles denies women’s agency. Not all women are mothers and not all women are peaceful. Feminist have used maternalism strategically as important tool to pursue a dynamic notion of peace strongly linked to social justice. “Real peace can not be achieved without women’s equality” (Tickner, 2018).

Sara Ruddick (1989) claims that the idea of maternal peace rests on the myth that mothers are peacemakers and victims that have no power. The history shows that women have supported men’s wars and some mothers have been the mothers. Regarding to Ruddick, war is seen as women’s enemy, because it interrupts caregiving. Caregiving is traditionally associated with assigned to women. Ruddick claims that thinking about peace arises from distinctive ways of doing care work but also men are capable doing it. “Peace-building and nonviolence require courage, struggle, and

resistance, and a refusal to accept victimization, traits we see in women activists in conflict zones today (Tickner, 2018).

### **Economic security**

Laura Sjoberg has been writing on the wars in Iraq and the devastation caused by the sanctions in the 1990s. In Iraq who's lives were affected the most by the sanctions were poor, sick, elderly and women who mostly took care of the vulnerable. During the war men are often killed and women often become the sole provider for the whole family. Sanctions are mainly aimed to hardship governments, but regular people suffer the most and mainly women. Economic sanctions have disproportionately negative effects on women since they are socioeconomically and politically vulnerable. In today's wars women's lives are affected the most as men often disappear or are killed that leaves women to be providers for the family (Tickner, 2018).

To feminist, security is not only defined in terms of physical security but also economic security. Women are often disproportionately located at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale even though most women undertake about three times more unpaid work than men. Women's engaged in paid labour are often in jobs that are stereotypically associated with "feminine" skills and are low-paying. Frequently women earn less than men for the same kind of work. Majority of women work outside the home but because the roles women are associated with caregiver, housewife and mother has become institutionalized and affects the choice of paid work available to them, which is decreasing women's economic security and autonomy (Tickner, 2018).

### **Environmental Security**

Everyone's security is threatened by multiple environmental insecurities, but the poor suffer the most immediate dangers. Gendered effects of environmental degradation have strong effects on women's environmental insecurities. "Since women are the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent on natural resources for their livelihood, women are more vulnerable to the natural hazards associated with climate change, such as floods, landslides, and hurricanes". The rural women are gatherers of firewood and fuel, provide clean drinking water and energy for the household. "Environmental damage has severe impacts on women's reproductive system and toxicity from dangerous chemicals and waste dumps frequently are situated in poor communities". In the positive side, house hold responsibilities place women to the position of being the agents

for the change. Their everyday knowledge can be used in climate change mitigation and disaster relief (Tickner, 2018).

## **2. Research Design**

The research design refers to the overall strategy that is selected to integrate the various components of the study in a articulate and logical way. The overall strategy ensures the effective addressal of the research problem, it constitutes the design for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The research designs vary on depending on the type of the design. There is a wide selection of research designs available, for instance, within social science there exists action research design, case study design, casual design, cohort design, cross-sectional design and many more (USC Libraries).

Whilst there is no unique feminist empirical method, there are perspectives on methodology that are distinctly feminist. Tickner's approach opens the way for a broad diversity of feminist contributions to international relations that are question driven, but not dependent on one methodology or method (Tickner 2006, 9). Tickner further argues that there are no uniquely feminist research methods. Feminists have drawn upon a diverse spectrum of methods, including ethnography, statistical research, survey research, cross-cultural research, philosophical argument, discourse analysis and case studies. "What makes feminist research unique is a distinctive methodological perspective or framework which fundamentally challenges the often unseen androcentric or masculine biases in the way that knowledge has traditionally been constructed in all the disciplines" (Tickner 2006, 22).

Amongst the previously mentioned research design types, the case study design best conforms with the criteria used to study feminist foreign policy. "A case study is an in-depth study of a particular research problem rather than a sweeping statistical survey or comprehensive comparative inquiry. It is often used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one or a few easily researchable examples" (USC Libraries). It is a useful design where not much is known about an issue or phenomenon and is suitable for determining whether a specific theory and model actually applies to circumstances/conditions in the real world (USC Libraries).

The case study design is the optimal model for this thesis as it both examines feminist foreign policy in compliance with the properties identified by IR feminist security theory and investigates

how this new phenomenon applies in reality. Therefore, feminist foreign policy has been selected to be “the case” in this thesis.

A case study is one which investigates various phenomena “to answer specific research questions (that may be fairly loose to begin with) and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, evidence which is there in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to get the best possible answers to the research questions”. A key characteristic of case study research is the use of multiple sources of evidence, each with its individual strengths and weaknesses, as no single type of evidential source is likely to be sufficient (or adequately valid) by itself (Gillham, 2010, 1).

The qualitative research is conducted for this thesis because the qualitative method investigates the connection between evidence and theory. Therefore, as the evidence (data) is collected, “the 'facts' - imperfect though they may be” (Gillham, 2010, 12) will be further explained by theory. Quantitative method is not appropriate for this thesis as this method is subject to statistics and involves counting and measuring (Gillham, 2010, 2) and therefore doesn't fulfil in this thesis presented research question.

In this thesis the evidence (data which is restricted to policy documents and articles or statements where feminist foreign policy is explained) to be primary in my research in order to avoid the researcher's common mistake of attempting to “cram their data into an unsuitable theoretical framework” (Gillham, 2010, 12). Consequently, I am using the deductive approach and will test all assertions using IR feminist theories and compare them with the evidential characteristics of feminist foreign policy explained within in source articles and statements. A theory (hypothesis) is tested in a case through which it is either validated or falsified, and then a generalisation can be made from this hypothesis which may indicate the validity of this theory. The hypothesis in my research is that Sweden's feminist foreign policy contains IR feminist security theory characteristics in their foreign policy.

“Discourse theocratizing crosses over and mixes divisions between poststructuralist, post-modernists and some feminists and social constructivists” (Milliken, 1999, 225). For Foucault, discourse is defined as a “group of statements which provides a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment ... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But since all social practices

entail meaning and measuring shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have discursive aspect (Hall, 1992, 201).

Foucault's theory of discourse explains that “One important point about this notion of discourse is that it is not based on the conventional distinction between thought and action, language and practice. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But it is itself produced by a practice: "discursive practice" - the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect. So, discourse enters into and influences all social practices. Foucault would argue that the discourse of the West about the Rest was deeply implicated in practice - i.e. in how the West behaved towards the Rest” (Hall, 1992, 201).

The main points of the Foucault's theory of discourse are the following:

“Anyone deploying a discourse must position themselves as if they were the subject of the discourse. Foucault puts it, "To describe a ... statement does not consist in analysing the relations between the author and what he [sic] says ... ; but in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it [the statement]" (Foucault, 1972, pp. 95-6).” (Hall, 1992, 202).

Discourses are not closed systems. A discourse draws on elements in other discourses, binding them into its own network of meanings. The the discourse draws on the earlier discourses, altering or translating its meaning. Traces of past discourses remain embedded (Hall, 1992, 202).

