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## Feminist foreign policy : the case of Mexico

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# Feminist Foreign Policy

## The case of Mexico

Présenté par Modester A. Doumon

Sous la direction de **Andrés Rivarola**

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## List of Abbreviations

LGBTQ Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, and Queer

FFP Feminist Foreign Policy

DGDH *Dirección General de Derechos Humanos y Democracia* (Directorate General of Human Rights)

CNDH *Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos* (National Human Rights Commission)

# 1. Introduction

*“Mexico is a feminist country and our foreign policy will also be feminist”- Marcelo Ebrard, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (DGDHD, 2020).*

In September 2019, Mexico’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcelo Ebrard (2018-), announced Mexico’s intention to adopt a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (Peralta, 2020). In January 2020, at the celebration of the 31st annual meeting of Mexican Ambassadors and Consuls, Mexico launched a FFP. With this policy, Mexico is looking forward to being inclusive in human rights, achieving gender parity, and responding to social demands. However, countries, including Mexico, have been leading gender issues and empowering women long before the adoption of a FFP.

Gender equality is an international relations discussion that traces back to the beginning of the 20th century. The feminist movements that have been extensively engaging and demanding for change have so far heightened the discussion. The push towards change is always themed on giving women more visibility. However, following the legalizing of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, and Queer) in Europe and America, talks on equality have expanded to capture the needs of this group across various countries. The push for foreign policy transformation at international and domestic levels often calls for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in decision-making. In the last century, there was a tireless, progressive, and dedicated commitment expressed by various women organizations.

This unwavering commitment has resulted in multiple action plans, state blueprints, and international frameworks laid down to achieve gender equality (Aggestam and True, 2020). The UN Agenda on Women, Peace, and Security, starting with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1979), are examples of some of the international frameworks that have changed the general global attitude and approach towards gender equality (Aggestam and True, 2020). International development banks, multilateral corporates, and financial institutions across most parts of the globe are mainstreaming gender equality to help ridding countries of gender blind policies that have deemed the visibility of sections of the disadvantaged population (Aggestam and True, 2020). An in-depth review of the sustainable development goals born in

2012 expresses the degree of attention that gender equality has received in the last three decades. The fifth goal of the sustainable development goals addresses gender equality employs states to put more focus on protecting women and girls from violence, discrimination, and exclusion (UN Women, 2018).

For as long as humanity has existed, heterosexist ideology has been the backdrop of this existence. The LGBTQ group has faced some of the most severe harassment following the inferiority attached to their sexual preference. Women also find themselves on the inferior edge of the horizon perpetuated and policed by the presumed validity of heterosexist. With heterosexism as the only valid sexual presence globally, most people who dared to possess an alternative opinion or express an alternate preference significantly suffered. Over the decades, the tight guidelines on heterosexism have been loosening up as states began accepting and embracing the LGBTQ group. Individuals aligned with the LGBTQ group are considered disadvantaged because of the severe treatment received over the years. Despite the legalization of LGBTQ in some parts of the world, the group faces discrimination and violence in the same states where they are considered legal. Gender micro-aggression is a significant source of gender-based discrimination and harassment against women and the LGBTQ group. As the talk on equality heightens, these micro-aggressions continue to perpetuate in rather subtle ways that make them a bit complex to notice. Essentially, the assumption is that the world is thriving on the progress of the 21st century, where women and persons in the LGBTQ community are considered a vital part of the global social, political, and cultural atmosphere that embraces equality. The reality is that the discussions on equality are mere talks that have hardly been translated into action. Since the emergence of the equality discussion, only five states (Sweden, Canada, Norway, France, and Mexico) have translated the feminist narrative into action. These states launched a feminist foreign policy to achieve gender equality and transform the attitude towards the disadvantaged LGBTQ group.

Analyzing the existing approaches in the feminist domain concerning foreign assistance and policy shows that improvement is required. There are already two approaches in place: one that pushes other countries to add their pledges towards gender equality, which acts as a funded goal and a principle. The second existing goal is concerned with adopting a more independent and rigorous practice used for research, evaluation, monitoring, and learning interconnected policies that have an intended outcome.

The integration of feminist foreign policy into domestic policy has been a troubled journey for most states that have steered the talk. Sweden made a bold move to adopt a feminist foreign policy (FFP) in 2014. After becoming a feminist state, Sweden pledged to integrate the gender equality aspect in its domestic policies. Sweden's gender equality action is centered on representation, rights, reality, and resources. France followed Sweden's example and adopted FFP in 2017. However, Canada limited its approach to the narrative, pledged to explore it at the international development aid level, and called it FIAP (Zhukova, E., Sundström, R., Malena, S. R., and Ole, 2021). France later adopted the FFP in 2019 to advocate for the importance of gender equality at the international level. Mexico's adoption of FFP is the most current move towards transforming domestic policies to integrate and translate the gender equality talks into action.

Given that issues related to gender equality, women and girls require a certain amount of resources such as military, humanitarian and financial influence, the common question often asked is: What does it mean for a less resourceful global south country such as Mexico to implement a feminist foreign policy vis-a-vis an industrialised country like Canada or Sweden" (Philipson, 2020).

Drawing on the Swedish experience, Sundström and Elgström (2020) find that the adoption of an FFP has a positive effect on Sweden international image (Sundström and Elgström, 2020). However, they also notice, there are critical voices. Mexico is not exempt from the same fate. Clearly, not everyone shares the positive images proclaimed by the Mexican government on this policy at the domestic level. The controversy grounded in policymaking leads this study to reflect on why Mexico engages in leadership on the world stage. At the same time, it already has a domestic policy and unresolved gender issues at home. To understand the relevance of the adoption of an FFP in Mexico, this thesis will answer the following questions:

- I. *Do domestic policies have an impact on a feminist foreign policy?*
- II. *Does Mexico possess the resources needed to ensure it achieves the objectives enshrined within its feminist foreign policy?*
- III. *Is there coherence between Mexico's domestic policy on equality and the adopted feminist foreign policy?*
- IV. *What impact does Mexico's capitalism have on the success of its feminist foreign policy?*

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the capacity of a foreign policy to regulate Mexico's gender equality gaps, considering the tremendous failure of its domestic policy to achieve this gender equality regulation. In this essay, I depart from the perspective that Mexico has a deep-rooted structural inequality that will take more than the adoption of a feminist foreign policy to eradicate. In addition, Mexico's capitalist status might hinder it from attaining the objectives adopted in its FFP. Having established that, I will also argue that the success of Mexico's FFP in achieving equality objectives depends on the volume of resources the country possesses. At last, I will conclude that if Mexico's adopted FFP is incongruent with the country's domestic policy, it might undermine existing grassroots work or advocacy of feminist organizations at a local level. Briefly, this essay questions Mexico's success in making its FFP regulate the gender equality gap and represent the LGBTQ groups.

The ideologies enshrined in the feminist foreign policies thus far adopted by Mexico can be explored through the lenses of constructivism, globalization, and feminism theories. Constructivism theory traces its root to the end of the Cold War. The social aspect of this theory sheds light on the vantage point from which individuals should view the social world. From a social perspective, constructivism argues that the world is socially constructed. The theory argues that the real meaning people have about something depends on the meaning they draw from it. For instance, 1000 nuclear weapons from Africa can be perceived as less threatening to the United States than one nuclear weapon from Russia.

The meaning accorded to the material structure of these weapons is different in the context of the probability of their use. Using the given example, it can also be perceived that a Russian nuclear weapon would be constructed with the primary aim of achieving extensive destructive results, while that from Africa may be built with less focus on the magnitude of damage it should cause. The social perception behind this argument highlighted by the constructivism theory is that a state may adopt an issue but fail to give it the maximum attention required to achieve results (Hurd, 2008). The theory further posits that reality is in continuous construction, creating more prospects for change. Concerning aspects and discussion around feminism, the theory alludes that the perception individuals and states have regarding feminism is socially constructed. What Mexico perceives as of greater importance may be different from Sweden's perception and ideology. Similarly, the theory provides a platform for embracing change, especially on the aspect of gender equality. As a concept of social theory, globalization stands for a broad set of dimensions. The political aspect of

globalization focuses on the changes that manifest in a political power due to transnational engagement.

Globalization ideologies have had a significant impact on gender equality discussion. However, the success of adopting these ideologies depends on the nature of policies a state uses. Globalization approaches to feminism and feminist policies lay out a framework for synthesizing the gender injustices related to globalization (Smith and Doyle, 2002). The theory also provides a framework for understanding the shared commitment to upholding feminist values. This essay integrates these aspects to evaluate the feminist umbrella that unites Mexico's domestic policies and the FFP. Feminism theory explores gender inequalities, sexuality, political rights of women, and power relations. The ideals of this theory will be used in this research to highlight the existing gender inequalities and connect the inequalities to the goals of Mexico's FFP. This study adopts an explorative research design that allows for the review of historical literature. The following section elaborates the theoretical background to this study.

## **2. Theoretical outline**

This chapter presents the approaches and theories of this essay. The first section starts with an overview of constructivism, followed by the constructivist method utilized. Similar sections on globalization and feminism will follow. In each of these sections, I will discuss the purpose of combining these theories as well as the limitations of how these theories can interact.

