



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Feminist foreign policy in Israel and Germany? The Women, Peace, and Security agenda, development policy, and female representation

Amnon Aran¹  and Klaus Brummer² 

¹Department of International Politics, City University of London, London, UK and ²Faculty of History and Social Sciences, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Eichstätt, Germany

Corresponding author: Amnon Aran; Email: Amnon.Aran.1@city.ac.uk

(Received 24 March 2023; revised 28 November 2023; accepted 21 December 2023)

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between feminist foreign policy (FFP) and a country's national role conception (NRC). Specifically, it asks whether countries with 'masculine' NRCs are opposed to the pursuit of FFP while countries with a more 'feminine' national role conception are advocates of FFP. To this end, the paper conducts a comparative analysis of 'masculine' Israel and 'feminine' Germany along three domains: normative (with a focus on the Women, Peace, and Security [WPS] agenda), material (in relation to development policy), and institutional (with reference to female representation). Generally speaking, Germany has indeed undertaken broader and more substantive activities in pursuit of FFP goals than Israel. At the same time, Israel has clearly been more active than its 'masculine' role would suggest, and Germany less active and vocal than its 'civilian power' role would imply. Overall, the discussion suggests that whether countries pursue FFP goals is strongly influenced by the latter's compatibility with the countries' overarching NRCs, with party ideology, institutional autonomy, and intersection between gender policy and state interests playing a greater role regarding the specific levels of commitment and intensity shown in the pursuit of those goals.

Keywords: feminist foreign policy; Germany; institutional autonomy; Israel; roles

Introduction

Adding to a broader discussion on gender and feminism in International Relations (IR),¹ increasing attention has been devoted to women and gender in specific issue areas of international politics, including regional integration, norms, security, and foreign policy.² In this context, a central topic has been the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda ushered in by UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000.³ More recently, following declarations by countries such as Sweden, Canada, and Norway to focus on feminist concerns in their international relations or even pursue a

¹See, for example, J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

²See, for example, Roberta Guerrina, Laura Chappell, and Katharine A. M. Wright, 'Transforming CSDP? Feminist triangles and gender regimes', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56:5 (2018), pp. 1036–52; Laura Sjöberg, 'Centering security studies around felt, gendered insecurities', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 1:1 (2016), pp. 51–63; Fiona Robinson, *The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011).

³Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

'feminist foreign policy' (FFP),⁴ pro-gender norms and issues of women and gender in the foreign policy of individual – mostly Western – states have received increasing scholarly attention.⁵

However, as True and Aggestam have argued, whereas single case studies are commonly researched, 'more scholarship is needed that systematically and cross nationally assesses how pro gender norms and feminist goals are present, adopted and practiced ... in foreign policy.'⁶ Drawing on other comparative studies,⁷ this paper extends the discussion by comparing Israel and Germany, which have hitherto received scant attention in relation to FFP.

The broader question or puzzle this paper probes is whether the pursuit of FFP, or lack thereof, can be linked to countries' national role conceptions, which is explored empirically in relation to the German and Israeli case studies. To our knowledge, this linkage has not been explored by scholars working on FFP or role conceptions. The discussions revolve around three dimensions which are presented in the extant literature as arguably representing the key substantive areas of FFP, pertaining to norms, material aspects, and institutions. We elaborate upon our research design, choice of case studies, and methods further below.

The remainder is structured as follows. First, the paper presents the research design and methods we have used. Second, we explore the puzzle of why Israel and Germany should exhibit diverging propensities concerning the pursuit of FFP, resulting from differences in their respective national role conception. Next, it lays out our understanding of FFP and highlights three key dimensions – normative, material, and institutional – along which FFP can be implemented, which are then examined empirically in the following three sections in relation to Israel and Germany. The final section summarises the argument and offers suggestions for future research.

Research design, methods, and data collection

In designing this research, we have adopted a case-study approach which, as George and Bennett have demonstrated, is very useful for developing theory and new hypotheses, such as the possible links between FFP and role conceptions.⁸ Specifically, our paper explores whether differences in role conception may lead states to exhibit diverging propensities concerning the pursuit of FFP. By role conceptions we mean 'policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems'.⁹ Thus, do countries with a 'masculine' national role conception, which places emphasis on the

⁴See, for example, Karin Aggestam, Annika Bergman Rosamond, and Annika Kronsell, 'Theorising feminist foreign policy', *International Relations*, 33:1 (2019), pp. 23–39; Karin Aggestam and Jacqui True, 'Gendering foreign policy: A comparative framework for analysis', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16:2 (2020), pp. 143–62; Karin Aggestam and Jacqui True, 'Political leadership and gendered multilevel games in foreign policy', *International Affairs*, 97:2 (2021), pp. 385–404; Karen E. Smith, 'Missing in analysis: Women in foreign policy-making', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16:1 (2020), pp. 130–41.

⁵See, for example, Annika Bergman Rosamond, 'Swedish feminist foreign policy and "gender cosmopolitanism"', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16:2 (2020), pp. 217–35; Katrina Lee-Koo, 'Pro-gender foreign policy by stealth: Navigating global and domestic politics in Australian foreign policy making', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16:2 (2020), pp. 236–49; Laura Parisi, 'Canada's new feminist international assistance policy: Business as usual?', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16:2 (2020), pp. 163–80; Inger Skjelsbæk and Torunn Lise Tryggestad, 'Pro-gender norms in Norwegian peace engagement: Balancing experiences, values, and interests', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16:2 (2020), pp. 181–98; Jennifer Thomson, 'What's feminist about feminist foreign policy? Sweden's and Canada's foreign policy agendas', *International Studies Perspectives*, 21:4 (2020), pp. 424–37; Katarzyna Jezierska, 'Incredibly loud and extremely silent: Feminist foreign policy on Twitter', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 57:1 (2022), pp. 84–107.

⁶Aggestam and True, 'Gendering foreign policy', p. 146.

⁷See Thomson, 'What's feminist'; Jennifer Thomson and Sophie Whiting, 'Women, peace and security national action plans in anti-gender governments: The cases of Brazil and Poland', *European Journal of International Security*, 7:4 (2022), pp. 531–50; Ekatherina Zhukova, Malena Rosén Sundström, and Ole Elgström, 'Feminist foreign policies (FFPs) as strategic narratives: Norm translation in Sweden, Canada, France, and Mexico', *Review of International Studies*, 48:1 (2022), pp. 195–216.

⁸Alexander George and Andrew L. Bennet, *Case Study and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

⁹K. J. Holsti, 'National role conceptions in the study of foreign policy', *International Studies Quarterly*, 14:3 (1970), pp. 233–309 (pp. 245–6).

use of force, power-seeking, and domination, object to the pursuit of FFP while countries with a 'feminine' national role conception, which underscores cooperation, restraint, and compromise, advocate/embrace FFP?

Along these lines, Israel and Germany are very useful as 'most likely' and 'least likely' cases; the two countries display rather different predominant national role conceptions that should in turn lead to (considerably) different propensities to advance FFP. As regards Israel, it has been labelled a 'militarized democracy',¹⁰ a 'garrison state',¹¹ and a 'nation in arms',¹² whose foreign policy is guided by the notion of the Iron Wall.¹³ This role perception has been reinforced by the skewed nature of the foreign policy decision-making process towards a powerful security network influencing foreign policy.¹⁴ Correspondingly, Israeli foreign policy privileges the state, and the use of hard power to pursue a national interest over promoting global justice, international law, and multi-lateral diplomacy and engaging with global civil society. Moreover, as Aharoni forcefully argues, Israeli 'militarism is a powerful paradigm that led to women being excluded from dealing with military and security issues, notwithstanding the compulsory conscription of Jewish women' and roles women have played in political parties, women's organisations, etc.¹⁵

Concurrently, Israel's role perception includes civic elements, including its definition as a Jewish and democratic state and its 'start up nation' reputation.¹⁶ However, Israel's challenging security environment, and the emergence of new forms of domestic securitisation as the distinction between 'home' and 'front' has blurred in the conflicts Israel has engaged with since 2000, have impacted significantly.¹⁷ These developments have countered the civilian aspects of Israel's role perception, reinforcing its militarised, power-oriented, realist traits.

Germany, in turn, has seen many foreign policy roles ascribed to it since reunification,¹⁸ predominantly that of 'civilian power' (*Zivilmacht*), which contains several guiding principles.¹⁹ Civilian powers place emphasis on regional and global institution-building and multilateral cooperation in conjunction with a rules- and norms-based international system and the legalisation of international relations more broadly. Regarding the normative underpinning of international affairs, freedom, democracy, human rights, and a market economy are considered as crucial values. In addition, civilian powers seek to promote social balance and justice at the global level. Finally, while civilian powers are highly sceptical concerning the use of military force as a tool of statecraft, they are not pacifist; they acknowledge that conflict resolution might require the use of military force, which in turn should be mandated by the United Nations.²⁰

¹⁰Sarai B. Aharoni, 'Internal variation in norm localization: Implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 in Israel', *Social Politics*, 21:1 (2014), pp. 1–25.