“The statements within a discursive formation need not all be the same. But the relationships and differences between them must be regular and systematic, not random. Foucault calls this a "system of dispersion": "Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever ... one can define a regularity ... [then] we will say ... that we are dealing with a discursive formation" (Foucault, 1972, p. 38)” (Hall, 1992, 202).

The aim of the analysis is to examine whether, and to what extent, the discourse of the feminist foreign policy interrelates in practice with the IR feminist security theory. In order to measure the nature and scale of the interaction between feminist foreign policy and feminist security theory, an

entirely feminist foreign policy discourse on security and a Swedish feminist foreign policy discourse on security are developed for this thesis.

An entirely feminist foreign policy discourse contains characteristics of IR feminist theory yet only considers the foreign policy aspects of them. An entirely feminist foreign policy characteristics are described in the theory chapter.

A Swedish feminist foreign policy discourse contains examples of feminist foreign policy in practice within Sweden, in terms of both actions and decisions. This ideal type will be further used in the analysis to critique and measure whether and to what extent Sweden's feminist foreign policy discourse matches with entirely feminist foreign policy discourse.

In the theory chapter named characteristics are considered as ideal features that should be part of an ideal type of feminist foreign policy perspective (entirely feminist foreign policy). The lack or inclusion of IR security theory characteristics in feminist foreign policy act as a measure to evaluate Sweden's feminist foreign policy perspectives on security. The evaluation of the policy will show to what extent has Sweden's implemented IR feminist security theory characteristics in their feminist foreign policy and when perspectives on security is present or absent in feminist foreign policy? The results of the analysis can help to identify if Sweden's feminist foreign policy perspective on security can be considered feminist according to the properties identified by IR feminist security theory?

The data set for the content analysis is limited to the empirical data set of statements where foreign policy is explained in 2014-2018. The chosen data reflects the actual practice of feminist foreign policy in Sweden. Because foreign policy analysis is interrelated with diplomacy, the primary sources consist of statements, speeches and articles of the policy makers or critical articles which focus on explaining the practical side of feminist foreign policy. The use of official policy papers will be minimal in this thesis as official documents often demonstrate the intention of the policy that may not interact with evolving changes in global politics. The analysis of the actual practice and real implementation can provide a reliable basis for determining feminist foreign policy, and

consequently aid the development of policy which could have potential application across the world.

### **3. Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy**

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the feminist foreign policy objectives and achievements in the period 2014-2018 that are described in the Swedish Government's official documents. The purpose of the overview is to gather all the data that describes the objectives and focus areas for each year of the implementation of the feminist foreign policy and to evaluate what the intention and the meaning attributed to the feminist foreign policy are.

The first part of this chapter evaluates the objectives of the feminist foreign policy because the objectives describe the intention of the feminist foreign policy's stance. The government documents on the Foreign Service Action Plan for Feminist Foreign Policy 2015-2018 including the focus areas for 2016, 2017 and indicative measures for 2018 are further reviewed and analyzed. In the second part of this chapter, the practical implementation and achievements of the feminist foreign policy will be evaluated based on the Swedish Government's documents: "Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Examples from Three Years of Implementation" (2017) and "Handbook of Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy" (2018). The final section of this chapter concludes the feminist foreign policy's stance and looks into other similar feminist foreign policies' practices that are implemented by other countries to give a better understanding of the real meaning of a feminist foreign policy.

"Foreign policy contains general objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states" (Encyclopaedia Britannica). "The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behaviour of other states, or plans to advance specific geopolitical designs" (Encyclopaedia Britannica). One of the most prominent foreign policy tools is diplomacy which can manifest war, alliances and international trade. The primacy of geography, external threats and domestic factors shape foreign policy (Encyclopaedia Britannica) and therefore the Swedish position within the group of Nordic countries needs further investigation.

The definition of the Nordic countries is consistent with what is used by the Nordic Council of Ministers and contain five countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as the Faroe Islands and Greenland (both part of the Kingdom of Denmark), and Åland that is part of the Republic of Finland (Nordic Council, 2018).

The Nordic countries are diverse group of countries and they differ primarily in their size, formal strategic orientation and their different relationship with European Union (EU). For example, Iceland's population is one third of a million and Sweden's population approaching ten million (Statistics Sweden, 2018). Some Nordic countries belonging to EU and others to NATO and each have different relationship with these organizations thought alignment or partnership. For example, Denmark, Iceland and Norway are members of NATO while Sweden and Finland are military non-allies (NATO, 2018). Denmark, Finland and Sweden are members of EU whilst Iceland and Norway are not, but they are part of European Economic Area (European Union, 2018).

Sweden and Finland have been leaders among the Nordic nations in promoting women's rights. In 1906, Finland was among the first nation in the world to grant the vote to women. In the 1930s, the ascendance of the Swedish Social Democrats ushered in an era of progressive social policies. This desire for equality extended to equal representation within the national legislature which was demonstrated by the 1948 election campaign slogan in Sweden "Without women, no democratic governance" (Ingebritsen 2006, 10).

Nordic countries are defined by Christine Ingebritsen as a group of countries with a distinct role in international society to consistently provide standards. Defined by Ingebritsen, there are four ways that Nordic counties have influenced World politics. Firstly, Nordic counties have exerted the power of unilateralism, mainly because (for a small states) it is difficult to act independently in World politics. Secondly, Nordic countries have exerted the authority through a partnership agreement with other members of the international community. Thirdly, Nordic countries have gained influence through alignment with other governments, in essence of multilateralism. This means that members of the international system have promoted their views and protected their interests by teaming up with others (Ingebritsen 2006, 3).

Through multilateralism, since 1950 the Nordic Council has provided a platform for Nordic intergovernmental cooperation, and further provided a forum for collective action in world politics and influencing the global political agenda. Nordic countries have been successful in influencing

international politics by focusing all the resources on a particular issue or problem, with the intent of altering international policy (Ingebritsen 2006, 3).

Swedish feminist foreign policy fits to the all the four characteristics of described by the Ingebritsen model of influence within international society and provides new norms and standards. In relation to Ingebritsen in the capacity mentioned above, Sweden has emerged as a “moral superpower by continuously and consistently advocating compliance with global standards of conduct and working by develop, refine, and maintain principles of mutual understanding in world politics” (Ingebritsen 2006, 4).

Sweden’s feminist foreign policy is one of the great examples of the intent of influencing the World politics with feminist agenda. Sweden’s ambitions of influencing the world are clearly worded in the Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy action plan 2018 where there is stated that “Global gender equality is still a vision – not a reality” and further is specified that Sweden’s intent to make the vison reality (Government of Sweden, 2018d).

### **3.1 Sweden’s National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security**

Sweden’s security policy remains firmly in place and their non-participation in military alliances serves them well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. “It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation, particularly with Finland, and credible national defence capabilities” (Government of Sweden).

Sweden has not experienced a direct conflict since 1814 and has been throughout history an international actor for peace, democracy and human rights. In Sweden, the women's rights movement has been well-established for over a century in order to promote peace and conflict resolution. Sweden often considers itself to be at the forefront of supporting the struggle of female participation in conflict management and peace building. Throughout their history women’s rights were recognized. Women’s participation in peace and security policy goes further than the adoption of the national action plan (NAP) for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and stretches into Sweden’s general national policies (Schabbauer, 2017, p. 87).