### **2.1 Constructivism Theory**

Constructivism is one of the theories of international relations that established its way in the IR after the Cold War. The theory is labelled and based on the assumption that meaning is socially constructed (Hurd, 2009). Adler (1997) argues that many reasons tend to obscure constructivism's scientific basis and its contribution to a deep understanding of International Relations (Adler, 1997). These reasons are the reliance of constructivist theory on rational and interpretive social theory. To clarify the misunderstanding, Adler (1997) argues that constructivism occupies the middle ground between the rationalist and interpretive approaches (Adler, 1997). As Adler explains: "constructivism is the manner in which the

material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world” (Adler, 1997). Constructivism as an approach has a wide spectrum of scientific investigation. In the paragraph below, I will specify the type of constructivist approach this essay employs.

The theory has been widely used to analyse how the powerful actors, mostly comprised of politicians, elites in the society, and institutional leaders, play a significant role in shaping and reshaping international relations by their interactions and actions (Hurd, 2009). The theory postulates that the social world is a construct of people's making. The view the theory portrays is that the nature of reality varies because individuals construct reality. In this context, the theory argues that reality is a relative aspect. What is threatening to another state may not be as threatening to a second state. Theys (2018), in explaining this context, uses an example of state weapons and the variation in their perceived threats. For instance, 1000 Sweden nuclear weapons are not as threatening to the US as 2 North Korean weapons. The difference in the magnitude of threats significantly relates to the nature of the social relationship the US has with both states. The social relationship between the US and Sweden, in this case, is better than the one it has with North Korea. From an analytical perspective, it can be argued that the likelihood of North Korea using the two weapons is higher than the likelihood of Sweden using 1000 weapons against the US.

Tranfering this weapon theory of Theys (2018) into the context of the adoption of an FFP, this thesis argues that what is considered a priority in another state may not be as important to a second state. Although Sweden, Canada, and Mexico adopt a feminist approach to their international policy, these countries differ in terms of the interpretation of the term feminist and policy strategy. Gender inequality is central to Swedish feminist foreign policy. The country's feminist foreign policy is a continuation of domestic commitment. Canada instead conceives poverty as a key issue to tackling gender issues in its feminist policy. It does not commit to disrupting patriarchy like Sweden and Mexico. The Mexican feminist foreign policy is what Robert Putnam explains in his work (1988) when he points out that foreign policy and national policy are intertwined and are sometimes the product of each other. In contrast to both Sweden and Canada, Mexico commits to an ambitious agenda. In addition to a gendered perspective policy, the country features human rights approach and makes intersectionality transversal in all areas of Mexican foreign policy. Meaning each country has a strategic behaviour in their feminist approach to foreign policy, as depicted in

Table 1. The strategic behaviour of each country is relative to the socio-political reality of each country.

Another social perception behind the notion of strategic behaviour highlighted by the constructivism theory is that a state may adopt an issue but fail to give it the maximum attention required to achieve results (Hurd, 2009). This example also means that a state can possess or adopt a policy, but without putting the policy into action, the policy becomes meaningless and impactless. Based on constructivist theory, I argue that the likelihood of Mexico’s success in eliminating structural differences, gaps, and gender inequalities is lesser than Sweden. Not to say that Mexico is far behind in terms of effectiveness in gender issues. However, judging from the current situation with regards to gender based violence, I argue that Mexico as a state can possess or adopt the most ambitious policy of all, but without enough resources and putting the policy into action, the policy becomes meaningless and impactless. Furthermore, Mexico’s strategy may result in the concept of isomorphism. This concept is described as a coercive process, which compels one unit of a population to resemble other units facing the same environmental conditions (Powell and Dimaggio, 1991). Meaning by including many goals and other social groups within its FFP, Mexico might end up institutionalizing these groups but not effectively address structural change.

Another argument of the constructivism theory is that structure and agent are mutually constructed. Meaning they influence each other. Agency is the capacity of an actor to act, while the structure is an international system consisting of ideological and material elements. The second ideal of constructivism is the concept of identities and interests (Theys, 2018). Constructive theorists note that states can possess several identities obtained from social interaction with other actors. The identities represent a state's understanding of what and who it is. An understanding of one's identities translates into interests and actions. This ideal can be absorbed to explore the identities of states that have adopted the FFPs. A state that expresses a clear understanding of its identities has an absolute interest in effecting change. Such a state puts effective strategies into place to ensure that its actions do not jeopardize the achievement of the FFP goals and promote this achievement.

Table 1: Feminist foreign policy in Mexico as compared to Sweden (EU) and Canada (North America)

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Types of FFP</b>	<b>Problem &amp; priorities</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Goal</b>
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M E X I C O	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foreign policy and national policy are intertwined</li> <li>- Sometimes foreign and domestic policy are product of each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender inequality</li> <li>- Rights of women</li> <li>- Rights of LGBTQ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human rights;</li> <li>- Gender perspective; and</li> <li>- Intersectionality in all areas of Mexican foreign policy (DGDHD, 2020).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eliminate structural differences</li> <li>- Disrupt patriarchal power structure</li> </ul>
C A N A D A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)</li> <li>- Does not include broader foreign policy domain of diplomacy, defense and trade (Thompson and Clement, 2019)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender inequality</li> <li>- Women and girl empowerment</li> <li>- Women's political participation (Thompson and Clement, 2019)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritization of gender equality in the service of broader economic and security goals (Thompson and Clement, 2019).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eradicate poverty</li> <li>- Build peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world</li> </ul>
S W E D E N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harmonization on gender equality in domestic and foreign</li> <li>- Feminist foreign policy as a continuation of domestic commitment (Thompson and Clement, 2019)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender inequality</li> <li>- Rights of women</li> <li>- Focus on women rather than gender</li> <li>- Ignores rights of LGBTQ (Thompson and Clement, 2019)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women's rights</li> <li>- Gender equality perspective</li> <li>- Resource</li> <li>- Increased Female Representation (Thompson and Clement, 2019).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disrupt patriarchal power structure</li> <li>- Gender equality</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Globalization Theory

Globalization takes place in different contexts and is generally defined as the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. As a

concept of social theory, globalization stands for a broad set of dimensions. Globalization conveys the idea of a worldwide society that seeks to move beyond the centrality of the nation-state as a sole actor in the political field. So does constructivism. As established in the previous section, “constructivism comes in various shapes and forms and appears to draw on a diversity of traditions of thoughts” (Palan, 2000). Constructivism shifts from a study of fixed, given units, nation or states, to the study of the encounter between political entities. It reveals an image of a divided space, isolated nation-states to an image of a global space (Palan, 2010).

By combining these two theories, this thesis reflects various reasons behind Mexico’s adoption of an FFP. One reason is the pressure to follow the new democratic global trend (FFP). The second reason is that by adopting an FFP, Mexico ascends in power in a pressured and challenging international environment for the third wave of foreign policy agenda. Big countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and many others across the globe are rather undergoing regressive waves in their democracy and are moving towards a conservative agenda. By combining these two theories, I argue that Mexico “can be sovereign only when people and other states see it as a corporate actor with rights and obligations over territory and citizens” (Hurd, 2009).

Globalization is primarily an economic process of interaction and integration associated with social and cultural aspects (Smith and Doyle, 2002). The two other dimensions are political and cultural. For the purpose of this essay, only the political and economic spectrum of globalization will be discussed. Political globalization comes in various dimensions and interpretations and is defined as the growth of the worldwide political system, both in size and complexity. The system includes national governments, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and government-independent elements of global civil society such as international non-governmental organizations and social movement organizations. The economic dimension of globalization seeks to explain the balance between knowledge and resources. This balance influences a state's productivity and competitiveness.

Regarding the balance between knowledge and resources, the theory argues that states in the progressed parts of the world tend to rely more on knowledge than resources. In contrast, states in the disadvantaged scope of the world rely more on resources (Smith and Doyle, 2002). A change initiated in the latter state will thus depend on resource availability to mature, while a change initiated by the former state will rely on knowledge. The reliance on

knowledge implies a significant reliance on technology. States that employ extensive use of technology hardly depend on manual labour and capital to achieve a robust production. This inclination towards a knowledge-based economy informs the need for extensive training of the population. This population should cover women and disadvantaged individuals in the community to help in expanding the breadth of production. A successful economy incorporates ideas from every actor in the state, including women and people in the LGBTQ group. Robust production also translates to deep-rooted political changes. A state's political power grows when it has a higher production capacity and a competitive economy (Wilkinson, 2021). The achievement of this deep-state political power and robust economy depends on the state actors' involvement, which often includes the entire population. The political dimension of globalization is primarily embedded in its economic aspect. The theory also explores the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and practices across states. The diffusion of ideas has increased the dependence of some states on other states. For instance, states in the Global South are dependent on Sweden because of its lucrative source of funds. Several development programs targeting women and children in the Global South receive donor assistance from Sweden. Sweden is also a significant hub of technological advancement. Resource allocation in most small countries depends on the likelihood of the US, countries in the Global North, or any other country they depend on to support this interest.