¹¹Jacob Abadi, *Israel's Search for Acceptance and Recognition in Asia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

¹²Uri Ben-Eliezer, 'A nation-in-arms: State, nation and militarism in Israel's first years', *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 37:2 (1995), pp. 264–85.

¹³Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall* (London: Penguin, 2014).

¹⁴Amnon Aran, *Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 6–7.

¹⁵Sarai B. Aharoni, *Women, Peace and Security: UNSCR 1325 in the Israeli Context* (Jerusalem: Van-Leer), p. 37 (in Hebrew).

¹⁶Dan Senor and Saul Singer, *Start Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* (New York: Twelve, 2011); Simon Rabinovich (ed.), *Defining Israel: The Jewish State, Democracy and the Law* (New York: Hebrew Union College Press, 2018).

¹⁷On this distinction, see Aharoni, 'Internal variation in norm localization', p. 7.

¹⁸Those include 'tamed power', 'central power', and 'geo-economic power'. See, for example, Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Die Zentralmacht Europas: Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne* (Berlin: Siedler, 1994); Stephen F. Szabo, *Germany, Russia, and the Rise of Geo-Economics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

¹⁹See, for example, Hanns W. Maull, 'Germany and Japan: The new civilian powers', *Foreign Affairs*, 69:5 (1990), pp. 91–106; Klaus Brummer and Friedrich Kießling (eds), *Zivilmacht Bundesrepublik? Bundesdeutsche außenpolitische Rollen vor und nach 1989 aus politik- und geschichtswissenschaftlichen Perspektive* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019).

²⁰Knut Kirste and Hanns W. Maull, 'Zivilmacht und rollentheorie', *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*, 3:2 (1996), pp. 283–312 (pp. 300–3).

Against this background, the expectation would be that the goals that are typically associated with FFP and pro-gender equality policies align nicely with Germany's civilian-power-predominant national role conception. The latter places a premium on the peaceful resolution of international conflict and the promotion of a broad array of norms in the political, economic, and social spheres. Advancing the role of women in peace and conflict situations as well as pursuing pro-gender equality norms perfectly match this agenda.

Overall, seen through a constructivist-role theoretical lens focusing on predominant national role conceptions, the expectations would be that Germany should be very much engaged in the pursuit of FFP due to the latter's compatibility with its predominant national role conceptions, whereas Israel should be considerably less inclined to pursue such policy based on its decidedly more 'masculine' role conception. Interestingly, a realist standpoint that focuses on the two countries' threat environments and ensuing security concerns would yield the same prediction.²¹ Essentially, while Germany, being deeply integrated in a process of regional integration, has been surrounded by friends for decades, Israel has faced a challenging security environment ever since its creation. Thus, Germany should be more likely to pursue a normative foreign policy than Israel.

Another consideration for choosing Germany and Israel is that they permit us to conduct 'within case analysis' in tandem with the comparison, which 'provides the strongest means for drawing inferences.'²² Moreover, whereas the bulk of the literature on FFP has focused on Western countries operating in benign security environments, our comparison brings together a Western EU-member country with a non-Western state, operating in contrasting security environment.

The data collection for the analysis draws on a host of primary and secondary sources published in Hebrew, German, and English. Sources include government documents (e.g. white papers, policy guidelines, coalition agreements, press releases), parliamentary documents (e.g. minutes of parliamentary select committees), and party documents (e.g. election manifestos). In addition, we submitted two freedom of information requests to obtain data on the representation of women in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and benefited from private documents shared with us. Our data also included newspaper articles (e.g. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Yediot Achronot*), autobiographies, and the academic literature.

We conducted eight in-person elite interviews between December 2019 and July 2022, at the Israeli MFA and the Golda Meir MASHAV-Mount Carmel International Training Centre (MCTC). We are well aware of the problems and pitfalls that are associated with elite interviews, including faulty memory, self-serving accounts, and distortions, and that these are narratives that were produced by people working in the Israeli MFA. Thus, we are fully cognisant of the potential of our interviewees to tell stories which, in Laura Shepherd's terms, 'produce realities' and the authority and values afforded to these narratives over others.²³ To address these potential limitations, we have been careful to triangulate the information generated by our interviewees with the data obtained by other sources, rather than accepting them at face value.

We have focused on the time frame beginning with the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, which ushered in a window of opportunity for the global diffusion of pro-gender norms and the corollary of foreign policy change.²⁴ The analysis ends with the 2021 fifth government of Binyamin Netanyahu and the first year of the Scholz government in the Israeli and German cases respectively. Hence, the paper juxtaposes a European and a non-European country, thereby departing from the predominantly European and North American focus of the FFP literature.²⁵

²¹We would like to thank one of the reviewers for highlighting this point.

²²George and Bennet, *Case Study and Theory Development*, p. 18.

²³Laura J. Shepherd, *Narrating the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Logics of Global Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 2, 11.

²⁴Aggestam and True, 'Gendering foreign policy', p. 158.

²⁵For exceptions, see Toni Haastруп, 'Gendering South Africa's foreign policy: Toward a feminist approach?', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16:2 (2020), pp. 199–216; Zhukova, Sundström, and Elgström, 'Feminist foreign policies'.

Feminist foreign policy

Scholars have recently paid increasing attention to FFP, yet ‘what exactly feminist foreign policy means or consists of remains contested’.²⁶ Still, despite the lack of consensus, the debate converges around the idea that FFP entails the pursuit and ‘promotion of pro-gender equality norms’²⁷ and of ‘gender-just principles’,²⁸ which can be promoted within normative, material, and institutional domains.

The *normative* international reference point for integrating feminist principles in the foreign policy of states has been the United Nations’ (UN) WPS agenda as introduced in 2000 by UNSCR 1325.²⁹ Essentially, the resolution urges all parties to increase the participation of women and involve a gender perspective in UN peace and security efforts and take special measures to protect women and girls from all forms of gender-based violence. Thus, UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions created an institutionally backed normative structure to ‘standardize, monitor and regulate state behaviour in relation to three interlinked elements: women’s participation, the gendered nature of conflict, and women’s post-conflict priorities’.³⁰

However, while the WPS agenda has been important for the emergence of FFP, the latter’s substance should not be limited to issues of peace and security. As Karin Aggestam and colleagues argue, ‘the WPS agenda is not in any way exhaustive of what a feminist foreign policy entails’.³¹ Indeed, the pursuit of FFP can take several forms and lead to different results, e.g. the ‘gender-sensitive policy outcomes’ enumerated by Karen Smith including ‘gender mainstreaming (meaning incorporating considerations of the impact of policies on women and men); promoting the inclusion of women in peace processes; increased levels of foreign aid; promoting human rights and in particular women’s rights and children’s rights; engaging in diplomacy and nonuse of force in disputes; support for peacekeeping’.³²

Following from this, one could explore FFP also along *material* lines, for example with respect to its actual effects on the ground during or after implementation, or whether the feminist goals remain on the rhetorical level or if they are funded and implemented. Ideally, FFP projects promote gender equality norms and principles, emphasising a commitment to care, to tackling gender discrimination and violence, and to women’s and children’s rights.

A third dimension refers to the *institutional* domain and concerns the gender gap in foreign policy, namely, the extent to which the inclusion of women affects decision-making and its implementation.³³ Thus, the pursuit of FFP can be evaluated against the degree to which institutional empowerment of women is promoted, which is not confined to the WPS agenda.

The normative domain

We begin by examining the response engendered by UNSCR 1325 in Israel, recognising from the outset the crucial role played by Israeli civil society, especially women’s organisations, in pursuing numerous activities, including protests in Israel; challenging Israel’s policies together with non-Israeli partners; and broadening the debate on security to cover military and civil issues under the rubric of human security.³⁴ However, providing a detailed analysis of this facet is beyond the scope

²⁶Thomson, ‘What’s feminist’, p. 425.

²⁷Aggestam and True, ‘Political leadership’, p. 386.

²⁸Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond, and Kronsell, ‘Theorising feminist foreign policy’, p. 28.

²⁹See, for example, Davies and True, *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*.

³⁰Aharoni, ‘Internal variation in norm localization’, p. 2.

³¹Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond, and Kronsell, ‘Theorising feminist foreign policy’, p. 28.

³²Smith, ‘Missing in analysis’, p. 136.

³³For example, Lise Togeby, ‘The gender gap in foreign policy’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 31:4 (1994), pp. 375–92; Sylvia Bashevkin, *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

³⁴See Aharoni, ‘Internal variation in norm localization’; Naomi Chazan, ‘Israel, Palestine and UNSC Resolution 1325; Then and now’, *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 25:3–4 (2020), available at: <https://www.pij.org/articles/2044/israel-palestine-and-uns-resolution-1325-then-and-now>.

of our paper. Thus, we focus upon official policy by Israel and its state-institutions in response to UNSCR1325 and include the civil society factor where relevant.