Sweden supports the UNSCR 1325, that recognizes the importance of the female role in ensuring peace and security and stresses the disproportionate effects that conflicts have on women. The

resolution urges United Nations (UN) member states to ensure that there is increased representation for women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and in all mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts (United Nations, 2000).

The implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its agenda for women, peace and security guides Swedish international contribution to peace-building and development. This strategy helps to increase operational effectiveness in peacekeeping missions and conflict management (Schabbauer, 2017, p. 87). Since 2006, Sweden has implemented three NAP-s for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325. Sweden's latest NAP is conducted for the period of 2016-2020 (Government of Sweden, 2017f).

The research on NAP-s show that Sweden is not the only country that has been advancing inclusion of women. Peace Women list 79 UN member countries (40% of all UN member states) that have adopted a NAP on support of UNSCR 1325. The data of the NAP-s show the progress, yet conclude that in 2019 there are 79 NAPs adopted to date and only 34 NAPs (43%) include some allocated budget for implementation. Event though 24 NAPs (30%) include references to disarmament and provide specific actions to disarm society and control the illicit trade of small arms there is lack of tracking such actions. Only 57 NAPs (72%) include description of monitoring and evaluation of the plan (Peace Women, 2019).

Further investigation on national action plans leads to the conclusion that national action plans are not very effective. A contents analysis of a study that looked 40 national action plans and their implementation showed the major challenges in the implementation phase. Pasquinelli and Prentice have noted that is largely because provision is often lacks the basic elements that are needed to ensure effective actions are taken. The successful implementation of a national action plan requires a dedicated budget, sufficient commitment from the institutions responsible for implementing the plan, concrete measures for achieving goals, clear lines of responsibility, and adequate monitoring mechanisms (Pasquinelli, Prentice, 2013).

Similarly to Pasquinelli and Prentice study, the Sweden's NAP for 2016-2020 assessed countries' previous NAP and concluded that it had a large number of sub-objectives and detailed activities but lacked a clear allocation of responsibilities on who was expected to implement, report and follow up activities. As the Sweden NAP lacked on clear lines of responsibility mentioned in

Pasquinelli and Prentic study, it reduced the relevance of the previous Sweden's NAP on women, peace and security (Government of Sweden, 2017f).

Sweden's efforts towards advancing peace, security and decade's worth of feminist work led to the inclusion of the women, peace and security agenda within Sweden's foreign policy objectives (Government of Sweden, 2016c). In 2014, the government of Sweden articulated a feminist foreign policy which was outlined in the Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015-2018 (Government of Sweden). Whilst Sweden's feminist foreign policy does not specifically mention resolution 1325, it clearly relates to and includes the women, peace and security agenda (Schabbauer, 2017, p. 87).

In Sweden's case, the feminist foreign policy has lifted the women, peace and security agenda into the arena of foreign policy and now it is part of the regular discourse within foreign policy discussion. The specific commitments are laid out in its yearly plan and are worded in the four-year policy in more general terms (Schabbauer, 2017, p. 87). As Sweden already implements the women, peace and security agenda, it raises the question why the country needs the feminist foreign policy if the similar feminist outcome could be achieved through the adoption of NAP on women peace and security?

Sweden's feminist foreign policy definitely needs further investigation and makes the perfect case to study the benefits of adding gender perspectives to a countries' foreign policy agenda and whether it is a beneficial and better strategy for advancing the women, peace and security agenda than adopting the national action plans. Does including the women, peace and security agenda in the foreign policy could be a better tool and if it is effective, other courtiers could follow the Swedish model.

### **3.2 Implementation of the Feminist Foreign Policy in 2014**

Sweden was the first country in the world to form a feminist government with the unique agenda of pursuing a feminist foreign policy. The feminist government stated that "women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives because it is a human right and a matter of democracy and justice" (Government of Sweden).

The concept of a feminist foreign policy was advocated by Sweden's Social Democratic-Green Party government in 2014. At that time Wallström was then the newly appointed foreign minister

in the new coalition government and declared that Sweden would be the first country ever to conduct such a policy (Rothschid, 2018).

At the time of the announcement of the Swedish feminist foreign policy, the concept was yet not defined and therefore number of civil society actors were invited to work on the agenda of the feminist foreign policy that resulted with action plan for feminist foreign policy, where the six long-term objectives were laid out for the years 2015-2018. Each year the government sets out different focus areas within six broad focus areas (Rothschid, 2018).

The aim of the feminist policy is to contribute to the gender equality to provide the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls. “Ensuring that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights is both an obligation within the framework of our international commitments, and a prerequisite for reaching Sweden’s broader foreign policy goals on peace, and security and sustainable development” (Government of Sweden, 2018). Swedish Foreign Service claims that just in three years the intensive implementation of new type of policy had great results at multilateral, regional and bilateral level (Government of Sweden, 2016, c).

The feminist government has made the gender equality central to the Government's priorities including decision-making and resource allocation. The feminist government hopes that gender equality brings the solutions to society’s challenges, in terms of both justice and economic development. The feminist government hopes to implement the feminist policy through gender mainstreaming and including responsive budgeting as an important component (Government of Sweden, 2018).

### **First ever feminist foreign policy?**

World first self-defined feminist government was formed in Sweden with the ambitious goal of making Sweden the first state ever publicly to adopt a feminist foreign policy. Sweden declared to become “the strongest voice for gender equality and full employment of human rights for all women and girls”. Launching a feminist foreign policy seemed a radical policy change, that included the UNSCR 1325 agenda on women, peace, and security as a normative framework for foreign and security policies (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

In 2014, “feminist foreign policy” seemed such a new and radical concept however the further research shows that similar feminist foreign policies have been articulated before. For example, Hillary Clinton, former United States (US) Secretary of State (2009-2013), similarly articulated a foreign policy in which subjugation of women was considered a security threat to the US. The protection and empowerment of women and girls were the key to the foreign policy and security of the United States (Hudson and Eason, 2018).

Clinton’s foreign policy was designed to place diplomacy and development planning on a same level with defense planning (Hudson and Eason, 2018). Clinton declared that American international development policy needed to further the empowerment of women in developing countries. Clinton framed the status of women as a matter of national security and played an important role in pushing for the unanimous endorsement of Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009) on sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

US foreign policy stated that “the protection and empowerment of women and girls is key to the foreign policy and security policy of the United States”. Women were placed at the centre of US diplomacy and development efforts, where women were not only beneficiaries but also the agents of peace, reconciliation, development, growth, and stability (Hudson and Eason, 2018).

United States foreign policy under Hillary Clinton and the Sweden’s feminist foreign policy under Margot Wallström seems to have some similarities. Both policies place women and girls at the centre of foreign policy and have similar objectives on “feminist foreign policy”.

US foreign policy under Clinton didn’t name its foreign policy differently but Sweden called it to be feminist foreign policy. These two countries seem to have similar view on feminist foreign policy, yet countries have a very different position in the world to make a comparison. US is a very powerful country that is often drawn into conflict and Sweden is an international norm leader (Hudson and Eason, 2018).