## **2.3 Feminist Theory**

Just like constructivism, feminism has a wide spectrum of theories. The feminist theory builds on the idea that constrained access to legal, economic, political, and social institutions is the primary cause of women's oppression. Feminist theorists are varied, but all find congruence in the themes of women's oppression and gender inequality (Thompson, 2020). There are different variations or conceptualizations of feminism. In general, feminism can be defined as a complex notion and has many modifications in connotation and meaning for people from different nationalities, social classes, sexual orientations, myriad identities, ethnic identities, and generations. The feminist theory relies on three crucial principles (Rospers-Huilman, 2003). The principles are:

- a) Women hold a valuable thing that will help contribute to each aspect of the world.
- b) As oppressed people, the women have been faced with the inability to attain their potential, achieve full involvement in society, and receive rewards.

c) Research in the feminism domain has to do a lot rather than criticizing. It should strive to reach a social transformation.

Throughout, history feminism has been described in three waves. The three waves are the first wave (from the nineteenth century to the earlier years of the twentieth century), the second wave (from 1960 to 1990), and the third wave (started from 1990 to up to date) (Hewitt, 2010). The concept of the three waves came up with Frances Power Cobbe, an Irish activist, in 1884. Frances believed that a movement could be equated to ocean tides, and each wave will obey one more command as it carries water onshore and offshore. To view feminism in terms of waves, an individual has to understand that the idea of monolithic and uniform waves is usually reductive. Furthermore, the idea ignores simultaneous and multiple movements across and within class, ethnicity, race, and nationality. In this case, women's bravery in the world before the start of the nineteenth century is disregarded. The insights of feminism are based on liberal feminism, radical feminism, and socialist/Marxist feminism. Womanist/Black feminism, China feminism, native American, feminism, Asian-American feminism, Arab American feminism, existential feminism, multicultural feminism, ecofeminism, and postmodern feminism. Some of the insights are in harmony with each other. Some of the insights build upon another, while some are opposed to another insight.

The liberal dimension of feminist theory that explores the constraints to legal, political, and social institutions states that the solution to unequal access is women's education and advocacy for political and social visibility. The radical aspect of the feminist theory argues that women's oppression extends beyond the social, political, and legal contexts into the sexual context. Essentially, sexuality is a significant cause of women's oppression. Women's bodies are objectified and controlled through violence and social institutions like medicine. Radical feminists advise that eliminating patriarchy and heterosexuality is the most effective way of freeing women from sexual oppression. This oppression has over time extended to the LGBTQ community, which has been constrained through their sexuality. Social and Marxist feminists argue that gender inequality is a construct of capitalism (Armstrong, 2020). Men and capitalists exploit the existing resources for women and ensure that women provide uncompensated reproductive labour. At workplaces, women are paid the least even when they provide extensive input. The theorists note that the end of capital oppression will result from the elimination of capitalism and patriarchy. Psychoanalytic theorists argue that women's oppression is constructed from their childhood experiences. Women grow up in male-dominated communities where the male symbolizes authority. The

theorists suggest dual parenting as a means of achieving an androgynous society. The various aspects of feminist theory expound on the sources of gender inequality while providing means to solve them. States, especially those that have gone feminine, need to integrate these aspects into their objectives.

## **2.4 Constructivist –Feminist approach**

It is a fact that the international relations discipline is experiencing a turn that is constructivist in nature. The concern raised by constructivism gives a special opportunity to understand the relationship between constructivists and feminists. Firstly, a number of international relations feminists look at power and gender as fundamental elements in the construction process. On the other hand, many constructivists regard power as an external force to the construction process. The failure to merge gender and power to be termed as pervasive and social contributes to the constructivist's failing to meet an important empirical reality found in the power of politics. Secondly, a constructivist is ready to ignore the effects of an epistemology that is considered post-positivist. On the other side, a feminist is likely to pose a crucial question in their agenda: "Who knows?" (Locher and Prügl, 2001). To be more explicit, unlike feminist theory, constructivists fail to problematize the research process as a social or political process (Locher and Prügl, 2001).

However, different constructivists share a similar ontology. That is how the world is to be depicted. The world is described by constructivists, not in the way it exists but whereby there is a distinct process acting upon it to be formed. A transformational aspect or ontology replaces the aspect of the position. As constructivism borrows its insights from sociology, it is argued that international wellbeing is social. In this case, relations, the adoption of a foreign female policy, are formed when various people meet and talk to follow certain norms and rules. These norms and rules are directed by the views of an institution or the world, engaged in performing rituals and engaging in different social practices. The focus of questioning by a constructivist is based on a social scenario that includes productions, language, institutions, rules, or norms. This scenario acts as a mediator between an agency that is rational choices and behavioural approaches that are privileged ontologically and structure which is world systems and philosophical realism theory that have been ontologically privileged.

The feminists are similar to constructivism, but there is diversity in orientation and range. It is not every feminist who employs an ontology based on constructivist ideology. Yet,

it is common for Western-based feminists to raise an issue with the way the term gender perceives a woman. This is because a woman is looked at as a part of a social construct. Therefore, independent ideas surrounding socialist ideas concerned with the division of labour by sex, women's equality, the suggestion by Freud that there is the production of identities, and sex roles viewed in the functionalist way all arose in the 20th century. The rise of these ideas undermines any kind of suggestion that portrays gender as naturally or biologically given (Wilkinson, 2021). However, during the second feminist movement wave in North America and Europe, scholars interconnected the insights raised in the 20th century to conclude that women face subordination. Due to this conclusion, gender was not only a part of social construction but also a tool that led to the oppression of women.

As established earlier, constructivism tends to marginalize feminist literature and gender analysis. Therefore if this thesis were only to employ constructivism, feminism would be understood as just a norm. Given that this thesis aims to understand the incorporation of feminism in the Mexican foreign policy as more than a norm, it is crucial also to understand how this policy will balance gender constructs (masculine and feminine constructs) and the relationships of power in the international atmosphere (Petersen, 2020). This is why using only constructivists alone is not sufficient. Feminism, on the other hand, offers more advantages, especially the particularity to women and gender. However, feminist theory is not exempt from limitations. If this thesis was to use only feminist theory, there would be a struggle to include feminism as a norm. As a consequence, Locher and Prügl argue that: “we believe that a dialogue between feminism and constructivism is important because the two approaches add to each other and in combination can yield better theoretical and empirical understandings of the world” (Locher and Prügl, 2001). Meaning “that feminism contributes to constructivism an understanding of power as an integral element of processes of construction” (Locher and Prügl, 2001).

This thesis finds strength in combining both approaches for many reasons. First, feminism will allow this essay to explore power as a social construct. To be more explicit, it will provide an understanding of how feminism in foreign policy challenges and maintains power structures (Petersen, 2020). Second, structures themselves are part of a constant negotiation which a constructivist approach will provide a better understanding of (Petersen, 2020).

In addition, the constructivist's understanding of agent and structure as mutually constitutive will lead to the understanding of feminism, as a norm, has developed in international relations in general and specifically within the Mexican foreign policy (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). A feminist approach to this study will allow us to observe whether changes have occurred in the gendered power relations (Ackerly, Stern and True, 2006). To do so, "this will be done by looking at discursive framing, changes in participation or action related to gender/equality focused work (Petersen, 2020).

### **3. Methodological Framework**

This section includes an overview of the methods and materials as well as the limitations of this study. This section provides an explanation of the qualitative research methods that will be used, and more importantly, the way in which data was collected and analysed. It also provides deep knowledge of the interview procedure.

#### **3.1 Philosophical Foundation of the Study**

Research Philosophy is a belief about the way research is conducted. Sometimes referred to as research paradigm, it develops a research background, knowledge, and nature (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). A research philosophy guides the researcher in selecting the most appropriate research design and methods appropriate for exploring the research question, data collection, and analysis. A research philosophy also clarifies the research paradigm enabling the researcher to structure their inquiry and adopt the best research approach. This study adopts a qualitative research method to explore the research questions and test the research hypotheses in line with these philosophical guidelines. Qualitative research methods are philosophically described as descriptive, interpretative, naturalistic, and humanistic. From a philosophical perspective, qualitative research places a significant focus on the study subjectivity. This subjectivity imbues an assumption that several realities are embedded in a single research phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This assumption supports the hypotheses highlighted in this study, making qualitative methodology the most appropriate design for exploring the research questions. The research methodology is guided by critical theory. The critical theory builds on the ideals of an inextricable link between the study object and the study subject (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The theory also enables researchers to explore the power dynamics,

inequality, and power structure in a capitalist society's political and economic prospects through its evolutionary stages (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). As the researcher, I feel inextricably connected to the study subject, which in this case is the capacity of Mexico's FFP to regulate Mexico's gender equality gaps considering the tremendous failure of its domestic policy to achieve this gender equality regulation.

## **3.2 Study Design**

The study employs an explorative research design. This research designed enables me to perform a systematic analysis of literature on the topic. The samples under review are retrieved through the google scholar database. There is extensively limited research on the research topic. The research title was broken into keywords to obtain the appropriate sources for this review. The main keywords are FFP and Mexico's domestic policy.

As an inclusion criterion, articles were included if they captured the main keywords. Only articles published in English were included in the study. Articles with clear abstracts, research methodologies, and adequate literature review were prioritized for this analysis.

The study incorporates an interview on Mexico's adoption of the feminist foreign policy. Only one individual is interviewed. The participant will be assessed for knowledge of gender inequality both at global and Mexican scope.