The Israeli MFA was absent from the process of promoting UNSCR 1325, which was spearheaded by women's organisations that sought to place the universal language of UNSCR 1325 in the Israeli context. The impressive scope of the activity highlighted gendered aspects of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the need to integrate women into peace processes. It included meetings with international organisations, media appearances, translating the content and principles underpinning UNSCR 1325 into Hebrew and Arabic, organising conferences, and advocacy. This activism was strongly reflected in an intensive lobbying campaign supporting legal reform led by Members of Knesset (MKs) Eti Livni (Shinui) and Professor Yael Tamir (Labor) to ensure women's equal and diverse representation in public committees and national decision-making, including security matters and peace processes.³⁵

To this end, in the summer of 2004, Livni and Tamir sponsored amendment 4 to the 1951 Women's Equal Rights Law, which was passed a year later with bipartisan support.³⁶ The amendment laid the legal framework 'mandating the representation of women on public committees and national policymaking teams,'³⁷ prompting a shift away from discussing 'women's representation' merely in terms of the 'quota principle'. Indeed, clause 6C of the law stipulated that women should be drawn from a 'variety' (*migvan*) of groups in Israeli society, not only from privileged traditional elites. These changes set the legal basis for holding the state to account and monitoring its policies on promoting women's equal and diverse representation in all national committees and decision-making, including national security and foreign policy. The amendment was conspicuously selective in how it integrated the central themes entailed by UNSCR 1325. For instance, it did not provide for the protection of women and girls in conflict nor for 'gender mainstreaming', which the legislators opined could be achieved through the increase in the number of women decision-makers.³⁸

The embedding of the representation component of UNSCR 1325, which was the first case in the world of entrenching an element of UNSCR 1325 through legislation, yielded limited results. Although it was used in eight submissions to the Supreme Court demanding the instatement of women where an exclusively male decision-making composition did not comply with the amendment, it failed to produce sustained institutional change.³⁹ Indicatively, women have been all but absent from peace negotiations with Syria and the Palestinians since 2001 – when these have existed – and the 2020 Abraham Accords. Exceptions to this rule were few and far between. Furthermore, when women participated in negotiations as civil servants, they filled middle-rank roles as professional specialists but not as decision-makers.⁴⁰

We next move to examine Israel's record in relation to developing a National Action Plan (NAP), which was launched in January 2012. A Comprehensive Civil Society Action Plan for

³⁵ Aharoni, 'Internal variation in norm localization', p. 16; Sarai B. Aharoni, *Women, Peace and Security*, p. 49.

³⁶ Aharoni, *Women, Peace and Security*, p. 56; Aharoni, 'Internal variation in norm localization', p. 15.

³⁷ Aharoni, 'Internal variation in norm localization', p. 15.

³⁸ Aharoni, *Women, Peace and Security*, pp. 48–9, 56–60; Aharoni, 'Internal variation in norm localization', pp. 10, 17–18.

³⁹ On the petitions, see Anat Thon-Ashkenazi, '1325 as an important resource for advancing Israeli–Palestinian peace', *Palestinian–Israeli Journal*, 25:3–4, available at: {<https://www.pij.org/articles/2059/1325-as-an-important-resource-for-advancing-israelipalestinian-peace>}; Tzipi Saar, '20 years to Resolution 1325: Are women more influential in matters of peace and security', *Haaretz*, available at: {<https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/mejunderet/2020-10-22/ty-article/.highlight/0000017f-f4c5-d887-a7ff-fce575480000>}.

⁴⁰ These exceptions include: Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni (2006–9); Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotoveli (2015–19); and Shimrit Meir, key foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Naftali Bennet (2021–2). See Knesset, 'Israeli Knesset Official Website', available at: {<https://main.knesset.gov.il/mk/Apps/mk/mk-government-activity/825>}; Knesset, 'Israeli Knesset Official Website', available at: {<https://main.knesset.gov.il/mk/Apps/mk/mk-print/213>}. On the Syrian and Israeli Palestinian peace process, see Aran, *Israeli Foreign Policy*, pp. 347–64, and for the Abraham Accords and on the rank women filled in peace talks, see Sarai B. Aharoni, 'No entry: How Israeli women were barred from peacemaking', *Palestinian–Israeli Journal*, 25:3–4, available at: {<https://www.pij.org/articles/2052/no-entry-how-israeli-women-were-barred-from-peacemaking>}.

the application of UNSCR1325 (henceforth the CS Plan) was formulated and submitted for the consideration of Israeli government in October 2013.⁴¹

Crucially, the CS Plan only partially reflected UNSCR 1325, having not addressed Israel's conflict in the Middle East and its occupation of Palestinian territories.⁴² Consequently, the CS Plan did not draw links between the possible impact of the occupation on women and girls, nor did it explore the role women should play in its resolution. Instead, the CS Plan focused almost exclusively on domestic matters and on removing obstacles to economic and social equality for diverse groups of women. Notably, it sidelined the issue of Palestinian women being part of a national minority in Israeli society by including them under the broad label of diversity. These omissions prompted several feminist and women's peace movements to not sign up to the CS Plan and to present a position paper critiquing the CS Plan on these grounds.⁴³

Having considered the CS Plan, the third Netanyahu-led government passed government resolution 2331 on 14 December 2014, which is the only government decision deriving directly from UNSCR 1325.⁴⁴ Government resolution 2331 pledged an official commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Accordingly, Israeli ministries were to appoint a gender-mainstreaming advisor and report annually upon the progress they had made on gender quality and mainstreaming. In addition, it stipulated the creation of an inter-ministerial committee, within 60 days, headed and coordinated by the Authority for the Advancement of Women, which would be renamed and restructured as the Authority for the Advancement of Gender. Its responsibilities would include policy formulation, designing an NAP (within 180 days), data collection, public dissemination of information relating to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and consulting with civil society, academics, international organisations, and the Israeli civil service.

However, as of 2023, government resolution 2331 has yet to be implemented. Why the poor record? On 14 May 2015, Binyamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister for a third consecutive term (and fourth overall). Netanyahu assembled a clerical-nationalist avowedly right-wing coalition government, which downplayed Israel's commitment to pluralism, social equity, and substantive democracy, while promoting an ethnocentric, ultranationalist, hegemonic interpretation of Israeli identity. As a result, as Chazan argued, gender relations and policies retrogressed, which stymied any measures to implement resolution 2331 including developing an NAP.⁴⁵ Indicatively, initial recommendations put forward by an inter-ministerial team formed following government resolution 2331 to develop an NAP, headed by Ms Vered Swede, which held nine meetings (28 May–23 November 2015), were not taken up by the new Netanyahu government and the committee petered out.⁴⁶ Subsequently, Israel plunged into a deep internal political crisis as the country held five elections between April 2019 and November 2022, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused any progress on implementing 2331 to grind to a halt.⁴⁷ Thus, to date, the core normative principles of the WPS have been absent from Israel's foreign policy.

What has been the record of Germany? The Merkel government defined the agenda and purpose of WPS as 'to increase the participation of women in crisis prevention, conflict management

⁴¹ Itach-Maaki – Women Lawyers for Social Justice, 'A comprehensive plan to implement UNSCR 1325', available at: <https://www.itach.org.il/wp-content/uploads/tochnit-peula-heb.pdf> (in Hebrew).

⁴² We draw here on a position paper produced by Alternative Coalition, which included several organisations that refused to sign the Comprehensive Action plan, and the account by Professor Naomi Chazan, who played a leading role in the process.

⁴³ Position Paper on Behalf of Jewish and Palestinian women's rights organisations in Israel, *1325 Alternative Coalition*, published following a workshop that took place in April 2015 in Jerusalem (private collection; in Hebrew); mentioned also in an official parliamentary report: Nurit Yechimovitz-Cohen, 'UNSCR1325 and its embedding in legislation and government resolutions in Israel', Israeli Knesset Information Centre Official Website, available at: https://fs.knesset.gov.il/globaldocs/MMM/c31207dc-1277-e511-80d1-00155d0ad6b2/2_c31207dc-1277-e511-80d1-00155d0ad6b2_11_9481.pdf (in Hebrew).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Chazan, 'Israel, Palestine and UNSC Resolution 1325'.

⁴⁶ Yechimovitz-Cohen, 'UNSCR1325', p. 11.