The women, peace and security normative commitment has been reflected in the foreign policy orientation of several other countries as Australia, Great Britain, and Canada. Australia’s first ever

female foreign minister Julie Bishop actively promoted and profiled women, peace and security issues, in particular by pushing for gender mainstreaming within various international forums. Former British foreign minister William Hague galvanized international attention for his quest to end sexual violence in conflict (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). Canada adopted Feminist International Assistance Policy that claims to be based on a truly feminist approach that brings benefits for all people. Feminist International Assistance Policy “supports the economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls, and makes gender equality a priority”(Government of Canada).

### **New radical policy for Sweden?**

It has been questioned what makes feminist foreign policy so different from previous efforts. What kinds of initiatives are implemented under the banner of a “feminist foreign policy” that are so different from previous Swedish government’s efforts to push globally for women’s and girls’ rights (Rothschid, 2018)?

In 2016 Katarina Tracz, director of the Stockholm Free World Forum (a leading foreign policy think tank) has described the feminist foreign policy as essentially “classical Swedish foreign policy”. She explains that the new type of foreign policy has been very successfully launched and pushed as something new and revolutionary even though, in fact is not (Rothschid, 2018) since much of the content has existed since ancient times (Kleberg, 2016).

In an essay entitled “Feminist Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice” Robert Egnell, a professor at the Swedish Defence University, compared a section of Wallström’s 2015 Foreign Policy Statement with a corresponding section in a 2013 statement from Sweden’s previous center-right government that was delivered by then-foreign minister Carl Bildt. The sections that he compared both referred to Sweden’s global role and self-defined responsibility to play an active part in the international community. Egnell demonstrated that this ideal has been place since the end of the Second World War. Moreover, both statements mention gender equality as key part of the ideal. Therefore, Egnell argues that the term “feminist foreign policy” is not a new radical turn for Sweden but is instead the expansion of an existing approach. The only difference is that the 2015 statement went further than previous ones, describing the meaning of the new term for foreign policy (Rothschid, 2018).

Wallström has stated that the purpose of a feminist foreign policy “is to counteract discrimination of women, to improve women’s conditions, and to contribute to peace and development ... A feminist foreign policy should permeate the work of the entire Swedish foreign service and the aim is to strengthen women’s rights, to increase women’s access to resources, and to expand women’s representation” (Rothschid, 2018).

Egnell concluded that [a]part “from the odd choice of words – not least the fact that the word “feminism” makes its entry here – the declarations are almost identical in their corresponding sections” (Rothschid, 2018).

Professor Robert Egnell explains that to foreign-policy traditionalists, “a feminist perspective would be idealistic, naïve - and potentially even dangerous – in the realpolitik power struggles between nations” (Nordberg, 2015). In diplomacy, a sphere in which words are often very carefully chosen in order to not offend, the term “feminism” is absent, as it is often being received as inflammatory and directed against men. As a respond to this issue Wallström has advised that if the term is bothersome, feminism can be called gender equality. She nevertheless finds “feminism” to be a good term as “it’s about standing against the systematic and global subordination of women” (Nordberg, 2015).

Wallström has embraced the concept of “smart power,” the term articulated by the political scientist Joseph Nye. The concept describes that when a country invests in solving global-scale problems, such as health and economic development, it will benefit in the end (Nordberg, 2015).

Wallström has in her statement given attention to global gender inequality and reinforced Sweden’s commitment to redressing imbalances. Wallström declared that “throughout the world, women are neglected in terms of resources, representation and rights. This is the simple reason why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy – with full force, around the world” (Rothschid, 2018).

The new normative direction in Swedish foreign policy is closely associated with Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström. Prior to assuming her current position, she was an advocate of gender justice within the work of the United Nations and held the position of the first-ever UN Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

Wallström has explained that feminist foreign policy is a toolbox that consists of three Rs: Representation, Rights, and Reallocation. The fourth R in the toolbox may be reality check or research – that is, drawing upon empirical research and policy reports to formulate further foreign policy and inform continued practice. Therefore, through these tools, “Sweden seeks to promote women’s representation and particularly in politics in general and in peace processes in particular to advocate women’s rights as human rights, including women’s protection from sexual and gender-based violence and to work toward a more gender-sensitive and equitable distribution of global income and natural resources” (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

### **3.3 Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy Objectives for 2015-2018**

Swedish Foreign Service created a feminist foreign policy action plan that supports the gender equality and all women’s and girl’s full enjoyment of human rights (Handbook, 2018 p 19).

Feminist foreign policy action plan 2015-2018 includes six objectives that are applied to the Foreign Service’s external work. The seventh objective is called “supporting and manifesting the implementation of the policy”, added in 2017 to be applied to the Foreign Service’s internal work.

Sweden’s Feminist Foreign policy specify 6 objectives in the 2015-2018 action plan:

1. full enjoyment of human rights;
2. freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence;
3. participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding;
4. political participation and influence in all areas of society;
5. economic rights and empowerment;
6. sexual and reproductive health and rights (Handbook, 2018 p 19).

In national level, feminist foreign policy contributes to the Government’s gender equality work and is guided by four underlying objectives such as: an even distribution of power and influence, economic equality, an even division of unpaid housework and care work, and an end to men’s violence against women (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

The action plan sets out the course of the feminist agenda focus areas for each year and specifies the steps to be taken to enhance the visibility of women as actors and push for women’s rights

(Government of Sweden, 2016a). The action plan long-term goals are reviewed and updated annually (Handbook, 2018 p 19). The action plan states that the chosen objectives match to the board challenges and cover the entire global agenda in order to promote the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including by fighting all forms of violence and discrimination that limit their freedom of action (Government of Sweden, 2015a).

Other national policies that support feminist foreign policy are Sweden's Policy for Global Development and the national action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

### **Sweden's feminist foreign policy action plan focus areas for 2016**

The feminist foreign policy action plan supports the long-term objectives and each year has focus on certain goals that are called focus areas (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

Focus areas for 2016:

1. strengthen the human rights of women and girls in humanitarian settings;
2. combat gender-based and sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations and impunity for such crimes;
3. promote the participation of women as actors in peace processes and peace support operations;
4. promote the participation of women and girls as actors for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development;
5. strengthen the economic empowerment of women and girls and their access to economic resources, including through productive employment and decent work;
6. strengthen the sexual and reproductive rights of girls and young people (Government of Sweden, 2016, a).

### **Sweden's feminist foreign policy action plan focus areas for 2017**

The Swedish Foreign Service announced that within three years, the intensive implementation process made its mark at multilateral, regional and bilateral level in relation to all the objectives that were listed in the feminist foreign policy action plan (Government of Sweden, 2016c).

In addition to the new set of focus areas for 2017, work on the focus areas for 2016 was continued, as other processes that contribute to the objectives for 2015-2018. The internal goal set for Foreign Service includes support and manifestation of the feminist foreign policy (Government of Sweden, 2016, c).