## **3.3 Data Collection, Interview procedure, and analysis**

### **3.3.1 Data collection**

Primary data are collected from historical and thematic literature on the research topic. The research topic is broken into main keywords allowing for easier retrieval of related literature resources. The study will also explore the literature on foreign feminist policies adopted. Published literature data will be obtained from historical documents and Mexican government publications on various forms of inequality. However, given that this study aims to bring out the controversial aspect of the FFP adopted in Mexico, the researcher goes to the extra length and includes data obtained from data analysts for policy equity.

The interviews will form the secondary data collection basis for this study. So far, one interview has been conducted, which presents the Mexican government's opinion on Mexico's adoption of a foreign feminist policy. The interview is a structured questionnaire verbally administered to the interviewee. The structured questionnaire format allows for expanding the

research scope, allowing the interviewee to explore other issues from the interview questions related to the research topic.

### **3.3.2 Interview Procedure**

In order to secure an interview with the Directorate-General for Human Rights of Mexico (DGDH), I explained through a formal email that I am a student at Stockholm University. I mentioned that as a master's student, I would be using the interview for my master's thesis.

On the instructions of the Office of Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard and the Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Minister Martha Delgado Peralta, the interviewee, reach out to me through email and follow up on my request for an interview about the FFP of the Government of Mexico.

The interviewee who participated in this study is extremely busy. He is Dr. Cristopher Ballinas Valdés, the Director-General for human rights and democracy of Mexico. He lives in Mexico City. Due to the difference in location and time, the DGDH approved a space on May 13 at 11:00 am (Mexico City time) to discuss my research on Feminist Foreign Policy. In this sense, they encourage me to prepare questions for the meeting, in addition to the topics I mentioned in my interview request email. I was offered the chance to confirm my interest and participation on the day and time indicated, and once I confirm the time, they sent me the connection link. The interview was conducted via zoom. The DGDH enriched my thesis with relevant knowledge and their personal observations.

The interviewee was aware that the interview would be recorded on my phone and used for research purposes for ethical reasons.

### **3.3.3 Data Analysis**

Data analysis techniques employed include data coding and sorting. The coding will involve transforming interview and literature data into cohesive categories that can provide meaningful themes. The coding will examine a link between common themes or codes with the study's theoretical foundation. The research will work on a pre-developed preliminary coding scheme aligned with the interview and research questions. Progressive discussions during the interview will be used to spot recurring issues within the codes. The coded data will then be sorted by theme or code category.

The following chapter comprises the empirical data and will touch upon five main topics. The first topic will cover an overview of Feminist Foreign Policy at a global level. The next topic looks at Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy in specific. Thirdly, the topic presents

the representation of marginalized groups (LGBTQ) in the FFP. The fourth topic discusses whether or not foreign policy needs to be coherent with domestic policy. The last section of chapter four presents discussions around critique and the contradiction of FFP in Mexico. Finally, the final chapter of this essay presents the conclusion.

## **4. Background on Mexican and global feminist foreign policy**

### **4.1 Global Feminist Foreign Policy**

The last seven years have seen a significant shift towards the adoption of a feminist policy. Sweden was the first state to adopt a feminist foreign policy in 2014. Within the next six years, four more countries have adopted and instituted the policies in their domestic frameworks (Zenklusen, 2020). The attention towards the FFP has aroused a significant need to understand the meaning, foundation, and basics of an FFP. Mexico's most current adoption of the FFP intrigues some degree of interest as other countries like Iceland show an intense interest in adopting the FFP. Research reports a significant gap in theoretical foundations for defining a feminist foreign policy. This gap has made it comparatively complex to reach a unanimous definition of feminist foreign policy. However, Thompson and Clement define FFP in the following line:

Feminist Foreign Policy is the policy of a state that defines its interactions with other states and movements to prioritize gender equality and enshrines the human rights of women and other traditionally marginalized groups. It allocates significant resources to achieve that vision. And it seeks through its implementation to disrupt patriarchal and male-dominated power structures across all of its levers of influence (aid, trade, defense, and diplomacy), informed by the voices of feminist activists, groups and movements." (Thompson and Clement, 2019)

This definition rolls out several elements such as resource allocation, priority to gender equality, traditionally marginalized groups, and women rights by which states adopting the FFP should abide. The elements of FFP in the definition also provide a framework for analysing Mexico's FFP adoption and the resources the state has in place to ensure that all these elements are indiscriminately met.

In September, the world will celebrate the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This platform for action rolled out a comprehensive framework for women's rights across the globe. The critical areas of concern themed in the framework include women and health, women's education and training, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, women and the environment, institutional mechanisms for advancing women, and girl child (Zenklusen, 2020). Every state adopting a feminist foreign policy is thus expected to place its central focus on achieving these themes. Even though the issues discussed in the Beijing Conference are still similar to the gender equality issues states are currently dealing with, the context of these issues has dramatically changed. Women have become a significant part of healthcare systems, economy, and organizational success. Climate change crisis, discriminatory legal policies across states, and political and social inequalities are currently some of the most urgent issues the world is dealing with (Thomson, 2020). Women play a significant part in all these issues. The time to talk about women's visibility and the inclusion of marginalized groups has become inevitable. Five key ingredients emerged from the Beijing conference. These key ingredients have since been used to define feminist foreign policy. The ingredients include purpose, definition, reach, perceived outcomes of the FFP, the strategy to achieve the outcomes, and plan to operationalize. These elements are essential in evaluating Mexico's FFP, as their incorporation in the FFP reflects the state's interest in achieving long-term change in the identified issue.

**Purpose:** The purpose articulates the reason for adopting an FFP at a government level. The purpose also highlights how the state adopting an FFP intends to establish coherence between the domestic and international policy.

**Definition:** This ingredient directs states to structure a clear description of FFP in their context. The FFP should adopt the values, approach, and rationale of domestic policies to meet the state's specific needs, which may vary from the internal and foreign needs.

**Reach:** The reach defines the scope the policy will cover after it is adopted. The scope can be broad or narrow depending on the state's objectives. The reach identifies the divisions and agencies the foreign policy intends to impact. It also helps identify the approaches the state intends to adopt to respond to the issue at hand.

**Expected Outcomes and Approaches to achieving the Outcomes:** The assumption is that states adopting an FFP seek long-term change. The policy should clearly define the change the state aims to achieve, the duration within which the change should be achieved, and the degree of involvement of the people the change is to impact.

**Operationalization Plan:** The state should explain how and when it intends to implement the FFP. Further explanation of an action plan is necessary to highlight the resources to be used, inclusion and representation, capacity building, and reporting schedule.

For the duration, gender equality has been the mainstream agenda of discussion for states; the main themes that have emerged from the talks are gender and women. Little attention has been paid to issues of sexuality to ensure the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the community like the LGBTQ are attended to (Thompson, 2020). This gap informs the question of whether states adopting the policy clearly understand its basic or possess the boldness to adjust the policy's content to cover the needs of other disadvantaged groups. Mexico is one of the states that have diversified the elements of the FFP to capture the discussion around the LGBTQ group. The degree to which Mexico will attend to each element enshrined in the definition of their FFP, however, independently depends on the state's understanding of these elements. Mexico achieves this independence through the principles of social constructivism theory, which states that a state can have several identities socially constructed from the interaction with other factors or actors. These identities represent the actor's synthesis of who they are and their interests regarding an issue. Therefore, Mexico's interest in adopting the FFP should guide the state in achieving its objectives. In this case, Mexico's approach to the FFP may significantly vary from the approach other international communities give to their adopted plan.

## **4.2 Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy**

A long history informed Mexico's adoption of a feminist foreign policy of discrimination against women and the marginalized. Women have faced worse than domestic violence since they have also been subjected to a high degree of violence from the state. The dangerous war against organized criminal groups and drug cartels has contributed to a gendered effect. This phenomenon can be shown by an increase in killings and disappearances of several women since the campaign started in the year 2006, whereby the government is often implicated. Current literature has demonstrated that the war on Drug Policies has caused differentiated consequences. The effects of Drug Policy affect various people in specific groups in society. An analysis that is made to access the connection between the fight against drugs and its consequences on women is very factual. It is factual because it shows that the war against drugs, which was started in 2006 by Mexican president Felipe Calderon Hinojosa negatively, affected the Mexican female society or the population.

That is, the war against drugs led to a high rate of female homicidal victimization compared to the male society or the population. Female homicidal victimization reached its highest point in 2007 and 2010.

During the 74<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Marcelo Ebrard, Mexico's Foreign Affairs Secretary, announced Mexico's move to adopt a Feminist Foreign Policy. This intention was translated into a reality in 2020 when Mexico adopted and institutionalized the Feminist Foreign Policy. Mexico is the first Latin American country to institutionalize a feminist foreign policy (Delgado, 2020). Mexico's adoption of the FFP has since been termed a ceiling-breaking move as most states have found it comparatively challenging to go feminine. In general, Mexico can be described as a country whose efforts in gender equality have been in the front line compared to other countries. The urgency to attain gender equality in Mexico existed even before the announcement of the feminist foreign policy. During my interview with Ballinas, he highlighted Mexico's friendliness towards gender equality by introducing the story of how the idea of feminist foreign policy emerges in Mexico. According to him, it is not necessarily a straightforward idea. Mexico had the very first international meeting on gender in 1976. The country has been leading many discussions on gender and human rights, more importantly, since 2019. However, it lacked some coherent plan within the Ministry of foreign affairs. The idea came from many places. When the new government came into place, the Ministry of foreign affairs decided to explore a gender perspective in every action within the ministry. He further explains that all the actions that actors are implementing must be coherent with a gender perspective within the ministry. The construction of the feminist foreign policy started based on the idea of a coherent gendered perspective project. At the same time, actors in Mexico were having discussions with other countries adopting the feminist foreign policy, that is, Sweden, Canada, France, Norway, and many others that were looking forward to implementing similar feminist foreign policy. In addition, there has been a long year of workshops with the main purpose of defining the characteristics that a feminist foreign policy is supposed to have. These ideas were presented to the chancellor, who in turn proposed that Mexico could make a big announcement at the UN general assembly in 2019, two years ago. This is exactly the story behind how Mexico started the foreign feminist policy.