⁴⁷ For the electoral timeline, see the Knesset Official Website, available at: <https://main.knesset.gov.il/mk/government/pages/governments.aspx?govId=37>; on gender regression, see Naomi Chazan, 'Israel at 70: A gender perspective', *Israel Studies*, 23:3 (2018), pp. 141–51.

and post-conflict peacebuilding to protect them against gender-based violence and in particular sexual violence in situations of armed conflict'.⁴⁸ It detailed Germany's contributions to the implementation of the WPS agenda in the 2012, 2017, and 2021 NAPs⁴⁹ and in reports on their implementation.⁵⁰ A key goal of the NAPs was to 'anchor the topic more solidly than hitherto as a cross-sectoral element in its foreign, security and development policy and give its measures a uniform frame of reference'.⁵¹ Indeed, an inter-agency whole-of-government approach characterised Germany's implementation of the WPS agenda during the Merkel years. Accordingly, the action plans assigned tasks and duties not only for the foreign office and the ministries for defence and for development, as might be expected, but also for several other ministries – including justice, interior, and family – which participate in an 'Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda'.⁵²

Substantively, the third and final WPS action plan adopted by the Merkel government (covering the years 2021 to 2024) listed six priority areas which pertain to different phases of conflict. Those were crisis prevention; participation; protection and support; humanitarian assistance, crisis management, and reconstruction; strengthening the Women, Peace, and Security agenda; and increasing institutional integration and capacities. A novelty of this third action plan was that it included a detailed 'monitoring and evaluation plan' which attached to the aforementioned priority areas specific targets, timelines, and indicators for assessing goal attainment.⁵³

Germany under Angela Merkel not only implemented the WPS agenda but also substantively developed it. During its non-permanent membership on the UN Security Council (2019/20), Germany acted as norm entrepreneur by sponsoring UN Security Council resolution 2467, which addresses the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. In addition, Germany pursued the WPS agenda through the European Union and NATO, both of which have also developed actions plans to this effect.⁵⁴ At the same time, numerous high-profile foreign and security policy documents adopted under Merkel hardly mentioned issues of women and gender at all. For example, the 2016 White Paper on Defence had little to say on those issues. Statements on this are limited to a brief reference to UNSC resolution 1325. Yet the lack of attention was not limited to defence-related policy documents.⁵⁵ For example, the 2011 concept on Germany and Africa and the 2020 Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific paid little attention to women or gender.⁵⁶

In December 2021, a new coalition government led by Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) took over, comprising the Social Democrats (SPD), the Liberals (FDP), and the Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen). The Greens have been instrumental in turning 'feminist foreign policy' into an explicit

⁴⁸Federal Government, 'Action plan of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 for the period 2013–2016', Berlin (2012), p. 3.

⁴⁹Federal Government, 'Action plan 2013–2016'; Federal Government, 'Action plan of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for the period 2017–2020', Berlin (2017); Federal Foreign Office, 'The German Federal Government's action plan for the Women, Peace and Security agenda 2021 to 2024', Berlin (2021).

⁵⁰Federal Government, 'Report on the action plan of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for the period 2017 to 2020', Berlin (2021).

⁵¹Federal Government, 'Action plan 2013–2016', p. 5.

⁵²Federal Foreign Office, 'The German Federal Government's action plan', p. 2.

⁵³Federal Foreign Office, 'The German Federal Government's action plan', pp. 41–59.

⁵⁴See Council of the European Union, 'EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2019–2024', Document 11031/19, Brussels (2019); NATO, 'Action plan for the implementation of the NATO/EAPC policy on Women, Peace and Security 2021–2025' (21 October 2012), available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_187485.htm].

⁵⁵Federal Government, 'White paper 2016 on German security policy and the future of the Bundeswehr', Berlin (2016), p. 63.

⁵⁶See Bundesregierung, 'Deutschland und Afrika: Konzept der Bundesregierung', Berlin (2011), pp. 9, 11, 16, 23–4; Federal Government, 'Policy guidelines for the Indo-Pacific: Germany–Europe–Asia. Shaping the 21st century together', Berlin (2020), p. 11.

goal of the new government, drawing upon an explicit commitment made in their manifesto.⁵⁷ Conversely, the election manifestos of the Social Democrats and the Liberals did not mention FFP. More specifically, the Greens pledged to strengthen the rights of women, girls, and marginalised groups, to implement the WPS agenda, and to provide adequate and sustained financial and political support for such a policy, among other things.⁵⁸ Subsequently the Greens insisted that FFP – using the English expression seemingly for the reason that the Social Democrats and Liberals were reluctant to include the concept at all⁵⁹ – entered the coalition agreement. In it, the government pledges, for example, to strengthen the rights, resources, and representation of women and girls globally and to implement and further develop the national action plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325/WPS.⁶⁰

Since assuming office, the pursuit of the WPS agenda, and FFP more broadly, has been considerably constrained by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Still, arguably the key difference from the Merkel government so far has been that WPS is now advanced explicitly under the label of FFP. Substantively, the Scholz government has not offered significant innovations to date. Rather, it is continuing the work of its predecessor by implementing the NAP that was adopted by the Merkel government in February 2021 and runs until 2024.

Despite no major changes specifically on the WPS agenda, the new government – especially foreign minister Annalena Baerbock – has clearly raised the public profile of Germany's activities to promote the status of women since taking office. Explicitly following the examples set by Canada and Sweden,⁶¹ Baerbock has addressed the status of women and feminist concerns more broadly in numerous public statements. For example, in a speech on International Women's Day in early March 2022, Baerbock laid out core elements of her understanding of FFP, which evolves around 'three Rs' in the form of rights, representation, and resources and whose ultimate goal is 'about hearing all the voices of society'.⁶² Further, when travelling abroad, Baerbock has sought to pay attention to feminist concerns in her statements and meetings.⁶³ Finally, the foreign office organised a high-profile conference on 'Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy' in September 2022, where Baerbock reiterated the 'three Rs', which should be 'mainstreamed' and a thread running through all of Germany's foreign and security policy. She also added the concept of 'diversity' as integral to and promoted by an FFP.⁶⁴

Thus, when looking at the normative domain in relation to the Israeli and German cases, some analytical conclusions emerge. To date, the normative agenda of UNSCR 1325 has not been incorporated into Israeli foreign policy, as attempts to do so through legislation yielded very limited results, and the country has yet to adopt a NAP. Conversely, in Germany, the WPS agenda already played a role during the Merkel years – to a larger extent than was commonly perceived – albeit not under the explicit label of 'FFP'. The Merkel government not only provided detailed plans on how to pursue the WPS agenda in its external actions but also acted as norm entrepreneur by contributing to the substantive development of the WPS agenda more broadly. The shift to the

⁵⁷Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 'Deutschland: Alles ist drin. Bundestagswahlprogramm 2021', Berlin (2021), p. 92.

⁵⁸Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 'Deutschland: Alles ist drin', pp. 104–5.

⁵⁹*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 'Der feministische Dreiklang' (12 September 2022), p. 5.

⁶⁰Bundesregierung, 'Mehr Fortschritt wagen: Bündnis für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Nachhaltigkeit. Koalitionsvertrag zwischen SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen und FDP', Berlin (2021), p. 144.

⁶¹Federal Foreign Office, 'Rede von Außenministerin Annalena Baerbock im Deutschen Bundestag zur Außen-, Europa- und Menschenrechtspolitik' (12 January 2022), available at: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/-/2506188>.

⁶²Federal Foreign Office, 'Auftrittimpuls von Außenministerin Annalena Baerbock für die Veranstaltung "Geschlechtergleichstellung heute für ein nachhaltiges Morgen" anlässlich des Weltfrauentags 2022' (7 March 2022), available at: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/-/2515802>.

⁶³For instance, during a visit to Morocco. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 'Ein Neustart im Lichte des Ukrainekriegs' (26 August 2022), p. 4.

⁶⁴Federal Foreign Office, 'Rede von Außenministerin Annalena Baerbock bei der Konferenz "Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy"' (12 September 2022), available at: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/feministische-aussenpolitik/2551358>.

Scholz government has increased the emphasis on the WPS agenda and feminist foreign policy goals through the explicit adoption of the FFP concept. However, it is yet unclear whether the new government will match its rhetoric with substance, given the significant headwinds such policy faces, not least the war in Ukraine. In both cases, domestic politics – the rise of the Greens and the clerical-nationalist Netanyahu governments – significantly impacted upon implementation of the WPS agenda. However, in Germany the shift reinforced FFP and feminine national conception role, whereas in Israel the change halted attempts to implement the WPS agenda, which would have challenged Israel's masculine role conception.

The material domain

We will examine the 'material' domain, starting with Israel's development policy, which is operationalised via MASHAV – the Centre for Cooperation of the Israeli MFA. MASHAV has devised its development policy towards women and gender through programmes termed interchangeably as 'empowerment of women', 'gender empowerment', 'women's status', or 'gender equality'.⁶⁵ MASHAV's focal point for operationalising these programs is MCTC, which was founded in 1961 by the then foreign minister, Golda Meir. As an international training institute, MCTC is affiliated with the MFA, not women's organisations/civil society, and has trained approximately 25,000 professional women and men from around the world, with women comprising 75–80 per cent of trainees.⁶⁶ Training courses, which are a key tool used by MCTC to implement MASHAV's foreign gender policy, are delivered by Israeli experts in Israel and through one week 'On-the-Spot' training courses abroad, include early childhood education; community building; sustainable development for women in rural areas; tackling violence against women and girls; building innovative micro-finance ecosystems for women; and the management of health systems in crisis.⁶⁷ These schemes are coupled with training courses in political leadership in gender and local governance, political empowerment of women, and leadership for civil society activism.⁶⁸

The schemes, which adopt a 'bottom-up', community-driven development approach, have been identified as catalysts for wider-scale development, human capacity-building, and training in relevant micro-project activities where Israel has expertise.⁶⁹ In addition, successive heads of MCTC and MASHAV have considered these areas of development as critical for women's empowerment; successfully establishing the relevant frameworks in these areas creates the conditions for women to pursue further education and employment, freeing up the time required to develop their commercial and political careers.⁷⁰

MCTC has also sought to establish itself as a high-level gender policy development hub. It routinely hosts women's organisations and runs the biannual International Symposium for

⁶⁵ See Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), 'MASHAV annual report 2003', Jerusalem (2003), pp. 4, 43; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2009', Jerusalem (2009), p. 4; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2011', Jerusalem (2011), p. 4; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2015', Jerusalem (2015), p. 6; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2019', Jerusalem (2019), pp. 6–7.