Focus areas for 2017:

1. Strengthening the human rights of women and girls who are refugees or migrants;
2. Combating violence against women and girls in close relationships;
3. Promoting the role of women and girls in preventing conflict;
4. Promoting women's and girls' participation as a strategy against the shrinking democratic space and the double vulnerability of women and girls;
5. Strengthening women's and girls' economic empowerment and influence, including by working towards non-discriminatory legislation;
6. Intensifying work for the sexual and reproductive rights of all people (Government of Sweden, 2016c).

### **Sweden's feminist foreign policy action plan focus areas for 2018**

The action plan states that in 2018 work will continue in the areas that have been in focus in 2016–2017 and towards the overarching objectives. The Foreign Service's internal work continues to support and manifesting the implementation of feminist foreign policy (Government of Sweden, 2018d).

Focus areas for 2018:

1. women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights;
2. women's and girls' freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence;
3. promote women's and girls' participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding;
4. women's and girls' political participation and influence in all areas of society;
5. women's and girls' economic rights and empowerment;
6. women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (Government of Sweden, 2018d).

### **3.4 Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Implementation Method**

Sweden's feminist foreign policy implementation is based on method that requires the Foreign Service to incorporate a gender equality perspective through "three Rs": rights, representation and resources. A fourth 'R' is all about reality check to ensure that action taken is based on analysis (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

The Swedish Government action plan further explains the method used by the Foreign Service and the meaning given to each "R":

1. Rights - promotion of "the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action";
2. Representation - promotion of "women's participation and influence in decision making at all levels and in all areas, and seek dialogue with women representatives at all levels, including in civil society";
3. Resources - ensuring "that resources are allocated to promote gender equality and equal opportunities for all women and girls to enjoy human rights" and promotion of "targeted measures for different target groups" (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

### **3.5 Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Achievements 2014-2018**

Feminist foreign policy was launched by the Swedish Government in October 2014 (Government of Sweden, 2016c). The feminist foreign policy action plan 2015-2018 describes the Sweden's feminist foreign policy efforts and achievements in 2014-2015.

Sweden's achievements in international level were following:

1. Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has examined the gender equality efforts in the missions abroad in each mission's context;
2. The Swedish embassies abroad in many countries have supported and implementing feminist foreign policy agenda in practice;
3. Foreign Service has produced an internal action plan to implement feminist foreign policy;
4. Foreign Service has produced an internal action plan based on these proposals;
5. MFA has produced information material on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SHRH) (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

In national level, as part on the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, Sweden held consultations with actors in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Palestine and a gender perspective was included into all new development cooperation strategies. Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) that belongs under MFA and the Folke Bernadotte Academy gender mainstreamed all its activities. The Swedish women's mediation network was established in 2015(Government of Sweden, 2016a).

Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs has introduced the foreign policy in all her major speeches including the Statement of Foreign Policy in February 2015, the key policy speech at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in June 2015, on Femdefenders in November 2014, at the US Institute of Peace in January 2015 and at the University of Helsinki in March 2015 (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

After three years of leading feminist foreign policy, Sweden's government has described in the official reports the accomplishments of feminist foreign policy achievements. Swedish Foreign Service has published the document "Sweden's feminist foreign policy Examples from three years of implementation" where accomplishments at multilateral, regional and bilateral level, and in relation to all the six objectives laid out in the action plan (Government of Sweden, 2018).

In the period of 2015-2018 Sweden's feminist foreign policy accomplishments to six objectives were following.

### **Full enjoyment of human rights**

In the arena of human rights, Sweden used a number of different platforms, roles and tools to promote the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls globally. One of the examples that they include is that Sweden was promoting the "Swedish legislation on prohibiting the purchase of sexual services, publishing 135 country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, increasing the focus of development cooperation on gender equality, including through a new strategy, and in various ways supporting civil society's efforts to empower women and girls" (ibid.).

### **Freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence**

As in the arena of freedom from violence, “Sweden has worked actively to give visibility to and combat destructive masculine norms and to strengthen countries' capacities to prosecute perpetrators, assist crime victims and reintegrate soldiers”(ibid.). It is explained further that Sweden has contributed to increasing knowledge about the link between the uncontrolled spread of weapons and sexual violence against women. Sweden claims that actions are taken and more actors joining efforts to combat sexual and gender-based violence in crisis situations and points out that more than 300 commitments in that arena are made (ibid.).

### **Participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding**

Document explains further the actions taken and participation in peace efforts. As an example given, Sweden has assisted in increasing the participation of women in peace processes in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Sweden has established and encouraged networks of women mediators. One of the highlights pointed out is Sweden's accomplishments to the women, peace and security agenda, as it was made the top priority for its term on the United Nations Security Council. Sweden has taken the role in pushing EU efforts forward and adopted a national action plan for Sweden's implementation of women, peace and security agenda (ibid.).

### **Political participation and influence in all areas of society**

In the arena of political participation, Sweden has contributed to advancing women's political participation in many countries. Also, Sweden has supported women human rights defenders and pressed for active advocacy for freedom of expression and opinion. Further, Sweden has pushed for the implementation of gender equality strategies at development banks and in environment and climate funds. Sweden is holding a leading role in the International Gender Champions Geneva initiative, with special responsibility for representation issues (ibid.).

### **Economic rights and empowerment**

Sweden has been successful in the arena of economic empowerment. “Sweden has promoted girls' education and women's employment, actively pushed to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated into the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda, and advanced gender equality efforts in trade policy and corporate social responsibility”. Sweden has been greatly visible in the campaigns HeForShe and 'Swedish Dads' photo exhibition (ibid.).

### **Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)**

Sweden has increased its efforts in the arena of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) through alliance-building, board responsibilities, development cooperation and dialogue, and by initiating the global #SheDecides movement. “At country level, efforts have helped increase the number of midwives and improve access to comprehensive sexuality education, contraceptives and safe abortions” (ibid.).

#### **4. Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Analysis**

The aim of this chapter is to examine whether, and to what extent, the discourse of the feminist foreign policy is interrelated in practice with the IR feminist theory. In particular, the focus is on how the IR feminist theory characteristics on security are translated into the feminist foreign policy in practice to establish in what ways feminist discourse is present or absent.

The IR feminist theory discourse analysis is based on Sweden's feminist foreign policy objectives and feminist foreign policy practice relying on empirical data for the years 2014-2018. The first four years of conducting and implementing the feminist foreign policy were chosen for this analysis because it contributes to improving our understanding on feminist foreign policy making from a gendered perspective and shows what feminism looks like in foreign policy practice.

A better understanding of the intention and practical dimensions of the Swedish feminist foreign policy view on security defines the key characteristics of feminist foreign policy as a whole while also determining its limitations - in order to improve effective implementation. An analysis of feminist foreign policy objectives and actual implementation can provide a reliable basis for determining a feminist foreign policy which could have potential application across the world.

The IR feminist theory perspectives on security were chosen as a basis for this analysis because security is central to any foreign policy concept and it addresses peace and security from a gendered perspective. The analysis is based on official documents, statements, articles, and speeches by policymakers on the subject related to defining the objectives and actual practical implementation of the feminist foreign policy. The further analysis on feminist foreign policy objectives and practical implementation presents in what ways feminist discourse in Sweden's foreign policy is present or absent.

