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Feminist Foreign Policy: Legacy of the WPS Agenda?

Neha Tetali

Abstract

Feminist Foreign Policies (FFPs) represent the rise of alternative ways of conducting foreign policy. They not only focus on promoting women's participation in decision-making processes, but also on protecting their rights and distributing resources for gender equality. FFPs have developed against the backdrop of decades of transnational feminist movements and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Currently (as of September 2025), nine countries have either adopted or have committed to adopt FFP. Despite the evolution and growth of FFP as a foreign policy approach, however, there have been retractions recently. This article addresses two questions: Can FFP be understood as a manifestation of the WPS Agenda? What impact do the recent retractions of FFP have on the WPS Agenda? In engaging with these questions, the article traces the genealogy of WPS thought and substance in FFP, while outlining the evolution, growth and recent withdrawals of FFP. It evidences how FFPs have drawn much of their goals, language, pillars, critiques and feminist fundamentals from the WPS Agenda. Taking an analytical approach, the article also discusses critical perspectives on FFP's recent retractions, and the impact these developments could have on the WPS Agenda.

Author Profile

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Introduction

Heralded as the most important policy framework linking gender to peace and security issues, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda comprises ten Resolutions (2000-2019) passed by the United Nations Security Council (De Jonge Oudraat and Brown 2025, 718). The Resolutions guide gender equality promotion, strengthen women's participation, protection and rights in conflict, and are enacted through National Action Plans (NAPs) (PeaceWomen 2014). The WPS Agenda (hereafter also referred to as the Agenda) ambitiously furthers a global commitment to sustainable peace, transforming gender mainstreaming in policymaking (Kirby and Shepherd 2016, 373; True 2016, 5).

In 2014, the foreign policy sphere too began to witness policies that spotlighted gender. Sweden officially adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) in 2014, followed by Canada, France, Luxembourg, Spain, Germany, Scotland, Netherlands, Slovenia, Mexico, Chile, Liberia, Colombia and Argentina (Achilleos-Sarll and Thomson 2023, 3). Although scholars had used and discussed feminist peace and feminist ways of doing foreign policy before (see Rajagopalan 2010, 2011), FFP normatively differed from the WPS Agenda because of its explicit and first-ever *formal* usage of the word 'feminist' in foreign policy. FFP doesn't comprise a fixed definition, because of the differing definitions of feminism itself, and because of the context-specific feminist values associated with each of the countries adopting FFP (UN Women 2022; Achilleos-Sarll and Thomson 2023, 3- 4).

Despite this definitional eclecticism however, FFP is broadly seen as prioritising gender equality at the forefront of foreign policy. This is done by promoting women's participation in peace processes, advocating women's rights as human rights, working toward a more gender-sensitive and equitable distribution of global income --all with the underlying principle of women's empowerment positively impacting national and international security (Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond 2019; Parashar 2018; Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond 2016).

FFPs burgeoned well over a decade after the WPS Agenda already set standards for gender mainstreaming in policymaking – the Agenda officially began in 2000, while the first FFP was declared in 2014. Both have similar approaches to gender equality and protection of women's rights. It is also observed that the countries that first adopted FFP were doing so to meet their WPS commitments. Another conspicuous likeness observed is that both face similar critiques –for being Western-centric and marginalising the Global South. This raises questions of whether FFP is a branch of, or a part of the legacy of the WPS Agenda, even though it is not officially recognised to be so.

The parallels between FFP and WPS also extend to the current reduction in support for both. Recently, countries have been disengaging with FFP. Sweden withdrew its FFP in 2022, highlighting its commitment to gender equality without the feminist label (Thomas 2022). Argentina, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Germany followed (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 9). In the context of the critical review of the WPS Agenda on its silver jubilee, it is worth examining the relationship between declining support for FFP and how that might impact the WPS Agenda.

This article seeks to answer the two questions that emerge from the discussion above: Can FFP be understood as a manifestation of the WPS Agenda? What impact do the recent retractions of FFP have on the WPS Agenda? The article is divided into two sections. The first section traces the normative development of FFP, mapping links with the WPS Agenda. The second section discusses the recent decline of FFP and the ramifications this has on the future of both FFP and the Agenda.