⁶⁶ Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2017', Jerusalem (2017), p. 44; and interesting historical analysis, Shachar Re'em, 'The early history of MASHAV Carmel International Training Centre: An inward and outward look at discourse and practice in international development 1961–1973', PhD diss., Ben Gurion University of the Negev, 2021.

⁶⁷ For example, Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2005', Jerusalem (2005), p. 44; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2009', p. 45; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2011', p. 44; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2016', Jerusalem (2016), p. 44.

⁶⁸ Israeli MFA, MASHAV publication pamphlets, provided to authors by Israeli MFA officials during fieldwork visit, July 2022; interview with Sarah Wilner, Head of the MCTC in 2022, Haifa, 4 July 2022.

⁶⁹ For example, Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2008', Jerusalem (2008), pp. 3, 5; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2011', pp. 4, 5; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2016', p. 6.

⁷⁰ For example, Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2005'; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2013', Jerusalem (2013), pp. 7, 42; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2016', p. 8; interview with Wilner (4 July 2022); interview with Mazal Renford, head of MCTC (1994–2014), Haifa, 4 July 2022; interview with Einat Shlain, ambassador, current head of MASHAV, Jerusalem, 5 July 2022.

Women (ISW),⁷¹ in partnership with women's organisations such as the Women's Mediterranean Forum and the International Council of Women⁷² and international organisations including the International Organisation of Migration and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women at the United Nations.⁷³

The ISW, which centres on issues aligned with the Millennium Development Goals, constitutes MASHAV's and MCTC's main network-building forum of high-level women office-holders such as ministers, parliamentarians, judges, leaders of NGOs, and journalists from around the world.⁷⁴ Each ISW generates a set of recommendations summarised in a biannual 'Haifa Declaration', which seems to have a primarily performative function, as we found no evidence that they are implemented.⁷⁵

To what extent does Israel's development policy align with FFP? In relation to the key FFP feature of funding, Israel falls short. Despite joining the OECD and becoming richer since 2010, Israel's development budget has decreased over time. During its heyday in the early 1960s and 1970s, MASHAV was the largest department in the MFA with Israel, per capita, having one of the most extensive technical assistance programs in the Western world.⁷⁶ However, MASHAV's operational budget was slashed by 50 per cent after the 1973 Arab–Israeli war, which severed relations between Israel and most African states.⁷⁷ The downward trajectory continued – bar a brief uptick during the 1990s Oslo Peace Process – and since 2007, Israel's ratio of Overseas Development Assistance as a share of GNI plateaued at 0.07, or 10 per cent of the level recommended by the OECD.⁷⁸

Israel's record of promoting gender equality norms and principles also does not correspond with FFP, as the 'woman capacity-building' programmes provided by MCTC are not primarily geared towards engendering political change by promoting gender quality norms and principles. Rather, as consecutive heads of MASHAV explain,⁷⁹ they are designed mainly to serve Israeli foreign policy interests:

If I were to highlight in order of priority the key foreign policy goals we seek to achieve via our woman/gender empowerment and equality programmes and foreign aid more broadly they would be: (1) use aid to strengthen relations with states in accordance to the Israeli national interest; (2) brand Israel as a significant and positive force in the development community by delivering aid emphasising Israel's specific strengths and capacities; (3) improving Israel's image abroad by presenting it in areas that lie beyond the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, thereby shifting the spotlight to other things that happen in Israel – in education, innovation, gender. This helps us build Israel's image.⁸⁰

Similarly, the MCTC-run ISW promotes Israeli foreign policy interests rather than gender principles and norms, which is strongly illustrated by how the composition of ISW attendees is determined. As the present head of MASHAV, Einat Shlain, explains:

⁷¹For example, Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2003', p. 44; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2011', pp. 10, 45; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2013', pp. 15, 42; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2017'.

⁷²Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2016', p. 44; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2007', Jerusalem (2007), p. 45.

⁷³Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2009', p. 45.

⁷⁴Interview with Shlain (5 July 2022).

⁷⁵For example, Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2003', p. 44; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2011', pp. 10, 45; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2013', pp. 15, 42; Israeli MFA, 'MASHAV annual report 2017'.

⁷⁶Moshe Decter, *To Serve, To Teach, To Leave: The Story of Israel's Development Programme in Black Africa* (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1977), p. 8.

⁷⁷Aliza Belman Inbal and Shachar Zahavi, *The Rise and Fall of Israel's Bilateral Aid Budget* (Tel Aviv: The Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy, 2018), p. 9.

⁷⁸Inbal and Zahavi, *Rise and Fall*, p. 14; according to the OECD, 'Israel's official development assistance', available at: <https://www.oecd.org/israel/israels-official-development-assistance.htm>; interview with Renford (4 July 2022).

⁷⁹Interview with Daniel Carmon, ambassador, former head of MASHAV and inspector general, Kiryat Ono, 7 July 2022.

⁸⁰Interview with Shlain (5 July 2022).

We do not invite more than 50 women leaders to this high-profile event and prioritise higher-ranked foreign policymakers. We also of course prefer to invite personalities that are supportive of Israel rather than someone that would criticise Israel. After all, and I say this very clearly, this is not an NGO but a governmental organisation of the state of Israel, we don't hide it and that's legitimate.⁸¹

Furthermore, Israeli ambassadors have the prerogative of requesting that certain invitees deemed useful for promoting Israeli interests are prioritised over candidates holding 'higher gender credentials' proposed by MCTC.⁸² Such invitees, including ministers and MPs, then meet Israeli ministers and government officials while attending the ISW, to forge a personalised bond with Israel.⁸³

To what extent does Germany's development policy align with FFP? In 2016, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development adopted a 'Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016–2020'. This gender action plan put forth a 'three-pronged approach of gender mainstreaming, empowerment and policy dialogue' to inform policymaking and ensuing projects in nine sector-specific issues and seven cross-sectional activities.⁸⁴ While the sections and activities also addressed peace and conflict (e.g. violence against women and girls; armed conflicts; peacekeeping; and displacement), they deliberately moved Germany's activities beyond the WPS agenda. Accordingly, it included issues such as access to justice and legal services, rural development, education, economic empowerment, health, water and sanitation, and climate change as well as activities such as tackling discrimination, gender equality in development financing, and strengthening women's organisations.⁸⁵ Also in 2021, the Merkel government adopted an 'LGBTI Inclusion Strategy for Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation'. The strategy stipulated as an 'overarching goal' that 'German foreign policy and development cooperation will provide structurally sustainable support to the LGBTI human rights work undertaken by civil society, with reference to specific vulnerabilities and multiple discrimination'.⁸⁶

Those proclamations were then implemented through national and multilateral programmes. Thus, during its G20 presidency in 2017 Germany established the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) and was its largest contributor with 75 million euros. Two years later, Germany pledged 30 million euros for the African Guarantee Fund, which supports the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA) programmes. In 2021, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) initiated an education programme for girls ('SHE – Support Her Education') in collaboration with Malala Yousafzai and the Global Partnership for Education, with a sum of 100 million euros. Lastly, Germany has contributed 100 million euros since 2017 to the joint EU–UN spotlight initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.⁸⁷

Notwithstanding this level of activity, issues of women and gender were not the overriding concern of Germany's development policy during the Merkel years. Indicatively, the final Merkel government sought to strategically reorient development policy as the development ministry paid only limited attention to issues of women and gender in its '2030 Reform Strategy'. True, the general thrust of this strategy was to render German development policy more efficient and focused, not least in terms of adjusting (read: reducing) the number of recipient states. However, those efforts were connected to sharpening the substantive focus of German development policy. Tellingly,

⁸¹ Interview with Shlain (5 July 2022).

⁸² Interview with Shlain (5 July 2022).

⁸³ Interview with Shlain (5 July 2022).

⁸⁴ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Development policy action plan on gender equality 2016–2020', Berlin (2016), p. 5.

⁸⁵ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Development policy action plan', chapters 3 and 4.

⁸⁶ Federal Government, 'LGBTI inclusion strategy: Federal Government LGBTI inclusion strategy for foreign policy and development cooperation', Berlin (2021), p. 6.