The analysis of Sweden's feminist foreign policy is based on the IR feminist theory. In order to measure the nature and extent of the interaction between the feminist foreign policy and the IR feminist perspective on security, an entirely feminist discourse on security (described in the theory chapter) and the feminist foreign policy discourse on security (described in chapter about Sweden's feminist foreign policy) are compared.

Firstly, I am using a deductive approach on Sweden's feminist foreign policy objectives by comparing these with an ideal type of an entirely feminist discourse on security. Secondly, I

examine how the IR feminist theory characteristics on security are translated into the feminist foreign policy in practice. Thirdly, I make conclusions based on the Sweden's feminist foreign policy analysis on objectives and actual practice in relation with IR feminist perspectives on security and answer the research question: To what extent Sweden has implemented the IR feminist theory characteristics in its feminist foreign policy?

#### **4.1 Sweden's Feminist foreign policy objectives compliance with IR Feminist Theory**

Depending on one's political perspective, there are different opinions about what a feminist foreign policy really is. These differences opinions are clearly understandable, as even feminists differ greatly among themselves on how to define feminism itself (Kleberg, 2016).

There is no definition given to the feminist foreign policy nor there is description of what characteristics the entirely feminist foreign policy should contain. Sweden's feminist foreign policy is chosen as a case for this analysis. Further evaluation Sweden's feminist foreign policy describes and informs the possible features that other countries could include in their foreign policy.

In order to get a better understanding what is the meaning given to the feminist foreign policy, I will investigate feminist foreign policy objectives. The further analysis on the feminist foreign policy objectives is important because it informs us about the intention of the policy and helps to define the meaning given to the feminist foreign policy.

The word "feminist" refers to the IR feminist theory that contains various perspectives. Feminist IR approaches illustrate the major goals of feminist IR and suggest that scholars and practitioners of international politics should ask gender questions and be more aware of the gendered implications of global politics (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208).

Sweden's foreign policy matches with the IR feminist principles that draws attention to the gendered implication and refers to the inequality in global politics. Sweden's feminist foreign claims to contribute to the gender equality and to provide the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls (Government of Sweden, 2018).

“Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015–2018, including indicative measures for 2018” document states that “Global gender equality is still a vision – not a reality” (Government of Sweden, 2018d). That statement gives the impression that feminist foreign policy aims to push its intentions to solve a global-scale problems and aspires to be the global norm leader. Further evaluation on Sweden’s feminist foreign policy objectives in compliance with all the four characteristics in Ingebritsen model displays that the aim of feminist foreign policy is based on normative agenda. Sweden has emerged as a “moral superpower by continuously and consistently advocating compliance with global standards of conduct and working by develop, refine, and maintain principles of mutual understanding in world politics” (Ingebritsen 2006, 4). Sweden foreign policy intention is to influence international society and provides new norms and standards world wide.

Feminist approach in IR questions to what extent theories are constructed and draws attention to the fact that IR theories are often constructed by men and from lives of men (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208). Similarly, foreign policies can be associated with masculine characteristics because “a desirable foreign policy is generally one which strives for power and autonomy and which protects its citizens from outside dangers” (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 206).

“The foreign policies of states are often legitimated in terms of hegemonic masculine characteristics” (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 206) that are tied to the states’ security. Feminist IR use a multidimensional definition of security that is not tied to conventional notions of national security (Tickner, 2018). Sweden’s feminist foreign policy objectives match with the IR feminist perspectives on security because it concentrates on human security rather than state security.

IR feminist approach draws attention to how policies impact women and whether a lack of women’s voices influences policy choices (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208). Further evaluation on Sweden’s feminist foreign policy shows that the focus of the policy is on women and girls and human security.

Particularly, “Sweden’s framing of a feminist foreign policy interacts with contemporary international discourse on human security by asking the feminist question “security for whom?” (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). The quest is to redefine security with a greater focus on women and girls. “This broader and more inclusive notion aims to ensure the security of all human

beings and political communities by challenging embedded patriarchal power relations and practices beyond borders” (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

The initiative is also interwoven with Sweden’s sense of self-identity as a “humanitarian superpower” that is closely related to the history, evolution, and legacy of the Swedish welfare state. In practice the cosmopolitan orientation of the rights are combined with promoting gender-sensitive dialogue across national borders and among different social groups. This “emphatic cooperation” captures some of the underpinnings of feminist foreign policy, which also emphasizes dialogue (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

Feminist scholarship uses a “gender lens” on addressing peace and security (Tickner, 2018). In the Sweden’s case the answer to the feminist question “security for whom?” matches with the feminist approach because the intent on feminist foreign policy is to contribute to the gender equality and to provide the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls (Government of Sweden, 2018).

IR feminist scholars have criticized that IR theories that are often constructed by men and from lives of men (Dunne, Kurki, Smith 2013, 208). Sweden’s feminist foreign policy matches with IR feminist perspectives because it draws attention to the inclusion of women and claims to entail applying a systematic gender equality perspective throughout foreign policy (Government of Sweden, 2018a).

When we are looking feminist foreign policy, it matches with IR feminist approach on policy making from gendered perspective. In Sweden’s feminist foreign policy making, the female voices were included as well as systematic gender equality approach was applied to the foreign policy. Sweden’s feminist foreign policy was conducted by the first ever feminist government (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016) and number of civil society actors including women’s organizations were included in the making of feminist foreign policy agenda. Consultations with women’s organizations resulted with an action plan for feminist foreign policy including six long-term objectives for the years 2015-2018 (Rothschid, 2018).

Sweden’s feminist foreign policy contains six objectives in the 2015-2018 action plan that include full enjoyment of human rights, freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence, participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding, political

participation and influence in all areas of society, economic rights and empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights (Handbook, 2018 p 19).

All Sweden's feminist foreign policy long term goals that include six objectives match with the IR feminist theory approaches that are named in the theory chapter. The main characteristics of IR feminist principles that match with feminist foreign policy are described as following:

Sweden's feminist foreign policy match with the feminist discourse because a greater focus is given to women and girls. Feminist foreign policy action plan supports the gender equality and all women's and girl's full enjoyment of human rights (Handbook, 2018 p 19).

Feminists use a multidimensional definition of security that is not tied to conventional notions of national security (Tickner, 2018). Sweden's feminist foreign policy objectives match with the IR feminist perspectives on security because it concentrates on human security rather than state security.

Tickner states that it is important to look at the flip side of "security" and pays attention to the insecurity. Sweden's feminist foreign policy all objectives include and are based on structural gendered insecurities that need to be eliminated in order to achieve peace and social justice (Tickner, 2018).

Tickner characterizes insecurity to be gendered and claims that "women are more likely to be in insecure positions in global politics, and that women's insecurity is often shaped by negative treatment because of their gender" (Sjoberg, 2018). Sweden's feminist foreign policy objectives include and support women's political participation and influence in all areas of society in order to eliminate mentioned insecurity.

IR feminist approach sees connection between inclusion of women in peace and security. Inclusion of women aims to ensure the security of all human beings and political communities by challenging embedded patriarchal power relations and practices beyond borders (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). Sweden's feminist foreign policy matches with that view as the inclusion of female participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding is included as one of the feminist foreign policy objectives.