The adoption of a feminist foreign policy project is a positive move towards change. The ministry of foreign affairs works towards raising awareness of the contributions made by women in the field. The ministry also aims at prioritizing the quest for international relations. However, there are significant consideration issues, such as the possibility of achieving

coherence between the FFP's principles and domestic policy principles. The basics of Mexico's FFP and the possibility of its long-term success can be examined through the lenses of the feminist, globalization, and constructivism theory. Mexico has been significantly challenged by gender inequality. Gurría (2020) reports that less than half of Mexican women who have attained a working age are involved in the labor market. Mexico thus has the second-lowest women labor representation in the OECD countries (Gurria, 2020). Gender inequality issues have been perpetuated in the country through various dimensions.

In the past twenty years, journalists and scholars have come up with a sensation surrounding a chain of female-related homicides. Looking into Ciudad Juarez, it is evident that femicide is rampant, whereby a woman is likely to be murdered because of her gender (that is because she is a woman). Most of the time, the North American Free Trade Agreement is faced with the blame of promoting devaluation among the social status of women in Mexico. The shifting geography in the worldwide drug trade needs to be given appropriate attention when it comes to the examination of female-based homicide. The balloon effect caused by drug trafficking is also important as the pathways involved in drug trafficking contribute to satisfying rationale to understand the female homicides. Femicide in Mexico is a longstanding crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has aggravated the femicide crisis, especially during the government-imposed lockdowns. The government has faced severe criticism due to how it handles the issue of killing women.

Data from the National System of Public Security indicates that there were about one hundred and forty four registered femicides between the months of March and April. However, the data vary from one organization to another. Another data obtained from the National Map of Femicides in Mexico shows that the reality is worse. It is because it reports that about four hundred and five incidences of femicide occurred between the 16th and 30th April. Most of the femicide cases tracked by the National Map of Femicides in Mexico indicate that about sixty three percent of these femicides were related to a criminal organization. The creator of the National Map of Femicides in Mexico is known as Maria Salguero. Maria states that in order to understand the relationship between femicide and criminal organizations, the gender dynamic has to be studied. Therefore, many cases of femicides related to criminal organizations happen to women whose male partners are directly or indirectly involved in the criminal group. For instance, the case of Playa del Cermen, which happened during the coronavirus pandemic. In this case, a woman was killed by a group of criminal gangs where the taxi driver (male driver) fled away. Since the criminal gang did not find the taxi driver, they killed the taxi driver's partner. Consequently, the number of

women who are involved in criminal organizations is perpetually increasing. According to evidence from the International Center for Research, Cancun 2020, a woman was executed because she was referred to as “halcona”. A halcona is a street name that means a falcon or rather a person who is a lookout for any criminal gang. The dead body of the lady was tattooed with some information meant for the police chief. Leaving a tattooed message which is meant to send some message to either the authorities or other criminal organizations has been arising.

According to Zenklusen (2020), the new policy in Mexico will help the country reduce the social and economic issues faced by women (Zenklusen, 2020). These issues are faced by women when it comes to equal representation and the quest for eliminating structural differences. Through the adoption of the foreign feminist policy, many things have improved. The first thing is on the matters of representation. The development of the feminist policy has led to introspection in the government. The government wonders how it can help foster gender equality in other countries but fails to implement the policy within Mexico. By establishing this foreign feminism policy, Mexico was faced with the likelihood of hypocrisy regarding gender equality globally as it failed to tackle inequalities found in various government sectors. For such a reason, various foreign feminist policies in Mexico are focused on creating gender parity within the ministry involved with foreign affairs. The Mexican government believes that in order to have a feminist foreign policy that is equitable to be made into a law, the ministry involved in creating that kind of law has to have a clear demonstration of women's equality in all its rank. This area of foreign policy in Mexico involves hiring more women in leadership positions within the ministry of foreign affairs. This kind of hiring is important as it shifts the aim of creating a high number of female voices. A high number of women in the ministry dealing with foreign affairs will solidify the opinion held by women in areas of developing and implementing a policy ranging from defense to foreign aid.

Already, the government in Mexico has transformed to become a gender-equal government all over the world. For example, in 2008 the congress had a total of two hundred and forty six women who represent about forty six percent of the total congressional seats. This scenario in the number of seats women occupy in congress places Mexico in the fourth position worldwide. It is the government's commitment to involving more women in the drafting process of the foreign policy that leads to the amplification of women's voices in the legislative process. It means that there will be an increase in women's advocacy globally, especially for women who live are poverty-stricken. The commitment by Mexico to involve

women in the gradual process of creating foreign policy shows the world the importance of having a foreign policy that is equitable when it comes to the process of making a law.

The second thing that matters is found in the interconnection between economics and equality. That is, economics and equality are two inextricable things. In the world, women usually earn about twenty four percent less than what is earned by men. In addition, many women are likely to be affected by poverty as compared to men. Any government attempts to ensure women's equality at the global level and should be focused on poverty reduction among women. Mexico acknowledges this element, and several of its FFP initiatives are involved in solving the structural inequality, such as the gender salary gap. The government in Mexico works in conjunction with an organization like HerForShe, which campaigns for economic and social equality in both males and females. Since Mexico is committed to FFP, the country has come up with initiatives like small loans and micro-financing for women.

The feminist theory perspectives provide a basis for understanding the perpetuation of these inequalities. The Marxist and socialists feminists review this context of low-wage and lack of security for women as a construct of capitalism. As a capitalist state, Mexico's women have been exploited in the labor industry where they work but are poorly paid (Saucedo, Rullán, & Villafuerte, 2015). Capitalism has also produced a patriarchal system that has continued to oppress women. The theorists advise that ending capitalist is an effective way of riding a state of capitalism and, ultimately, a patriarchal system. The low pay has demotivated women from participating in the labor market. Mexico's adoption of a feminist foreign is seen as a step towards eliminating capitalism by responding to women's professional needs and rights. However, the main question arising is whether Mexico can end capitalism, given the extensive way capitalism is rooted. Reports also indicate that Mexico is among the leading OECD countries with the highest number of violence cases against women (Iniguez-Montiel and Kurosaki, 2018). The radical feminist perspective highlights that sexuality is the primary basis of women's oppression. The theorists note that women's bodies are controlled and manipulated through violence. This violence leads to the objectification of a woman's body. Violence is perpetuated through social institutions such as religion and medicine.

As Mexico transitions to a feminist state, women hope that the policy establishes a framework that guides how social institutions view a woman's body and protect women against sexual violence. With the adoption of an FFP, Mexico seeks to move past a background where 33% of women are not in employment, lack education, or any form of training (Delgado, 2020). This gap in knowledge and training makes it considerably hard to include women in the knowledge economy or the decision-making spectrum of a state. There

is a significant unclarity in Mexico's intent to achieve a violence free-state given the deep-rooted nature of violence against women. The time to act is now; the question is whether Mexico is ready for this change or is moving with the pressure thus far established by Canada, Norway, Sweden, and France. Mexico's feminist foreign policy seeks to incorporate core themes of feminism such as self-governance in decision-making, substantive equality, structural inequality elimination, and discrimination. Thompson and Clement (2019), in their definition of feminist foreign policy, identified core themes that an FFP should feature. These themes include gender equality, rights of marginalized groups and women, and resource allocation. Analytically, Mexico's FFP adequately incorporates the core elements of concerns of an FFP (Thompson and Clement, 2019).

Mexico's adoption of the FFP presents implications both at the domestic and international levels. At the domestic level, the FFP will steer Mexico towards achieving a fair community that is sensitive to women and the LGBTQ community's needs. However, the achievement of the goals drafted in the FFP requires an adequate injection of resources as established in foreign policy (Thompson, 2020). Evaluating Mexico's capacity to inject these vast resources into achieving its FFP goals involves examining the constructivism theory. The constructivism theory argues that structure and agency are mutually constructed (Hurd, 2009). Agency influences structure and vice versa. Agency in the context of Mexico is perceived as Mexico's capacity to act on an issue it has been dealing with for ages. Structure in this context implies the feminist foreign policy that provides states with a framework to act on the gender inequality and related problems that states are dealing with (Thompson and Clement, 2019). On the constructivism aspect of identities and interest, Mexico seems to have a robust understanding of who it was as a country and the need to transition from a male-dominated country to a female state. The country possesses adequate resources which can be granted step-by-step to women and the marginalized group. Mexico's resources are diverse, ranging from natural resources like natural gas, gold, copper, and zinc which have significantly strengthened the country's GDP. Other resources that the country needs to increase women's and LGBTQ's access include schools, the healthcare system, and employment opportunities with better working standards. These resources can be granted through domestic policy reforms.