⁸⁷ Federal Government, 'EINWELT – unsere Verantwortung. Globalisierung gerecht gestalten. 16. Entwicklungspolitischer Bericht der Bundesregierung', Berlin (2021), pp. 75, 88.

the promotion of pro-gender norms or the role and status of women were not explicitly listed among the ‘core areas.’⁸⁸ Rather, gender only appeared at the very end of the document when listed in tandem with human rights and disability inclusion as one out of six ‘quality criteria’ which were supposed to indicate ‘what defines development cooperation as value-based, sustainable and forward-looking.’⁸⁹ Similarly, an evaluation report on the implementation of the strategy adopted in June 2021 devoted little attention to women and gender bar a brief overview of measures that were adopted towards Sustainable Development Target no. 5 on gender equality.⁹⁰

In short, similarly to the normative dimension, feminist concerns clearly did play a role also in the material domain during the chancellorship of Merkel. However, and like the trend we unearthed in the normative domain, feminist concerns have become more prominent under the new government. Most significantly, under the leadership of the current federal minister for economic cooperation and development, Svenja Schulze, from the Social Democrats, Germany pursues a ‘feminist development policy’. Schulze summarises the gist of that policy as follows: ‘The reasons for this [gender inequalities] are discriminatory social structures, norms, and roles, which must be overcome if we want to achieve gender equality and sustainable democracies. And this is precisely why we need a feminist development policy, especially in times of crisis.’⁹¹ The ultimate goal of such a policy is to usher in social transformation and to ‘make entire societies more resilient, stable, peaceful, and prosperous.’⁹²

At the same time, as has been the case with the WPS agenda, there is considerable continuity in policy as several development programmes instated by the Merkel government – such as We-Fi or the EU–UN spotlight initiative – have been maintained by the new government. Simultaneously, significant increases in projects devoted to feminist concerns are to be expected in the coming years. Indeed, Schulze pledged at the aforementioned conference to ‘gradually increase the share of bilateral Development Ministry funding that contributes to gender equality as a principal or significant objective – from its current level of about 60 per cent to a level of 93 per cent’ by 2025.⁹³

The comparison between Israel and Germany is revealing. Under the Netanyahu and Merkel governments, gender was present in Israel’s and Germany’s development foreign policy. However, in the Israeli case, its pursuit was subservient to achieving broader real-politic goals – buttressing alliances, improving Israel’s image, punishing unsupportive countries. In turn, in the German case gender clearly played second fiddle to other concerns, which included greater efficiency and efficacy in the spending of development funds and the strategic reorientation of development policy towards a few core states. Under the Scholz chancellorship, there has been a declaratory shift reflecting an ideological commitment to an explicit and transformative FFP. Indicatively, the new government pledges that ‘feminist development policy would become one of the hallmarks of the Development Ministry,’⁹⁴ which should soon culminate in a new strategy for feminist development policy. To this end, ‘feminist developments and gender equality’ was recently listed among the ‘focus areas of development cooperation’ in the ministry’s new Africa strategy, albeit only as fourth

⁸⁸Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘BMZ 2030 reform strategy: New thinking – new direction’, Berlin (2020), p. 4.

⁸⁹Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘BMZ 2030 reform strategy’, p. 10.

⁹⁰Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, ‘BMZ 2030: Gemeinsam weiter Zukunft denken. Ergebnisbericht’, Berlin (2021), p. 10.

⁹¹Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘Conference: Feminist Development Policy – Transforming International Cooperation’, available at: <https://www.bmz.de/en/issues/feminist-development-policy/conference-transforming-international-cooperation>.

⁹²Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘Keynote speech by Development Minister Svenja Schulze at the opening of the conference “Feminist Development Policy – Transforming International Cooperation” (27 September 2022), available at: <https://www.bmz.de/en/news/speeches-and-contributions/minister-svenja-schulze/220927-speech-schulze-conference-feminist-development-policy-122164>.

⁹³Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘Keynote speech’.

⁹⁴Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘Keynote speech’.

item among a total of six.⁹⁵ However, amid the financial pressure imposed by first the Covid-19 pandemic and the ‘energy crisis’ unleashed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is unclear whether those declarations will yield noteworthy financial consequences. Thus, the rise of the Greens and their FFP ideology ended up reinforcing German’s feminine role conception, which did not suffice to produce a FFP under Merkel’s chancellorship. In Israel, women capacity-building occurred as long was instrumentalised to, and aligned with, national interest considerations.

The institutional domain

We turn to examine the institutional domain to account for women’s representation, focusing on the Israeli MFA and appointments to what it defines as senior positions – ambassadors, deputy director, and director general. A more nuanced picture emerges than that of women’s representation in decision-making, which we presented in the normative section. Between 2001 and 2010 there were 12–13 women ambassadors and heads of missions,⁹⁶ or 12 per cent of the 103 Israeli missions abroad. By 2016, the number had risen to 22, or 20 per cent, of the then 106 missions, which by 2021 had dropped to 18, or 17 per cent, of the missions.⁹⁷ Concurrently, there has been a moderate growth in the number of women holding for the first time some of the most prestigious and strategically important ambassadorships including: Anna Azari (2006–10) and Dorit Golender (2010–15) in Moscow, Aliza Bin-Noun (2015–21) in Paris, and Gabriella Shalev (2008–10) at the UN. Einat Shlain (2015–17) and Amira Oron (2020–ongoing) were the first women ambassadors appointed to Jordan and Egypt respectively.⁹⁸

During the 2001–21 period, the number of women assuming non-ambassadorial senior positions increased too, though unevenly. Between 2001 and 2016, the number of women deputy directors remained at 3–4, increasing sharply to 7 by 2021 (16–40 per cent).⁹⁹ In all categories, notably, the composition of the women in senior leadership is monolithically Jewish-white, with only the ambassador to Ethiopia (2012–17), Belaynesh Zevadia, being a woman of colour. Furthermore, in terms of the representation of women and marginal groups in the diplomatic corps, which is a key indicator of an FFP, Israel falls short. Although women comprise 47 per cent of the MFA workforce,¹⁰⁰ ambassadorial and non-ambassadorial appointments to senior positions peaked respectively at 20 per cent and 40 per cent (since 2016).

How can we account for these trends? The so-called Pipeline Problem, whereby the small numbers of women recruited to the MFA in earlier periods, resulting in women being subsequently underrepresented, emerges as a key suppressing factor. Drawing upon data we obtained via a freedom of information request and privately received documents, we are able to account for the ‘Pipeline Problem’. From 1969 to 2021, the MFA opened 36 cadet courses, which typically recruited yearly or every two years. [Figure 1](#) represents the percentage of women cadets in each cohort.

Typically, a women cadet reached a senior role within 15–20 years. Therefore, due to the very low number of women cadets recruited between 1969 and the 1998 – which was the first cohort where the MFA sought parity between men and women as a recruitment policy¹⁰¹ – the number of women eligible for senior positions from 2001–21 was low to begin with.

⁹⁵Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘Shaping the future with Africa: The Africa strategy of the BMZ’, Berlin (2023).

⁹⁶Diana Bachur, ‘Women in the MFA: New record, old discrimination’, *YNET* (27 May 2002), available at: <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-1912315,00.html>; Israeli MFA, ‘Women in the MFA: A Snapshot’, Jerusalem (2008).

⁹⁷Israeli MFA, ‘In the past five years the number of managers in the MFA has doubled’ (9 March 2021), available at: https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/international_women_s_day.

⁹⁸Data available on list of ambassadors 2001–21 and lengths of term obtained via a freedom of information request.

⁹⁹Israeli MFA, ‘International Women’s Day (Gender Equal Day)’, Jerusalem (2008); Israeli MFA, ‘In the past five years’.

¹⁰⁰Orna Sagiv, Israeli MFA’s inspector general, lecture delivered to the National Security Study Program at the University of Haifa, 25 May 2017, authors’ private collection.

¹⁰¹Interview with Einat Kranz-Neiger, chief gender equality officer and special advisor on the advancement of women, Jerusalem, 31 December 2019.

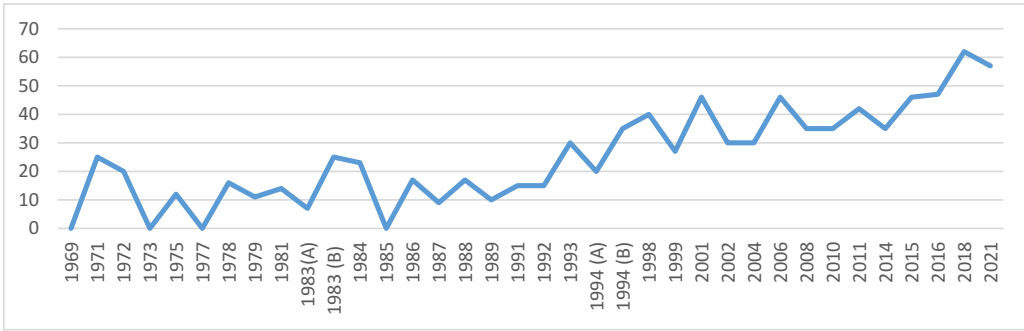


Figure 1. Yearly percentage of women in MFA cadet course.