The similarities between FFP and the WPS Agenda have been discussed cursorily in scholarship. There are nods to FFP deriving its foundational aspects from the Agenda (see Parashar 2018; Haastrup 2023; Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond 2016), discussions of both in different case studies like Sweden's WPS engagement in Lebanon and Iraq after it abandoned FFP (Mezher 2025) and Canada's FFP and WPS implementation (Leclerc 2025). However, a conceptual analysis of both these frameworks to flesh out their shared goals has received limited attention. In addressing this gap, this article lists out the comparable aspects of both the WPS Agenda and FFP, while contextualising the analysis within FFP retractions.

From WPS to FFP: Normative Evolution and Legacy

The countries that adopted FFP conceptualised it as a foreign policy approach that considers gender equality concerns as the main policy priority in the relationship between nations. These concerns included increasing women's participation in global politics, promoting women's rights, advancing an equitable and gender-sensitive distribution of global income, to name a few (Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond 2016). The underlying principle of FFP was that women's empowerment will positively impact international security (Aggestam and Bergman Rosamond 2019).

The closest to a universalist formal definition is laid out in the 2025 report of the Feminist Foreign Policy Collaborative:

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

> exercise of those values at home and co-created with feminist activists, groups and movements, at home and abroad" (Thompson et al. 2020, 4).

Of the fourteen countries that have formally adopted or have committed to adopt FFP, three of them have formally rescinded the policy (Netherlands, Germany and Sweden) and two have abandoned it without a formal statement (Argentina and Luxembourg). Libya, which had formally committed to FFP in 2021, has 'disappeared from the discourse' after its foreign affairs minister was dismissed (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 20). As of September 2025, nine countries are adopting or committed to adopting Feminist Foreign Policy: Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Liberia, Mexico, Scotland, Slovenia and Spain. Each of these countries have set unique FFP priority areas, but they converge in having overseas development assistance as an instrument towards women's empowerment (Sielker 2024). Among other priorities, Canada spotlighted inclusive digital transformation, Germany focussed on unequal access to education, Sweden on increasing representation (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 59; Aggestam and Rosamond 2019, 38), Chile and Mexico on increasing indigenous cooperation and a joint regional initiative to promote feminist development tools (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 26).

Although the scope of FFP is context-specific, for the ease of analysis, it is often categorised neatly into the 3 Rs (following Sweden's categorisation of its FFP) and more recently into the 5 Rs by analysts (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025). These translate to Rights, Representation, Resources, Research and Reporting, and Reach, all of which are briefly discussed below:

- *Rights* refers to the protection of human rights.
  E.g. Spain and France discuss Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in their FFPs in the context of human rights and women's access to services respectively (Thomson 2023, 21).
- *'Resources'* implies ensuring an equitable distribution of financing.
  E.g. Spain earmarked 20 percent of humanitarian funding for gender equality initiatives. Scotland and Slovenia allocated resources to develop staff gender training plans and gender analysis tools respectively (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 21, 22).
- *Representation* involves increasing the participation of women in foreign policy decision-making and leadership roles.
  E.g. In FFP countries, women held 31 percent of ambassadorial roles in 2024, substantially above the global average of 21 per cent (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 23). As part of its FFP, Mexico also introduced an affirmative action policy that requires admitting two women for every man in its foreign service recruitments.
- *Research and Reporting* involve rigorous and independent evaluation of FFP and its publicly available reporting.
  E.g. Canada, as part of its gender responsive humanitarian action, committed to invest in and report on gender data and analysis, including the production of a gender responsive budget (Ansorg, Haastrup and Wright 2021). FFP research is growing in academia and policy, evident in analytical articles (Tetali 2023; Färber 2025; Papworth

2024), academic peer-reviewed work (Wright and Rosamond 2024; Färber and Standke-Erdmann 2025) and in a recent and comprehensive evaluation of the current state of FFP (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 26).

- *Reach* outlines the integration of gender principles with different policy domains of the government (e.g. climate change, digital transformations, etc.), unrestricted to only foreign policy principles.
  E.g. Spain lists human trafficking and trade relations, and Canada lists environmental and climate action, as policy areas in which FFP is applied (Cohn 2023, 14). In academia, scholars are scrutinising FFP's mobility: Cheung and Scheyer (2024) examine Germany's healthcare policy that heavily recruits foreign labour from the Global South in the context of the feminist principles enshrined in its FFP.

Therefore, the development of FFP reflects a movement towards state-initiated policy that seeks to prioritise gender. However, FFP cannot be seen to have developed in isolation, since it has grown against the backdrop of decades of feminist activism, research and legal commitments, including the WPS Agenda.