Constructivism builds on the idea that a state can have several socially constructed identities. The identities represent the state's understanding of who they are. An elaborate state identity translates into interests (Hurd, 2009). Mexico adopting an FFP before most states implies the country has a strong interest that will be translated into achieving long-term

change benefits. The country's urgent need to have a gender-inclusive and non-discriminatory society has seen Mexico collaborate with other foreign states to accomplish this objective. Since 2019, Mexico has been working alongside the United Nations and European Union to improve public space access for its population indiscriminately. From a globalization theory perspective, Mexico's interaction with other states has been aligned with its needs. The interaction has also been considerably positive, increasing the country's chances of receiving aid and resources from foreign countries. With the capacity to provide the necessary resources, Mexico will sustain the long-term objectives of its FFP.

Globalization theory provides that with increased interaction between states, greater economic opportunities emerge. Information spreads faster with increased access to technology. The second tenet of globalization theory states that countries with a greater inclination towards knowledge employ extensive technology to increase their production (Wilkinson, 2021). Mexico's appreciation of technology is comparatively lower than states like Canada and Sweden, which have also adopted feminist foreign policy. This gap in technology appreciation forces Mexico to rely more on resources such as manual labor to increase its production capacity. With the majority of women still working under the low-wage job groups. One of the ways Mexico intends to achieve gender equality is by eliminating structural barriers. The elimination of the structural obstacles begins with eradicating domestic policies that have hindered women from accessing education and training to compete favorably in the job market. Mexican women find it comparatively hard to land well-paying jobs (Letra S and Cotidiana, 2014). Those in the labor industry are also getting meager pay. This low pay has demotivated them, forcing most women out of their jobs. Mexico's participation in globalized practices like trade is thus low because of its low production capacity. If women had been empowered earlier, Mexico's participation in trade would not be as limited as it currently is. Globalization theorists identify that gender inequality is a significant hindrance to a country's international involvement. However, globalization is presently shifting gender roles due to increased access to information. Empowering women and marginalized groups economically presents significant benefits to Mexico as its population will be indiscriminately participating in improving its economy. Empowering its women through education and increased access to resources will enable Mexico to build a more knowledgeable population.

**Scope:** This ingredient states adopting a feminist foreign policy to articulate the reason for adopting the policy. The state also highlights how it seeks to achieve coherence between domestic policies and foreign policy. Deep-rooted violence should be a primary priority in

this FFP. Mexico's domestic policies are still on par with the feminist foreign policy. This incoherence is, however, justified in the tenets of the constructivism theory. The theory argues that the meaning people draw from the world is socially constructed. In this context, what is a priority to one individual may not be a priority to the other individual. The meaning Mexico drew from the needs of women seems to vary from the meaning Sweden drew from the same needs slightly. There is a significant variation in Mexico's FFP scope with that of Sweden or Canada. Mexico's reasons outlined in the FF include the eradication of structural inequality and discrimination. Mexico's structural disparities seem to be worsening. The country is thriving on wage-restriction policies that have sustained the perpetuation of various forms of inequality. Before adopting a feminist foreign policy, the first step should have been restructuring the country's domestic policies to ensure that they could eradicate disparities. Seemingly, Mexico is not ready for a feminist foreign policy. It is quite challenging to achieve an international goal when the domestic goal undermines the achievement of the former.

**Definition:** This ingredient states that the adopted FFP has to capture the rationales, values, and domestic policy approaches. Mexico's domestic policies are extensively incoherent, and at per, with its adopted foreign policy. The FFP should adopt the values, rationales, and approaches of the domestic policy. With a poor domestic policy structure, Mexico's FFP risks sinking into the loopholes in the domestic policy, which will eventually obscure the FFP's objectives.

**Reach:** Mexico's FFP seeks to reach out to women and marginalized groups. The scope also identifies the needs of these players, which are similar. The adopted FFP aims to eliminate the contextual barriers that have obscured the achievement of equality. So far, the scope adopted in the FFP is broad enough and representative of the needs of the population of interest.

**Expected Outcomes and Approaches to achieving the Outcomes:** Mexico's adopted FFP is intended to help the country achieve long-term gender equality, eliminate structural barriers, enhancing self-governance in decision-making, substantive equality, and eliminating discrimination.

### **4.3 Representation of Marginalized groups (LGBTQ) in the FFP**

The FFP uses a human rights approach whose priority is to expand and protect the human rights of women and marginalized groups. The FFP in Mexico tries to find total enjoyment of ultimate freedoms and freedoms to each individual. Currently, unexpected backlash, nativism, and populism against marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ is gradually increasing. The Mexican FFP is supposed to promote and protect the human rights of these marginalized groups. The main purpose of the FFP is to incorporate the efforts of every civil society and defender of human rights. Therefore, the marginalized groups are to enjoy the privileges of the FFP as there is conflict resolution that is at the level of decision making.

Letra and Cotidiana (2014) report that Mexico's LGBTQ community is still among the most marginalized community in the OECD region. In 2019, at least 117 persons in the LGBTQ group in Mexico were brutally murdered. Between 2010 and 2013, more than 250 homicides of LBGTI members were reported in Mexico. This trend has continued through the years. A report by Lopez (2020) aligns with Letra and Cotidiana's (2014) findings, where the author confirms that discrimination and violence against Mexico's LBGTI community are still core issues of concern. According to the author, at least 117 persons in the LGBTQ group in Mexico were brutally murdered in 2019. The violence against this community has been extended to reach other family members like school-going children. Students associated with members from the LBGTQI community are experiencing severe homicide bullying that manifests in verbal slurs, insults, assaults, and taunts.

Duarte-Gómez, Cuadra-Hernández, Ruiz-Rodríguez, Arredondo, and Cortés-Gil (2018) found that the perpetuating discrimination against Mexico's LBGTI community has resulted in strained access to healthcare care services leading to poor health outcomes for the population. Hansen (2017) established that the LGBTQ are at equal risks as women of experiencing sexual assault. These findings justify the need for a functional legal framework that will respond to the needs of this group. Mexico is transitioning from a patriarchal system where the status of men is higher in society. However, not all men have their status elevated to the upper level. Men in the LBGTQI have a significantly lower status, exposing them and increasing their risks of experiencing sexual violence and discrimination. Over the years, Mexico has made notable steps towards protecting the rights of the LGBTQ community. However, the country's domestic policies have significantly hindered it from eradicating

structural inequalities. While the status of men is higher up, the LGBT people are lower down in the hierarchy.

There is a common stereotype about the macho culture in Mexico. This stereotype is likely to cause a certain expectation about the legal setting for Mexico's LGBTQI rights. It is expected that in Mexico, the situation is less egalitarian as compared to the situation in the United States. Using comparative politics theories about the effects of religion, left and social movements, it is expected to find out that the sexual minority groups in the society enjoy more equivalent legal handling in the United States than Mexico. However, reviewing the FFP in Mexico sets a different scenario. In both Mexico and the United States, the state governments control the LGBTQ rights policies. Research has shown that countries whose social movements are powerful have a less religious community. The leftist parties are strong and ready to encompass equal rights to people in marginalized groups. In the United States, the rights movements (LGBTQ) are more powerful than in Mexico. The religious population is less, and a centre-left party has governed it for a long time in the past twenty years. Therefore, it is expected that the United States to have a legal framework that is more egalitarian to the marginalized groups than what is in Mexico (Iniguez-Montiel and Kurosaki, 2018). The situation in Mexico is different from what is expected. The abolishment of discriminatory legal laws founded on an individual's sexual orientation was abolished even before the FFP was promulgated. Sodomy was decriminalized in 1870 before the Supreme Court in the United States was overturned in 2003 against anti-sodomy laws. Mexico is committed to a non-traditional and intersectional human security attitude as it has expanded its adoption of the feminist policy. Hence, the feminist policy is important in LGBTQ rights, trade, immigration, women's rights, and climate change. Ballinas highlights this issue when he explains the vision of the feminist foreign policy regarding women and LGBTQ rights in Mexico:

“Mexico adopted a feminist foreign policy with gender and LGBTQ+ perspective. We have been following a sustainable development goal that commits to leaving no one behind. Within the feminist debate, there are still many things that are not settled yet, especially when it comes to Trans, LGBTQ rights, and the feminist agenda. We decided to go for a plus approach that includes the right of people from the LGBTQ+ community. This is also an agenda included in the foreign policy plan of the ministry.”-extract from the interview with Ballinas

Since the adoption of the feminist foreign policy, Mexico has demonstrated its determination to achieve gender equality. However, Mexico must avoid becoming tired as it focuses on the approach aimed at adding women. Mexico should also show commitment to

other entities from various marginalized groups. It should include but not be restricted to indigenous communities and the LGBTQ community.

### **4.3 Does a Foreign Policy need to be coherent with Domestic Policies?**

A foreign policy entails all the relations of a single nation with other countries. The 21st century is the start of globalization, and in particular, it is important for a country's interdependence. With the arrival of globalization and international society, the effects of a foreign policy in a single country are very crucial. The decisions made by one country in the 21st century tremendously affect other countries. The government formulates a foreign policy with the specific aim of attaining complex international and domestic agendas. It entails several steps, and domestic politics play an essential role. Mostly, a foreign policy is planned through international and domestic groups and actors. By analysing the executor or the government that wants to implement the foreign policy, several motivating factors are likely to be identified. These motivating factors can be used to explain the underlying principle behind the choices taken. Some influencing factors are domestic politics, the cognition and personality of the leaders, the level of rationality, and the interest of domestic and international groups. However, from the stated factors, the political environment in a country determines the whole pathway of making decisions in the specific country.