Source: Compiled by authors from documents received privately and through freedom of information requests. In the rare instances where two cadet courses opened in one year, we have tagged them as A and B.

However, the ‘Pipeline Problem’ is not the only cause. Deeply seated social norms of male chauvinism, too, have constrained the progress of women. Tova Herzl, for example, who served as the Israeli ambassador to Latvia (1993–6) and South Africa (2000–3), candidly reflected on this issue. Her appointment committee to the MFA, which consisted of ‘somber, middle-aged men’, posed to her during an interview an astonishing question: ‘When you are posted abroad and the local government will summon you to complain about Israeli policy, what will you do, cry?’¹⁰²

This question, which reflected the very low esteem women were held in, was not an isolated event. Several other women ambassadors have revealed how their male colleagues maintained that women could not adequately perform the duties of a diplomat on the grounds that they were ‘hysterical’; ‘bad managers’; ‘prone to having affairs if alone on a diplomatic mission’; ‘unable to handle sensitive security issues’ and balance their childcare responsibilities with their diplomatic duties.¹⁰³ None of these unfounded ‘concerns’ were put before male diplomats, who, as female ambassador Shavit puts it wryly, were accompanied by female partners who were expected ‘to act as a perfect wife and as an impeccable host’.¹⁰⁴ The deeply seated open male chauvinism exacerbated the Pipeline Problem by holding back or preventing women from filling diplomatic roles required for climbing up the ranks.

However, legislation passed in the early 1990s, such as Amendment 7 (1995) to the 1959 Civil Service Law concerning gender equality in appointments to the civil service,¹⁰⁵ and the 1998 Israeli Sexual Harassment Law,¹⁰⁶ changed the scene somewhat. Open male chauvinism gave way to a latent form of male chauvinism. For example, there was an acute sense across the generations of women recruits that, to secure a position in a senior role, it was necessary to overcome or at least outmanoeuvre the old boy network, which women felt excluded from. The old boy network typically forms during the cadet course, which until the late 2010s, were majority male. They are then sustained in a majority-male workforce and reproduced through professional and social events, which women can attend less frequently than men due to their family responsibilities. Women had

¹⁰²Tova Herzl, *Madam Ambassador: Behind the Scenes with a Candid Israeli Diplomat* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), pp. 1–2.

¹⁰³Colette Avital, *The Girl in the Red Scarf* (Tel Aviv: Miskal, 2021), pp. 66–7, 76; Interview with Orna Sagiv, ambassador, Jerusalem, 31 December 2019; Dorit Sahvit, *Diplomat in a Skirt* (Azor: Tzameret Book, 2018), pp. 14, 136–9.

¹⁰⁴Shavit, *Diplomat in a Skirt*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁵Knesset, ‘Israeli Knesset Official Website’, available at: <https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Legislation/Laws/pages/LawBill.aspx?t=LawReshumot&lawitemid=170159>.

¹⁰⁶International Labour Organisation, ‘NATLEX: Israel (174)’, available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=57358&p_country=ISR&p_count=174.

less or no access to these formal and informal settings, which created male ‘networks of trust’ supporting their professional progression.¹⁰⁷

A third constraining factor concerns the differential impact of 4–5 years of a diplomatic mission abroad upon female and male diplomats. When a women diplomat is posted abroad, her partner is likely to delay or give up their career and lose pension rights. The MFA does not provide a solution to these serious problems, resulting in male partners often not joining their female partner for a post abroad. This causes the family unit to split or collapse altogether, which is a factor that affects female diplomats far more than their male counterparts. Unlike males, going it alone and leaving the family behind is problematic for female diplomats. Often they are stigmatised as ‘abandoning’ their families for the sake of their careers, and there are no support structures for single mothers serving as diplomats. These very serious obstacles, which male diplomats do not face, as they will often be accompanied by their wives and are less stigmatised if they leave their family behind while abroad, have reduced the number of women taking up diplomatic and ambassadorial positions or caused them to cut short their ambassadorships.¹⁰⁸

How can the constant rise in women’s representation, particularly since 2016, be explained nevertheless? Extensive governmental work to increase the representation of women across the civil service, culminating in the recommendations of the 2014 Shtauber report,¹⁰⁹ which were adopted by Israeli government decision 1697, was decisive. The report set clear goals for the civil service, including equal opportunity for women, an emphasis on promoting women to senior positions, and gender streamlining and instated a stringent reporting and monitoring system holding governmental ministries to account.¹¹⁰

The Shtauber report and the ensuing measures, which required the MFA to work towards the goal of reaching 50:50 ratio in women’s representation, was coupled with internal changes in the ministry. Most significant was the change in the role of chief gender equality officer and special advisor on the advancement of women. Tamar Samash, who was the first appointee to this role during the 1980s, which at the time only carried the title of ‘status of women officer’, provides insights as to how this role evolved. ‘Essentially’, as she explained, the status of women officer role ‘was about protecting women from sexual harassment rather than advancing them professionally’. Thus, for several years Samash was the single women serving in an ‘observer capacity’ on the MFA’s male-dominated promotion and appointment committee.¹¹¹

However, following the pro-gender legislation of the 1990s and government decision 1697, the status of women officer title was changed to the chief gender equality officer and special advisor on the advancement of women. They are appointed for a period of four years with an option to extend for two more periods of two years. Crucially, they are tasked with identifying and encouraging women to apply to senior positions and are a voting member of the appointment and promotion committee.¹¹²

What has Germany’s record been in the institutional domain? For starters, Angela Merkel was the first female German chancellor (2005–21), and the second-longest tenured chancellor in the country’s history after Helmut Kohl. However, having a woman chancellor did not translate into widespread appointments of other women politicians to leadership positions in foreign and security policy. Two out of five defence ministers (Ursula von der Leyen from 2013–19

¹⁰⁷Herzl, *Madam Ambassador*, p. 2; Interview with Carmon (7 July 2022); interview with Kranz-Neiger (31 December 2019); interview with Sagiv (31 December 2019); interview with Shlain (5 July 2022).

¹⁰⁸Interview with Kranz-Neiger (31 December 2019); interview with Sagiv (31 December 2019); interview with Shlain (5 July 2022).

¹⁰⁹Dalit Shtauber, ‘Guidelines to government ministries as regards the implementation of the Shtauber Report’, Knesset, 2014, available at: {<https://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Legislation/Laws/pages/LawBill.aspx?t=LawReshumot&lawitemid=170159>}.

¹¹⁰Shtauber, ‘Guidelines to Government’, <https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/reports/guidelinesplanninghc2016/he/GuidelinesPlanningHC2016.pdf>.

¹¹¹Interview with Tamar Samash, Jerusalem, 31 December 2019.

¹¹²Interview with Kranz-Neiger (31 December 2019).

and Annegret Kamp-Karrenbauer from 2019–21, both from the CDU) and one out of three development ministers (Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul 2005–9, SPD) were the exceptions.

True, the foreign and security policy portfolios were not held exclusively by Merkel's CDU but also by her junior coalition partners from the SPD and the FDP respectively, which were not particularly inclined to fill key posts with women either. The foreign ministry, tellingly, which in Germany traditionally goes to the junior coalition party,¹¹³ was held exclusively by male politicians: Frank-Walter Steinmeier (2005–29 and again 2013–17, SPD), Guido Westerwelle (2009–13, FDP), Sigmar Gabriel (2017–18, SPD) and Heiko Maas (2018–21, SPD). On the level of junior ministers in the foreign office, the picture was only moderately better; 3 out of 9 state secretaries and 2 out of 15 ministers of state were women between 2005 and 2021.

On the international level, the record of the Merkel governments in promoting women to key leadership positions is similarly ambivalent, as scrutiny of transatlantic and European leadership appointments, in which Germany had at least some say, suggests. The appointments of respectively Anders Fogh Rasmussen in 2009 and Jens Stoltenberg in 2014 to the post of secretary-general of NATO – a post not filled yet by a woman – were supported by Merkel.¹¹⁴

Likewise, most EU key positions were filled with male leaders during Merkel's chancellorship, including the presidencies of the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Central Bank (ECB). A key exception came in 2019 when both the ECB presidency and the European Commission presidency went to women, namely Christine Lagarde (ECB) and Ursula von der Leyen (Commission). Reports suggest that Merkel was eventually reconciled with not nominating the then president of the German central bank (Bundesbank) Jens Weidmann, for the ECB post, since she ascribed greater importance still to the Commission presidency.¹¹⁵ While Merkel eventually supported Lagarde's nomination for the ECB presidency, a commentator referred to this as 'collateral benefit',¹¹⁶ rather than something that Merkel was actively pursuing. Concurrently, Merkel staunchly supported the candidacy of Manfred Weber from the German CSU, the sister party of Merkel's CDU, as Commission president.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, though, Merkel dropped Weber and supported the nomination of Ursula von der Leyen. However, it was upon the initiative of French president Emmanuel Macron rather than Merkel that von der Leyen, who was German defence minister at that time, was presented as candidate for the post.¹¹⁸ Curiously, when the European Council eventually voted on von der Leyen's nomination, Merkel had to abstain on the insistence of her coalition partner, the SPD, who did not favour a (female) conservative German politician being appointed. Overall, while certain domestic and European leadership positions were filled by women during Merkel's chancellorship, promoting women to key foreign policy posts was not among the major concerns for Germany during the Merkel years.