Gendered structures of inequality have effects on women's physical and economical insecurities that various feminist scholars in IR have been analyzing and explaining these structures using a gendered lens (Tickner, 2018). Both mentioned inequalities are included in Sweden's feminist foreign policy agenda objectives.

In conclusion, Sweden's feminist foreign policy six objectives for 2015-2018 compared with the entirely feminist discourse on security match with each other. To sum up, the main characteristics of the feminist foreign policy include awareness of the gendered implications of global politics and its impact on women, refers to the inequality in global politics, applies systematic gender equality perspective approach throughout foreign policy, contributes to the gender equality and full enjoyment of human rights, addresses peace and security through "gender lens", concentrates on human security and pays attention to the insecurities.

#### **4.2 Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy in Practice**

In the previous section I concluded that Sweden's feminist foreign policy objectives match with an entirely feminist discourse. However, Sweden's government action plan states that "Global gender equality is still a vision - not a reality" (Government of Sweden, 2018d). In order to understand what it takes for Sweden's to achieve its vision, the further investigation on implementation on feminist foreign policy is necessary. Next, I will examine Sweden's feminist foreign policy practise to establish in what ways feminist discourse is present or absent.

In 2017, a coalition of 62 Swedish non-governmental organizations and women's organizations (named CONCORD), published the report titled "How Feminist is Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy?". About 19 civil society organizations conducted the report and analysed the implementation of the feminist foreign policy in Sweden (Concord, 2017).

The report showcases some good examples of successful implementation of the feminist foreign policy and offers examples of critique towards some actions of feminist foreign policy. Concord report divides the subject in following sections: development cooperation and humanitarian aid, peace and security and policy on migration and refugees. These examples are a good starting point for further analysis because they provide information on what extent, the discourse of the feminist foreign policy interrelates in practice with the IR feminist theory and what feminist foreign policy in practice looks like.

While evaluating the Sweden's feminist foreign policy in the IR feminist perspective, the feminist foreign policy has made the difference yet failed in some goals and ambitions. The report shows that the most success was achieved in development cooperation and humanitarian aid section and had some accomplishments in peace and security (Concord, 2017).

As shown in the Concord report, Sweden's feminist foreign policy has had a good impact and made a difference in women's economic empowerment within its development cooperation, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the shrinking democratic space for the defenders of LGBTQ and women's rights. One of the best examples is that more resources have been allocated to support social security systems with a focus on women's economic empowerment. It is suggested that there is room for improvement to ensure that women of all ages are covered, including women of retirement age. Additional work needs to be done to strengthen women's rights in the workplace (including in the informal economy) and to support the empowerment of women in rural areas who depend on farming and food production (Concord, 2017).

As the report states, Sweden has continued to be an important defender of women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) and rights, reflecting the priority shown in the action plan for Sweden's feminist foreign policy for the years 2016 and 2017. Sweden demonstrated its leadership for example when the new US administration reintroduced the Mexico City policy. Sweden was successful in a "She Decides" initiative and increased its support to SRHR in the 2018 aid budget. However, experts claim that there is room for improvement with humanitarian aid, particularly given the lack of strategies on how to include SRHR in this work (Concord, 2017).

Shrinking democratic space for defenders of the rights of LGBTQ people and women's is an important issue for Sweden's feminist foreign policy, given the necessity of gender equality for societies to thrive. Sweden has supported civil society through the development cooperation. The issue was given a greater priority due to Sida's new communication on the issue. Furthermore, the inclusion of this topic was included in the 2017 feminist foreign policy action plan. The Concord report suggests that the Government must be consistent in raising this problem in its political dialogue, in order to ensure the support for rights defenders in a challenging context (Concord, 2017).

In the area of peace and security, Sweden has been successfully chaired the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and supported women in peace processes (Concord, 2017). Given that Sweden occupied a non-permanent place on the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2017-2018, there have been more opportunities to carry out feminist foreign policy within the UN. As chair of the Council in January 2017, Sweden used the opportunity to introduce a resolution—which was successfully adopted - stating that sexual and gender-based violence can be seen as a cause of sanctions. Another example of Sweden advancing a feminist agenda was when women’s rights defenders from Somalia and Nigeria were invited to speak before the council in order to voice their concerns.

As mentioned in the Concord report, soon after the announcement of the feminist foreign policy, a network for women mediators was set up by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The women mediator’s network has successfully carried out work such as training and supporting women’s representatives in conflict areas to prepare them for their participation in peace processes and negotiations. The authors of the Concord report advise that in order to achieve the full potential of the network, Government needs to allocate more resources to the network’s work (Concord, 2017).

The main failures were in the peace and security areas in the subject of Sweden’s arms trade and in the are of migration and refugees, including migration and refugee policy and Sweden’s voice in the European Union (Concord, 2017).

Swedish framing of a feminist foreign policy interacts with contemporary international discourse on human security by asking the feminist question “security for whom?” The quest is to redefine security with a greater focus on women and girls. This broader and more inclusive notion aims to ensure the security of all human beings and political communities by challenging embedded patriarchal power relations and practices beyond borders (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

Women’s inclusion and participation in peace processes is prioritized, as statistics reveal a lack of inclusive political representation and gender equality. The advocacy and active promotion of women’s participation is mostly centered on peace processes inline with UNSCR resolution 1325. (Aggestam, Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

The feminist agenda was put to the test in 2015, when Wallström caused a diplomatic crisis by stating in a speech to the Swedish parliament that Saudi Arabia is led by a dictatorship that suppresses women's rights. After that statement, Saudi Arabia then blocked Wallström's scheduled speech to the Arab League, where she planned to call on members to "focus on women's rights" (Rothschid, 2018).

One main area where Sweden's feminist government has not received universal praise and the the main critique of its foreign policy approach has been about the hypocrisy in the government's application of gender equality and concerns that government's actions on trade have not always been consistent with a feminist agenda (Rothschid, 2018).

The crisis continued with Sweden's decision not to extend a weapons deal with Saudi Arabia; in response, Riyadh recalled its ambassador to Stockholm (Rothschid, 2018). The diplomatic crisis was unwelcome for many major Swedish companies such as Atlas Copco, Volvo, ABB, Securitas, Ericsson, Radisson, and SAS were affected (Expressen, 2015). In the end diplomatic relations were eventually restored and a new deal with Saudi Arabia reached, one that focused more on civilian than military cooperation (Rothschid, 2018).

The new agreement, which concerns taxes to be paid in which country was signed by Saudi Arabian Finance Minister Ibrahim Al-Assaf and Swedish Minister of Industry Mikael Damberg. Damberg explained that the deal would lead to increased investments and claimed that relations between the countries were good once again. However human rights in Saudi Arabia, the cause of Wallström's statements, were not even discussed during the ministerial meeting (Expressen, 2015). Critics highlighted the hypocrisy of a feminist Swedish government not even putting the topics of human rights and feminism on the agenda when Swedish and Saudi officials met to sign the new deal (Rothschid, 2018).

The critique comes from the fact that government's arms exports to countries that violate women's rights and its restrictive policy on family reunification for refugees counteract Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The arms sales boost the power of repressive states that violate women's rights. By restricting refugees' reunification rights, it also disproportionately impacts women and girls who are left behind in conflict zone (Rothschid, 2018).