Shared Ideas and Pillars: The WPS Legacy in FFP

By the time the first FFP was adopted (2014), it had already been over a decade since the WPS Agenda was set in motion. Countries had developed NAPs and reporting mechanisms, civil society organisations implemented resolutions and commitments within communities, and policy analysts and academics were engaging with WPS to offer evidence-based analysis and critical perspectives on its realisation. FFP, therefore, did not develop in isolation, but rather much after the wheels of the WPS Agenda had already been in motion and on the foundation laid by feminist theoretical and activist movements. The genealogy of the Agenda, as expressed in its language, pillars and goals, is visible in many facets of the FFP, like shared language, goals, and even critiques.

The WPS Agenda was pivotal in laying out the normative roadmap of the gender equality architecture internationally. The most recent WPS resolutions covered gendered issues in a range of activities supporting international peace and security, like information gathering, protection of civilians, support to the rule of law, security sector reform, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (Hutchinson 2018, 124). In a similar way, gendering key international issues through prioritising a feminist response is a fundamental conceptual foundation for FFP. For instance, Germany highlighted the gaps in the legal protection of women and their unequal access to education, to deal with which their FFP combines principles with pragmatic action (Amt 2023 in Tetali 2025, 52)[1]. As part of its FFP, Mexico hosted the first international forum to address gender equality since the Beijing conference in 1995 and co-presided over the WPS informal expert group at the United Nations Security Council in

[1] This is an extract from the guidelines of Feminist Foreign Policy by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany (Auswärtiges Amt). At the time of writing this article (January 2026), the German government retracted their FFP, and thus removed the aforementioned link from their website. Here I have cited my doctoral thesis, which contains the extract verbatim. In the bibliography both the original (removed) link (Amt 2023) and the doctoral thesis (Tetali 2025) is included.

2021 (García 2023). Chile's FFP emphasises equality and non-discrimination as the principles of its policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2023). For the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs' work on integrating a gender perspective across diplomatic, consular, and administrative activities, it was awarded the United Nations Development Programme's Gold Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions in June 2025 (United Nations Development Programme 2025). Therefore, the normative genealogy of WPS is visible in various ways in different countries' conceptualisation of FFP.

Structurally, WPS and FFP have shared goals and language. Like the FFP's 3 Rs, the WPS has its own fundamental pillars that guide its programme, called the 4 pillars. The first WPS pillar 'Participation' calls for increased participation of women at all decision-making levels (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011, 492). The second 'Protection' pillar seeks to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence in situations of conflict; the third pillar 'Prevention' focusses on intervention to prevent violence (United States Institute of Peace 2020; United Nations Security Council 2000, 3); and the fourth pillar 'Relief and Recovery' addresses the needs of women by rebuilding after crises (UN Women 2025). It is interesting to note that among the Rs of FFP and the Pillars of the Agenda, three have a shared correspondence, while the rest work on similar intersecting issues:

WPS Agenda's Ps	**FFP's Rs**	**Commonality**
Participation	Representation	Increasing women's participation in governance
Protection	Rights	Protection of the rights of women
Relief and Recovery	Resources	Rebuilding post-crisis, economic empowerment of women
Prevention	Reach Research and Reporting	Not a neat overlap, but intersecting issues such as the application of a gender perspective to issues, (violence prevention) strategies

Table 1: Shared Goals between WPS Agenda's Pillars and FFP's Rs

While the correspondence between the Rs and Ps is not seamless, some issue areas intersect neatly. The congruence between these shared goals and policy language speaks to FFP deriving from the gender equality principles and ideologies laid out by the Agenda. The primary difference being that while the Agenda focuses on international peace and security, FFP's issue areas comprise broad foreign policy areas: this may include trade, environmental policy, or even tackling discrimination. Therefore, FFP is not restricted to peace and security issues.

Interestingly, it is observed that the countries that adopted FFP had previously taken a lead on the WPS Agenda. Sweden, for instance, had been a strong proponent of the WPS Agenda and was one of the first states to produce a NAP (Thomson 2020, 428). Latin American countries (of which Mexico, Colombia and Chile have FFP) have been traditionally strongly involved in

the promotion of women's rights in the United Nations (UN) and regional organisations (Zilla 2025, 189). Drawing on this link between proponents of gender policy through WPS NAPs and then later FFP, the following table captures briefly the countries that have adopted FFP and looks at how FFP overlaps with the WPS Agenda's NAPs:

FFP Countries (Including retractions)	**FFP Adoption**	**WPS Agenda's NAP Adoption**	**Nature of Overlap**
Argentina	Adopted and abandoned (Jan 2023 – Dec 2023)	Launched 2 NAPs, with the most recent one in 2021	Both had different focus areas: FFP prioritised care, economic autonomy and reduction of violence; NAP prioritised women's inclusion and participation in politics. They converged on bringing a feminist perspective to international engagements and security respectively.
Canada	Committed but unpublished (2017-FIAP, 2020-FFP)[2]	Most recent NAP released in 2024	WPS part of FFP's Action Areas. Recent NAP mentions FFP several times as a tool for advancing the WPS Agenda.
Chile	Adopted (2022)	Was the first to pioneer NAP in Latin America in 2009. Most recent NAP was launched in 2015.	FFP based on Chile's historical gender agenda, focusses on non-discrimination as a core principle. FFP document recognises WPS as a priority focus.
Colombia	Adopted (2022)	Most recent NAP launched in 2024 as part of FFP implementation	NAP is a part of their FFP (rather than the other way round): WPS NAP is a deliverable in FFP.
France	Adopted (2018)	3 NAPs, most recent in 2021. Committed to 4th NAP to be released in 2026	While recent NAP doesn't mention FFP, both are based on France's international gender equality strategy. The 2026 NAP will focus on strengthening peace processes and post conflict reconstruction, expanding FFP's reach.

[2] While Canada formally announced and published its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) in 2017, it only committed to an explicit Feminist Foreign Policy in 2020. The FFP document was unpublished as of December 2025.

Germany	Adopted and formally retracted (2021 – 2025)	3 NAPs, most recent in 2021	FFP mentioned WPS as key priority for Germany's multilateral engagement. Recent NAP said it will continue to be aligned with German foreign policy and its principles.
Liberia	Committed but unpublished (2022)	2 NAPs, most recent in 2019	FFP unpublished. However, alignment between NAP and expressed FFP values (through speeches, conferences, etc.) is seen in institutional commitment to representation, increasing participation of women and raising accountability across sectors.
Luxembourg	Adopted and abandoned (2018 – 2023)	2 NAPs, most recent in 2025	Recent NAP uses 3D approach to foreign policy (Diplomacy, Defence, Development) to address political participation, human rights and socio-economic empowerment of women. They say this will help support the WPS Agenda.
Mexico	Adopted (2019)	NAP published in 2021	Limited overlap between the two, except gender equality mentioned as necessary condition of sustainable peace. Interestingly, NAP adopted after FFP.
Netherlands	Adopted and formally retracted (2022 – 2025)	4 NAPs, most recent in 2021	Gender equality is a pillar of the Dutch foreign and development policy: work in this regard will continue through WPS NAP (after FFP rollback).
Scotland	Adopted (2023)	5 NAPs of UK Government, most recent in 2023	Sub-national government, with foreign affairs (and NAPs) under the purview of the UK Government. However, peace and security are a part of Scotland's FFP focus areas: it notes it contributions to WPS through a fellowship.
Slovenia	Committed but unpublished (2023)	3 NAPs, most recent in 2025	Overlapping focus areas, like empowering survivors of sexual violence in conflict, providing a safe space for peacemakers, etc. The WPS Special Envoy contributes to FFP implementation.
Spain	Adopted (2020)	2 NAPs, 1 forthcoming	Government says the latest (unpublished) NAP will align with and incorporate FFP, expanding reach.

		(drafting in 2025)	
Sweden	Adopted and formally retracted (2014 – 2022)	4 NAPs, most recent in 2024	FFP built on state feminist tradition and support for the WPS Agenda. But NAP and FFP had limited reference to each other except shared gender mainstreaming approach.

Table 2: Overlap of FFP and WPS Agenda's NAP Adoption[3]

The table shows that *all* the countries that adopted FFP have a NAP. It is also notable that the countries that have formally rescinded, or informally abandoned FFP are continuing their NAPs. Not only does this highlight the permeating structural nature of the WPS Agenda, but also the continuation of FFP through NAPs because of the overlapping nature of the two policies.

