

Critical Approaches to Feminist Foreign Policy: Colonial Logics, Hierarchies, Care and Anti-Genderism

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Orthodox approaches to foreign policy privilege national and international security, economic growth and a variety of other national interests over feminist values and norms. Feminists have challenged every aspect of this understanding of foreign policy by asking questions such as “what is security?” “How is it best achieved?” “What are the detrimental effects of militarism on people’s wellbeing?” What colonial and gendered privileges prevail in the conduct of feminist foreign policy? What kind of feminism undergird states’ adoption of pro-gender foreign policies? Do feminist foreign policies obscure distinctively western understandings of feminism? What are the effects of trailblazing feminist foreign policies beyond borders without anchoring them in societal concerns? To date few FFPs actually are steeped in such critical questions, rather they reproduce orthodox interest-based, gendered and colonial understandings of foreign policy practice and world politics. As such they do not fully engage with the structural intersectional inequalities that undergird world politics, leading to gendered and colonial effects, and, at times harm and violence. This panel brings together five papers that all seek to challenge orthodox understandings of feminist foreign policy, in particular by addressing questions of colonial logics, normative hierarchies, anti-genderism as well as the lack of care and intersectional sensitivity in actual feminist foreign policy conduct. Empirically the papers centre on both non-western and western states including Canada, France, India and Sweden. The papers employ a range of feminist research methods.

Track Classification: Gendering International Relations Working Group