According to Sundström and Elgström (2020), the perspective of the executing government in terms of foreign policy has to first undergo a definition through the country's political system (Sundström and Elgström, 2020). It depends on the president's power and the significance of public and political consensus in a country where foreign policy is being implemented. The president is influenced by factors like international organizations, personality, and rationality when it comes to making the decision to implement a foreign policy. However, the president can be faced with a negative political environment that will compromise putting into practice foreign policy. The country's political environment includes lobbying groups, government agencies, and laws restricting or influencing individuals within the society. Therefore, the political system determines the power and the scope of decision-making through a foreign policy.

In the scope ingredient of a feminist foreign policy, states adopting a foreign policy are mandated to highlight how they seek to achieve coherence between domestic policies and foreign policy. Sundstrom and Elgstrom (2020) note that the effectiveness of an FFP policy depends on its coherence with the domestic policy and legitimacy (Sundström and Elgström,

2020). The authors state that if any elements-legitimacy and coherence are missing, the FFP is likely to be ineffective. In the case of Mexico, its domestic policies have been the primary hindrance to achieving gender and other structural equality. According to Iniguez-Montiel and Kurosaki (2018), Mexico thrives on a pro-rich policy growth that ensures that the rich continue getting rich while the poor and marginalized groups continue getting poor (Iniguez-Montiel and Kurosaki, 2018). Marxist and socialist feminist theorists support this notion. They note that a capitalist state ensures that capitalists and men continue dominating, obscuring women from getting adequate pay for the jobs they do. As a firmly founded hierarchical capitalist state, Mexico's domestic policies are designed to support growth by exploiting the disadvantaged individuals in the society and elevating the status of societal elites. Mexico has attempted to reform its policies to allow inclusivity and eliminate structural discrimination in the past year. For instance, the country adopted a redistributive policy that significantly aided in lowering the inequality gap. However, Iniguez-Montiel and Kurosaki (2018) note that these redistributive policies have not provided much aid as the country's population is growing at a significantly higher rate (Iniguez-Montiel and Kurosaki, 2018).

#### **4.4 Critique, contradiction and incongruence in FFP: the Mexican case**

As established earlier, there is a need for some type of coherence between international and domestic policy. This section researches the action of the Mexican government at the international and domestic levels since the FFP adoption.

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, the political system determines the power and the scope of decision-making through a foreign policy. Mexico's adoption of an FFP has received considerable criticism. In her critique of Mexico's FFP, policy analyst Daniela Philipson notes, "Violence against women and girls draws attention to the inherent contradictions between Mexico's international attempts at feminist foreign policy leadership and its negligence at the domestic level to prevent and end violence against women and girls (Philipson, 2020). She further argues that Mexico should instead focus more on fortifying its commitment to women's security at home.

The 6<sup>th</sup> June mid-term elections in Mexico highlight the big difference between President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and the Mexican feminist movements. Many activists of women's rights voted for a politician who has a left-wing political affiliation. Voting for a left-wing politician was hoping to have progressive and non-liberal politics that would transform the plight of women and girls in Mexico. Even though the president was

approved by women's rights organizations, it is evident that he has not been consistent with the FFP's recommendations. The president has avoided the implementation of the FFP (Delgado, 2020).

Clearly, Mexico's decision to adopt a feminist foreign policy is better than not taking any action at all. Especially when one focuses on recent global events such as countries withdrawing from their democratic or corporative way. In a geopolitical and international scenario, countries that used to be progressive are now going in the direction of authoritarianism. For instance, in Latin America, countries are undergoing regressive waves in their democracies and are moving towards chauvinistic and xenophobic ways (Villanueva and Tadeo Hernández, 2019). In Brazil, ex-president Jair Bolsonaro is known for his racist, xenophobic, and misogynist comments. Further, leaders in Colombia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Chile are similarly bending towards a conservative agenda.

Outside Latin America, Russia has always been authoritarian and continues to be so. The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union in January 2020, the same year Mexico adopted its FFP. The ex-president of the United States, Donald Trump, known for his revisionist agenda to "Make America Great Again", is very conservative and nationalist-driven foreign policies (Villanueva and Tadeo Hernández, 2019). Another example is Turkey. Recently, the country took a very strong stance against gender equality and withdrew from the Istanbul convention. In summary, many countries are pushing back from their progressive status towards more conservative policies, making the international environment challenging for the third wave of foreign policy agenda. According to Philipson, there is a very big gap in progressive countries pushing this agenda. Hence Mexico has done a great job by stepping in and pushing forward and negotiating all these agreements that we are witnessing recently. For example, the generation equality forum is a high-level political declaration.

The FFP can be described as an all-inclusive concept whose aim is to initiate structural change at different levels. Therefore, effectively implementing FFP should not be underestimated. Foreign policy in Mexico is recognized for its pledge to essential concepts such as multilateralism as well as supporting nuclear non-proliferation. In addition to the essential concepts, the foreign policy also allows proper wealth distribution in harmony with the requirements of the FFP. The feminist foreign policy has influenced the Gender Action Plan for climate policy because it contributed to its inclusion (the Gender Action Plan for climate policy). It was adopted in December of 2019 at the climate change conference known as the UN COP25. Again, in 2019, a partnership was created between the United Nations and the European Union to implement the Spotlight Initiative. The Spotlight Initiative

is a program that works at a large-scale level whose purpose is to eliminate any kind of violence faced by girls and women across various continents. The continents covered by the Spotlight Initiative are Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific, and the Caribbean. The initiatives that work consistently with each country have extended will to multilateralism. In addition, the initiatives play a major role in the progression of making various policies globally. The policies that are created are in important areas like wealth distribution and in nuclear non-proliferation.

The undersecretary for multilateral affairs and human rights in Mexico headed by Martha Delgado Peralta is responsible for overseeing the feminist foreign policy. Martha spent most of the time promoting the policy in Mexico and other countries abroad. In particular, Martha was a delegate in a significant conference to the Beijing Platform for Action because it marked its 25th anniversary hosted by the United Nations, referred to as Generation Equality. In 2021, a conference of Generation Equality was hosted in Mexico City in March. However, it could not be possible to host the physical conference due to the ongoing worldwide coronavirus pandemic. France and Mexico had achieved significant progress as they had jointly created the Generation Equality Action Coalitions. By doing so, they brought governments, corporations across the world together for the announcement and definition of investments and policies. The purpose of the Generation Equality Action Coalitions was to develop six vital road maps based on a particular topic in gender equality, which will take place in the coming years. The launch of the road maps is likely to happen in the Generation Equality meeting, which took place in June-July 2021 in France.

Promoting gender equality is one of the duties of foreign policy in Mexico, which was evident since the 1975 UN declaration of International Women's Day, which saw Mexico City becoming the first city to host the very first conference on the matter. Since then, more milestones have been achieved, as displayed in figure 1. However, reviewing domestic developments, women face violence, and this continues to be a serious issue. The violence had increased since 2007 when the war against drugs was declared. Even though there is a high death rate among men, the Narco Wars in Mexico have dramatically increased domestic and sexual violence and femicide. Finally, in Mexico, the parliament has reached gender parity, but the country has not been able to reach actual gender equality. The autonomy of women is restricted in a number of states, and there is continuous gender-based violence and risk to the well-being and the lives of women and marginalized groups (LGBTQ individuals) in Mexico.

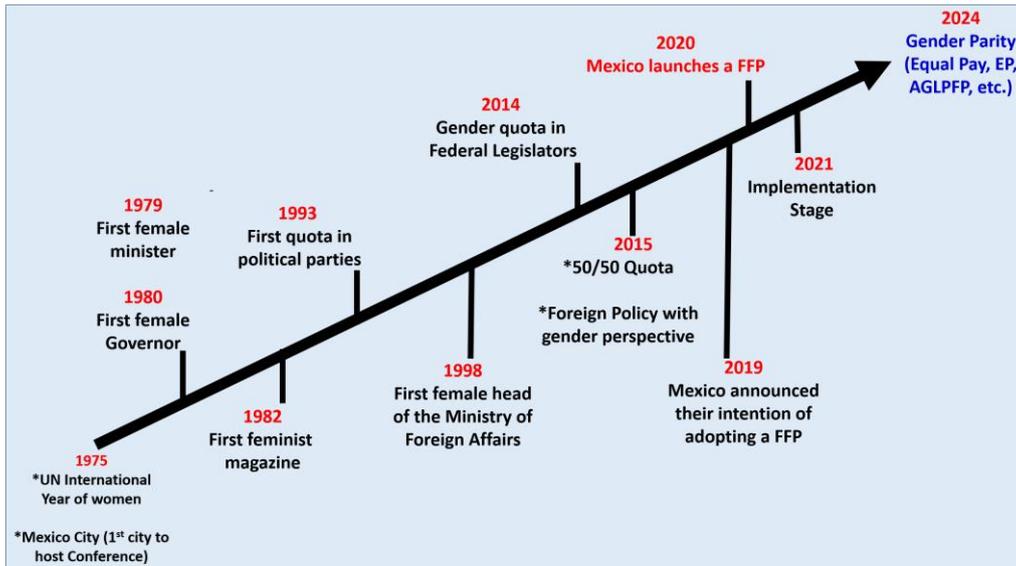


Figure 1: Milestones for Women Empowerment, Participation, and Equality (1975-2024) in Mexican society, notably adopting a feminist foreign policy in 2020 and attaining gender parity by 2024. FFP: feminist foreign policy, EP: employment parity, and AGLPFP: application of gender lens to every position in foreign policy.