Shared Critiques: The WPS Legacy in FFP

While FFP draws from the Agenda, it also inherits some of the latter's critiques. Critical feminist scholars have argued that the WPS resolutions have reinforced asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and South, providing a rationale for, and contributing to the Security Council's selective interventionist policies (Basu and Nagar 2021, 218). Postcolonial scholars have also shown how racialised hierarchies have been built into the WPS discourse, and how the discourse is framed from a context dominated by the UN permanent members, an international security arena that is complicit in the violence and injustices against women (Basu and Nagar 2021, 218). In a similar vein, FFP too is critiqued for ignoring the racial dynamics between the Global North and South, since increasing aid to the Global South seems to be possible only in the context of wealthier Global North nations exporting development, implying that resources are a prerequisite to having FFP (Ansorg, Haastrup, and Wright 2021, 208). They also argue that uneven power dynamics are manifested in brown and black bodies inevitably becoming the testing ground for FFP priorities.

Postcolonial feminist scholars also question FFP's conceptual logic and ask if simply taking elite women in foreign policy as a subject and stirring (increasing representation) would be enough for gender equality (Achilleos-Sarll 2018). Although FFP aims to address the historical underrepresentation of women in foreign policymaking, scholars argue that without actively attempting to resolve the distrust sowed by masculine politics, FFP is missing out on offering a structural change (McEvoy 2009; Scheyer and Kumskova 2019, 70). FFP is rather focussing

[3] Sources used for the table listed in the footnote for ease of reading: (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025; Wright and Rosamond 2024; Zilla 2025; SecurityWomen 2025; Drumond et. al. 2022; Biddolph and Shepherd 2024; Towns, Jezierska and Bjarnegård 2024; Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs 2025; Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación. n.d.; Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade 2025; Federal Foreign Office 2021; Habersetzer Heilmann 2022; Park 2024; Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, n.d., 2021).

on cosmetic changes like increasing the number of women representatives. The WPS Agenda too is often critiqued for its tokenistic representation of women, which is argued to have resulted in the instrumentalization of women's rights, evident in the "glaring lack of support" for women's organisations, despite statements of intent (Brown 2021, 142).

Like the Agenda, FFP too operates within frameworks of the politics of protection. Within the WPS, scholars argue that by excessively focussing on 'protecting' women from sexual and gender-based violence, the Agenda has made war safer for women, rather than strengthening women's activism to prevent war (Otto 2017). Portraying women as those needing protection by virtue of being vulnerable has long been critiqued in feminist scholarship. Shepherd (2011) points out how women are shown to be the victims who need to be rescued by men. Not only does this approach homogenise all women, it also ignores the contributions of women in conflict, and the impact violence has had on men. In the context of FFPs, Duriesmith (2018) argues they risk the 'masculine protector logic.'

These are but a few instances of FFP and WPS having similar fundamentals, shared goals and language, corresponding pillars and even comparable critiques. It is for these reasons that scholarship terms FFP a 'derivative' of the WPS Agenda (Parashar 2018) and the WPS as the 'key bedrock' of FFP (Haastrup 2023, 20). Scholars have long highlighted the links between the two, arguing that FFPs have a clear connection with WPS within the context of the international conversation around women's rights (Thomson 2020, 428). Even though FFP is often called a 'radical' policy change, it is embedded in the broader global effort to promote gender equality internationally, especially in the aftermath of the adoption of WPS (Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond 2016, 323). Building on these previous works, this article fleshed out the shared language, goals and critiques of both the WPS Agenda and FFP, and in doing so, attempted to trace the footprint of the Agenda in FFP. Therefore, although the WPS Agenda doesn't have a commitment directly relating to the establishment of FFP or mandating the signatories to commit to an FFP (the way it has for NAPs), genealogy of WPS thought shaped FFP in fundamental ways.

FFP Withdrawals and the Future of WPS

Recently, the countries that pioneered FFP have been withdrawing them: Sweden, Luxembourg, Argentina, the Netherlands and Germany. While some retractions have been loud [Sweden made an explicit announcement that it is dropping FFP since the label tends to cover up the content (Thomas 2022)], others have been quieter. For instance, Germany released a coalition agreement that does not explicitly refer to feminist foreign policy and Canada too has been noticeably silent on further development of their FFP (Färber 2025). Netherlands discontinued its FFP label due to what analysts call 'changes in political will' (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 133).