Concord report highlighted negative aspect on Sweden's arms trade, as Sweden continuous to sell arms to non-democratic countries. In 2016 and 2017 Sweden sold arms to both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates despite the fact that they were carrying out airstrikes against Yemen. Human rights organizations have described these attacks as war crimes that has resulted in some 80 percent of the population in Yemen being in urgent need of humanitarian aid. One other negative example is that as soon as Columbia's new peace deal came into force, Sweden signed military agreement with the Colombian government to sell it fighter jets. These two examples are a complete contradiction to a feminist foreign policy (Concord, 2017).

Another criticism of the Swedish feminist government was raised in 2017 when "Trade Minister Ann Linde and female colleagues wore headscarves when meeting Iranian President Rouhani in Tehran"(Rothschid, 2018). The decision to wear the headscarves was ridiculed by the NGO UN Watch, which claimed that Sweden had "sacrificed its principles and betrayed the rights of Iranian women" (Radio Sweden, 2018).

The leader of the opposition Liberals, Jan Björklund, argued that wearing headscarves had sent inappropriate signals. Further on, Björklund elaborated that Linde's decision "sends the wrong message to women living under religious oppression in Sweden and abroad." (Radio Sweden, 2018) The trade agreements which were signed in Tehran, could have been concluded elsewhere." (Radio Sweden, 2018). Ann Linde defended her decision to wear a headscarf by explaining that it was done in order not to violate Iranian law. She added that the Swedish delegation did express its views about trade union rights and women's rights (Radio Sweden, 2018).

In 2017 the Iranian case was also contrasted with Swedish officials' stand against US President Donald Trump's approach to women's rights. Right after the Iranian case, Sweden's Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin posted a picture online in which she signed a climate bill surrounded by female colleagues--mocking Trump's earlier -released photo in which he signed an anti-abortion executive order surrounded exclusively by male aides and advisers (Rothschid, 2018). One of the criticisms of Lövin's picture was that Swedish officials "should have also condemned an equally unfair situation in Iran" (Rothschid, 2018) and therefore once again displayed a bit of hypocrisy.

Swedish migration and refugee policy that was conducted in 2016 has failed to support feminist agenda in its foreign policy. The new policy is distinguished from the previous one by the adoption of new temporary asylum rules that make it impossible for persons who have received asylum in

Sweden to reunite with their families. As there is no opportunity of family reunification, women and children are left behind in conflict areas or refugee camps or are forced out to transit routes. This policy has created an environment in which women and girls risk their lives and become highly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence or trafficking. Although Sweden's feminist foreign policy action plan for 2017 included the issue as a priority area to strengthen human rights for women and girls who are refugees and migrants, the Government has obstructed this goal by its new legislation on asylum rules (Concord, 2017).

One other negative example highlighted by the Concord report is the Government's support for an immigration cooperation with Libya, as carried out by the Libyan coast guard. This cooperation risks contributing to human rights abuses suffered by migrants, from torture to sexual and gender-based violence, kidnapping, and trafficking. Therefore, Sweden should voice the issue in the EU and not continue to support cooperation that risks contributing to state-sanctioned violence against women and children (Concord, 2017).

In conclusion, Sweden's feminist foreign policy practice matches in many cases with entirely feminist discourse on security and some examples show that commitment on entirely feminist security agenda is not consistent. Feminist discourse is absent in the areas of arms trade, migration and refugee policy.

#### **4.3 Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Perspectives on Security**

IR feminist theory discourse analysis was performed on Sweden's feminist foreign policy for the years 2014-2018. The analysis focused on how the IR feminist theory characteristics on security are translated into the feminist foreign policy objectives and in practice to establish in what ways feminist discourse is present or absent.

The aim of this analysis was to examine whether Sweden's foreign policy fits with the IR feminist theory in order to answer the posed research question: To what extent has Sweden implemented the IR feminist theory characteristics in its feminist foreign policy?

The results show that Sweden's Foreign Policy *objectives* can be considered feminist according to the properties brought forward by IR feminist theories. The main characteristics of the feminist foreign policy include awareness of the gendered implications of global politics and its impact on women, refers to the inequality in global politics, applies systematic gender equality perspective

approach throughout foreign policy, contributes to the gender equality and full enjoyment of human rights, addresses peace and security through “gender lens”, concentrates on human security and pays attention to the insecurities.

Sweden’s feminist foreign policy practice matches in many cases with entirely feminist discourse on security, however some examples show that commitment on entirely feminist security agenda is not consistent. Feminist discourse is absent in the areas of arms trade, migration and refugee policy.

The examples given in this thesis show the consistency in Sweden’s leading role of promoting feminist foreign policy and gender equality. In controversially Sweden is also one of the largest foreign aid donors and largest arms exporters in the world on per capita basis (Hudson & Eason, 2018). Controversial examples and this analysis on feminist foreign policy lead on further assessments that the feminist discourse is entirely present in feminist foreign policy *objectives*, yet the Sweden’s feminist foreign policy *practice* is rather feminist only by convenience.

## Summary and Conclusion

This thesis focused on Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy analysis and looked into how the international relations (IR) feminist theory characteristics were translated into feminist foreign policy objectives and in practice. Further it studied Sweden's feminist foreign policy compliance with the properties identified by IR feminist theories.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy characteristics were compared with the IR feminist theories. Therefore, an ideal type of entirely feminist discourse was created based on IR feminist theories and described in the theory chapter.

The aim of qualitative content analysis was to examine whether Sweden's foreign policy fits with the IR feminist theory and to answer the posed research question: To what extent has Sweden implemented the IR feminist theory characteristics in its feminist foreign policy?

IR feminist security theory discourse analysis was performed on Sweden's feminist foreign policy practice for the years 2014-2018. The analysis was based on official documents, statements, articles, and speeches by policymakers on the subject—those related to the practical implementation of feminist foreign policy—to establish in what ways such discourse is present or absent.

The main characteristics of the feminist foreign policy included awareness of the gendered implications of global politics and its impact on women, refers to the inequality in global politics, applies systematic gender equality perspective approach throughout foreign policy, contributes to the gender equality and full enjoyment of human rights, addresses peace and security through “gender lens”, concentrates on human security and pays attention to the insecurities.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy practice matches in many cases with entirely feminist discourse on security, however some examples show that commitment on entirely feminist security agenda is not consistent. Feminist discourse is absent in the areas of arms trade, migration and refugee policy.

While evaluating the Sweden's feminist foreign policy in the IR feminist perspective, the feminist foreign policy had made the difference but yet failed in some goals and ambitions. The examples given in this thesis show the consistency in Sweden's leading role of promoting feminist foreign policy and gender equality. Controversially Sweden is also one of the largest foreign aid donors and largest arms exporters in the world on per capita basis (Hudson & Eason, 2018).

Controversial examples and this analysis on feminist foreign policy lead on further assessments that the feminist discourse is entirely present in feminist foreign policy *objectives*, yet the Sweden's feminist foreign policy *practice* is rather feminist only by convenience.

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