This has changed under the new government, albeit (so far) confined to the domestic level. Unprecedentedly, a woman was appointed as German foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock from the Greens, who reshaped the composition of the ministry's leadership and key ambassadorial appointments. In late 2022, two out of three ministers of state as well as two out of three state secretaries were women. The latter included the former executive director of

¹¹³Kai Oppermann and Klaus Brummer, 'Who gets what in foreign affairs? Explaining the allocation of foreign ministries in coalition governments', *Government and Opposition*, 55:2 (2020), pp. 241–59.

¹¹⁴FAZ.net, 'Rasmussen wird nun doch Nato-Generalsekretär' (5 April 2009), available at: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/einigung-in-letzter-minute-rasmussen-wird-nun-doch-nato-generalsekretar-1782124.html>}; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 'Letta will Rasmussen folgen' (26 March 2014), p. 6.

¹¹⁵*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 'Weidmanns EZB-Chancen schwinden' (25 August 2018), p. 15.

¹¹⁶FAZ.net, 'Merkels Europa' (8 July 2019), available at: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/erbe-der-kanzlerin-wie-merkels-ihr-vermaechtnis-in-der-eu-regelt-16271997.html>};

¹¹⁷*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 'Merkels Personaldilemma' (31 May 2019), p. 19.

¹¹⁸FAZ.net, 'Von der Leyen soll EU-Kommissionschefin werden' (2 July 2019), available at: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/von-der-leyen-als-eu-kommissionspraesidentin-nominiert-16265585.html>};

Greenpeace, Jennifer Lee Morgan, as the ministry's special envoy for international climate action.¹¹⁹ Baerbock also appointed women to high-profile positions both in the ministry and in the country's diplomatic representations. Those include the posts of political director, where Tjorven Bellmann succeeded Jens Plötner, of permanent representative to the United Nations, where Antje Leendertse followed Christoph Heusgen, and of German ambassador to China, where Patricia Flor took over from Frank Rückert. Both Leendertse and Flor are the first women diplomats ever in those positions. Overall, the post of foreign minister, 4 out of 6 state secretaries/ministers of state, 4 out of 10 heads of directorate-generals, and about one-third of Germany's ambassadorial positions are currently filled by women.¹²⁰ Moreover, at least for the first 13 months of the new government, the ministers for economic cooperation and development (Svenja Schulze, SPD) and for defence (Christine Lambrecht, SPD) were also women, and respectively one out of three (development) and two out of four (defence) state secretaries were also women.¹²¹ The recent appointment of Boris Pistorius (SPD) as defence minister still makes Germany's foreign policy executive, comprising of Baerbock, Schulze, Pistorius, and Scholz, evenly split in terms of gender. Turning to the international stage, the new government pledged in its coalition agreement to increase the representation of women in international leadership positions.¹²² However, it is unclear whether the new government will successfully live up to this commitment, since key European or transatlantic posts will only become available in 2024.

The Israeli and German cases uncover different patterns when it comes to the institutional domain. In Israel, there was a clear tilt towards male representation in the MFA, which was caused by historic under-recruitment of women, deeply seated social norms of male chauvinism, and the differential impact of family commitments on careers between men and women. There was a partial rebalancing towards women's representation, which was driven by institutional changes within the MFA, legislation, and government reforms. However, on the political decision-making level, women's representation remains all but negligible. In turn, the Merkel chancellorship did not display a commitment towards increasing women's representation. The foreign ministry remained male-dominated, the number of female junior ministers stayed low, and Germany did not initiate the few significant women appointments on the EU level. As in the previous domains, the main shift was prompted by the change of government and the clear ideological and political commitment by the Green party to increase women's representation. Indeed, for the time being, the new government has clearly followed words with deeds on the domestic level in terms of increasing the representation of women in foreign policy leadership positions; bar Chancellor Scholz, the whole of the Germany foreign policy executive are women. Thus, in the cases of Israel and Germany, role conception had a limited impact. Instead, it was political domestic change in Germany and reforms – legal and institutional – in Israel that shaped FPP in the institutional domain.

Conclusion

This paper draws on role theory to explore whether the pursuit of FPP, or lack thereof, can be conceived as a function of a country's national role conception. More specifically, it asks whether countries with 'masculine' national role conceptions refrain from pursuing FPP goals while countries with 'feminine' national role conceptions advocate said goals. To that end, this paper has engaged in a comparative analysis of the FPPs of Israel and Germany in their normative, material, and institutional dimensions. Overall, the findings are in accordance with our expectations

¹¹⁹Federal Foreign Office, 'Leadership', available at: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/about-us/leadership-federal-foreign-office>.

¹²⁰*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 'Der feministische Dreiklang'.

¹²¹Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Leadership of the ministry', available at: <https://www.bmz.de/en/ministry/leadership-ministry>; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 'Staatssekretärinnen und Staatssekretäre', available at: <https://www.bmvg.de/de/ministerium/staatssekretaere>.

¹²²Bundesregierung, 'Mehr Fortschritt wagen', p. 144.

grounded in the countries' foreign policy roles; Germany has undertaken broader and more substantive activities in pursuit of FFP goals than Israel. At the same time, Israel has been more active than its 'masculine' role would suggest, and Germany less active at least in some dimensions and less vocal than its 'civilian power' role would imply, particularly during the chancellorship of Angela Merkel.

Regarding Israel, FFP's compatibility, or lack thereof, with core state interests and role conceptions seem to be the key driver for the country's mixed record. When FFP clashes with those interests and narratives, then limited progress towards, if not flat rejection of, FFP goals along all three dimensions examined in this paper – irrespective of the composition of the government – is the result. The lack of incorporating the WPS agenda into Israeli foreign policy due to its incompatibility with the long-standing masculine foreign policy approach is evident in women still being missing from Israeli foreign policy and security-making, notwithstanding serious attempts by civil society and legislators to change this, and lack of a NAP. Similarly, in our analysis of the material domain, we observed that despite some progress towards building women's capacity, feminist aspects of Israel's development policy were subservient to, and conditioned by, state interests. Those interests clearly remain the priority over producing gender-driven political change. It is in the institutional dimension where most progress could be observed. Indeed, a growing number of women cadets who have climbed up the professional ladder in the Israeli MFA amid significant challenges have made the Pipeline Problem less pronounced and male chauvinism less explicit. These trends point towards social changes within institutions and the ability to harness pro-feminist legislation and government reform to increase women's representation as being key factors in partially instilling FFP gender equality and norms in the institutional domain of Israeli foreign policy.

In turn, for the German case, party ideology was clearly the key driver in terms of how the country pursued FFP goals as well as for changes therein over time. Thus, since the substance of FFP aligns nicely with the civilian power role, which is widely shared among the country's mainstream parties, its pursuit already under Merkel is unsurprising. However, the way it has been pursued under Merkel is best described as FFP 'by stealth'.¹²³ We suggest that the main reason for pursuing FFP in all but name was that such explicit labelling was not something that Merkel's conservative CDU (or its sister party CSU) would have supported – hence also the absence of the term in the party's election manifestos. In fact, this might also be among the reasons why the Merkel governments were quite active in the normative and material domains but much less so in the – arguably much more visible – institutional domain in terms of promoting women to key leadership posts, domestically and internationally. The recent change of government, in which the Green party took over the foreign ministry, confirms the key role of party ideology. A commentator summarised the foreign minister's attention to and focus on FFP by suggesting that 'in the first three quarters of her term in office, Baerbock has devoted herself to no other conceptual issue in her department as intensively as that of feminist orientation.'¹²⁴

Overall, the discussion suggests that whether countries pursue FFP goals is indeed strongly influenced by the latter's compatibility with the countries' overarching national role conceptions. However, the paper's findings also highlight that additional factors such as party ideology, institutional autonomy, and compatibility between realist state interests and FFP also come into play. The latter might be perceived as intervening variables that influence the translation of overarching national role conceptions into specific levels of commitment and intensity shown in the pursuit of those goals by individual countries.

¹²³Lee-Koo, 'Pro-gender foreign policy by stealth'.

¹²⁴Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 'Der feministische Dreiklang'.

Acknowledgements. None.

Amnon Aran is Professor of International Politics of the Middle East at City University of London. Author's email: Amnon.Aran.1@city.ac.uk.

Klaus Brummer is Professor of International Relations at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. Author's email: klaus.brummer@ku.de.