While the reasons for such withdrawals can be further explored, the trends reveal that in each case, federal elections strengthened centre-right forces (Färber 2025). The links between

conservative far-right populist movements against the perceived threat of gender equality has been explored in recent research (see Kováts 2018). Evidence has shown that the narrative of a violent migrant man attacking local girls has been a motivator for right-wing mobilizations, revealing that although gender issues are not the final target, they are absolutely central for racist and authoritarian right-wing demands (Kováts 2018, 1; Berg 2019, 80). This far-right culture represents anti-feminist positions by opposing gender equality policies, gender studies, and same-sex marriage, while supporting normative 'traditional' gender roles (Berg 2019, 80). Interestingly, these mobilizations are also nationalist in nature, giving primacy to their own cultures, and viewing other cultures as lesser. Scholars highlight how the logic of contrast is used to reaffirm the nation's position at the top of the hierarchy by positioning other races, cultures, and classes in contrast and therefore, lesser –a mechanism also used by authoritarian leaders (Mole 2011; Slootmaeckers 2019).

The preoccupation of the right wing with national identity is informed by a collective anxiety and perceived threats to core nationalist traditional values (Kinnvall 2019, 286). Gender equality is seen as a threat, leading to the rise of anti-genderism that is against feminism. Anti-genderism is thus defined by Von Redecker (2016, 2) as the resentful mobilization against pluralism and 'political correctness', which are perceived as instituted by 'gender ideologues.' Kováts (2018, 8) argues that gender only provides the theatre for the struggle for hegemony, not the final target for these movements. So, they should be seen as a symptom of a larger systemic crisis against equality. In the context of the withdrawals of FFPs across the world, the correlation with the rise of right-wing populism is stark.

How does this fall help us better reflect on the WPS Agenda, twenty-five years after its birth? Färber (2025) writes that the WPS Agenda is more effective than FFPs for its binding nature, extensive monitoring and reporting machinery which translate to accountability mechanisms. In comparison, FFP doesn't have a legal basis since it is state-led, implying that a state can choose to either declare its commitment or withdraw it entirely. She also argues that the WPS Agenda cannot save FFP, "But it can act as a fallback option if feminist foreign policies are withdrawn – at least to a limited extent" (Färber 2025).

However, evidence also shows that retractions of FFPs were also simultaneously accompanied by a reduction in support to the WPS Agenda. The USA has been leading a normative and moral attack on international frameworks like the WPS agenda at the UN (Downing 2025). The US Defense Secretary called the Agenda a "woke divisive/social justice initiative" and that they will "fight to end" the Agenda for their next budget (Reuters 2025). There is also a wider gendered silence among the West and NATO on WPS commitments in response to the invasion of Ukraine (Wright and Rosamond 2024).

Coming back to the impact of the recent retractions of FFP on the WPS Agenda, the article argues since FFP is state-led while the WPS comes with its ecosystem that comprises accountability mechanisms and involvement of civil society organisations, WPS has a better chance of surviving long-term, despite reducing support. Building on Farber (2025), the article thus puts forth the argument that because of the state-initiated nature of FFP, it can be

withdrawn or changed at will, unlike the WPS Agenda, which is international law. Moreover, it might be more prudent to go deeper to analyse not only what impact the withdrawals of FFP will have on the WPS Agenda, but the growth of right-wing politics and anti-genderism and their links with gender equality policies, reflected in declining support. This not only presents a future research agenda but will also help take stock of current global developments, enabling better action-points for the WPS community. The question then is: how can we understand both the decline of FFPs and the reduction of support to the WPS Agenda in the context of rising right-wing politics and anti-genderism across the globe? Based on the trends observed in the retractions of FFPs, to be truly transformative, the WPS ecosystem must be able to withstand ideological developments and changes that are to come.

Conclusion

The FFP story is not just its own. FFPs have drawn much of their goals, language, critiques and feminist fundamentals from the WPS Agenda, which in turn builds on a century of transnational women's peace activism. The shared similarity has led to the blurring of boundaries between the two, often leading to countries adopting FFP as part of their WPS commitments, or pushing for a WPS NAP as part of their FFP deliverables.

Although FFPs are seen to be reducing in number, it might be too presumptuous to declare their complete fall. Afterall, there are still several countries like Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Honduras, Mongolia, Nepal and the United Kingdom, that are making formal statements of intent to adopt FFP themselves (Whipkey, Ahmed and Thompson 2025, 10, 11). Perhaps more nuanced FFPs could be developed after taking into consideration the critical perspectives that have come from several vantage points across society: taking stock of scholars' critical work and involving local expertise, civil society actors and activists, can be a strong way forward for foreign policies.

Conversely, recent withdrawals of FFP must nudge society towards a more thorough examination of feminist policy to ask and answer the question of how we can make our policies strong enough to withstand tides of anti-genderism. The WPS Agenda, while it preceded the FFPs and influenced their growth in many ways, has much to learn in the wake of their recent retractions.

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