Mexico's leadership at the international level is a welcome development. International NGOs and many countries are celebrating and applauding Mexico for having a feminist, progressive agenda. Describing a positive image of Mexico FFP, Ballinas stated that this had been a long demand from many people within the government and outside the government. However, in the Mexican legal framework, every ministry is supposed to have a general plan of development and action for the next six years, and they need to include the very basics. The legal requirement for the entire ministry is to take actions that improve the situation of women, including the ministry of foreign affairs. In addition, in the national legal framework, Mexico is supposed to include many actions regarding women.

The difference between the FFP and what used to be done six years ago is the lack of a long-term way of guaranteeing a gender perspective action plan in every area of the Ministry. This is why NGOs demand and encouraged Mexico to adopt a FFP. The reason for this sustainability is that discrimination against women comes in many ways from many dimensions. That is why the concept of intersectionality is important to Mexico. In order to define the idea of FFP and the elements of Mexico's FFP, actors in Mexico have been working together with the Centre for Research for Women and the Rockefeller Centre. It is a well internationally respected NGO.

Ballinas did not only reflect on the high-level international influence on Mexico's FFP. He also reflects a lot on the importance of coherence between the government action at the international and domestic levels. However, current events such as women's strikes and

ongoing gender violence in Mexico inevitably draw attention to the contradiction surrounding Mexico FFP and make one question if there is really a coherence between Mexico's foreign and domestic policy. The feminist domestic policy can smoothly work together with the FFP but pursuing only the FFP is usually insufficient to attain genuine gender equality. To find the type of coherence Mexico's feminist foreign policy has with domestic policy, Philipson advised looking at various factors such as the political environment, the federal government's response to its political environment, followed by the direction the current president is taking.

#### **4.4.1 Actions of the federal government in Mexico since the adoption of FFP**

According to general criticism, the direction and actions taking by the presidents are rather countering and undermining gender equality and feminism. Mexico has had positive progress when it comes to gender equality promotion, especially at the international level, but things within the Mexican boundaries cannot be reflected. This is because things have become unfair to women since there was a retrogression to getting worse in 2020.

In 2020, there were occupations and protests in large numbers. The first countrywide strike was by women workers (Deslandes, 2020). The women pointed out that there is a strong tendency of rigidity in cultural-based gender roles in Mexico. The protestors demonstrated that in Mexico, there was also wholesome impunity towards crime. The factors raised by the striking women workers demonstrate that in Mexico, the violence faced by women can be regarded as endemic and deadly. Research shows that, on average, about eleven women lose their lives each day. The reason for the lost life is mainly due to gender. Moreover, women are often killed by a close family member or their known male partner. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador showed that he was considerably unsympathetic when it comes to the effort by the government on the issue of violence met by the women. There has been a documented rise in violence towards women since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Although the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased gender-based violence, it has negatively affected the number of working women. This is because the number of working women has drastically reduced by about ten percent (Deslandes, 2020). In May 2020, the president denied the allegation that stated that most calls received by the 911 system of Mexico were from women facing gender violence (Deslandes, 2020). These big demonstrations on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (International Women's Day), despite the COVID-19, confirm how serious and harmful the situation is in Mexico. Of all countries in South America, Mexico has the highest number of cases of femicide. Moreover, the president failed

to mention the ongoing femicide during his speech after the feminist protests demand justice for women who are victims of gender-based hate crime. Finally, when the president decides to address these issues, he portrays women as victims who need men's protection. His speech rather reinforces gender stereotypes. He also rejects criticisms of his government made by feminists. According to the president, the critiques against his government are false information. By stating that the right-wing manipulates women, he portrays them as stupid, which is also another stereotype. According to Philipson, "his speech did not mention femicide victims and failed to detail accountability mechanisms or comprehensive public policies to address the crisis". In addition, she argues that the president's speech completely undermines gender equality and feminism and counters issues the policy is supposed to address; therefore, the president is not a feminist. From her understanding:

The Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy defines a Feminist Foreign Policy as "a framework which elevates the everyday lived experience of marginalised communities to the forefront and provides a broader and deeper analysis of global issues." According to this definition, the Mexican government is not feminist. It will not be unless it safeguards women's lives, human rights, and dignity and that of marginalised communities, particularly migrants, and addresses impunity for crimes against these groups (Philipson, 2020).

She further argues that the government search for gender equality appears to be only a scratch at the surface but seems like an anti-woman government at the deepest level. Moreover, judging from the current situation, it appears that the gender issues at the domestic level are completely independent of the FFP. Mexico has seized the opportunity to leverage some power by stepping in with the adoption of an FFP. However, the country itself and the domestic agenda is completely behind and going in the opposite direction. Philipson suggested that the government should not only be pushing this pinkwashing campaign, hosting the generation equality forum and praising how Mexico is feminist, and then ignore the struggle and advocacy of feminist organizations at the local level.

There are other important issues to consider. These international negotiations and declaration abroad should really benefit Mexican women; otherwise, the FFP cannot be seen as effective at the domestic level. Gender-based violence and femicide should not be disregarded by the Mexican government and passed under the rags. Because if that is the case, this policy is no longer relevant. Philipson further argues that there should be some coherence between this FFP and actions at all levels. Otherwise, it will become just a media tool, a campaign to say we are a feminist without any accountability. Some of the larger non-profit

and activist organizations contributing to women's rights and gender equality issues in Mexico are Data Civica, Equis Justicia, and Intersecta.

For instance, *EQUIS Justice for women* (2011) is a feminist organization that seeks to transform institutions, laws, and public policies to improve access to justice for all women. They practice intersectionality between gender and other categories such as sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, immigration status, class, disability, etc.

*EQUIS Justice for Women* is innovative in terms of promoting new ways of addressing gender violence and non-discrimination. As an approach, this organization uses criminal law and seeks to look at structural causes. They work directly with governmental and judicial institutions and offer proposals based on research and solid evidence. They believe that transparency tools are their main resource to achieve advocacy. They research the various categories of identity mentioned above and report their findings to the United Nations committee at the international level. To eradicate racial discrimination and strengthen access to justice for indigenous women in Mexico. At the local level, they work with other organizations such as the National Network of Indigenous Lawyers (RAI), Intersecta, the National Refuge Network (RNR), and the "Indigenous Professional Centre for Advice Defense and Translation, AC" (CEPIADET) to report on the access to indigenous women to the UN. One example of program implemented by EQUIS is the *Programa de Promotoras Mayas de Justicia*. EQUIS works with the Mayan communities to generate materials. The program supports strengthening leadership among indigenous Mayan women and creates awareness among women, children, and men of the communities.

At the regional level, *EQUIS Justice for Women* collaborates with the construction of the Latin American Network of Parliamentarians for a new drug policy. The meeting was held in Ecuador with Mexico and other participants such as Colombia, Uruguay, Costa Rica. This gathering aims to join ideas and determine the objectives and goals that contribute to the approach of a new drug policy in the region.

*EQUIS Justice for Women*, among other feminist organizations, is fighting for women, gender equality, the right to sexual preference, indigenous women, and many other categories. These organizations also fight against gender violence, femicide, care economy, and create programs to help local communities. The Mexican FFP action plan also promises to focus on these same issues. This is why the government's actions must reflect a great amount of coherence with the advocacy of these feminist organizations. By ignoring these issues and declaring in the media that feminist criticism and gender violence are false information, the president is undermining grassroots work as well as the advocacy of feminist organizations.

Another area of incongruous policy practice is Lopez Obrador's public policies since his arrival in 2018. The president applied an economic austerity package, reduced subsidies for domestic violence shelters, then militarised the federal police by creating a national guard. In addition, the government also deployed armed forces to stop migrants on the southern border. He also eliminated a social security and healthcare program for informal workers. This series of actions of Lopez Obrador might be well-intentioned. However, his strategy benefits some groups of people and causes problems to some other groups. According to Philipson, women are more likely to suffer from the consequences of Lopez Obrador's actions (Philipson, 2020). For a president under which administration, Mexico started exploring the idea of a FFP, his public policies are rather harming women.

When the Mexican government applies the austerity package by cutting public spending, this measure led to the dismissal of thousands of government employees and a drastic reduction in daily spending. By doing so, farmers and young people benefit from this austerity. However, his actions cause problems in companies and construction. As established in the previous chapters, women in Mexico have fewer career opportunities and face more obstacles to gain full employment. Of all women of working age in Mexico, less than half participate in the labor market. Men are more active informal jobs, and they represent 82 % of the labour market. This means, of the less than half of women who participate in the formal jobs, some will be dismissed due to the economic austerity applied by the government, which will lead to fewer women in the formal job.

Another controversial action of the Mexican government is the reduction of subsidies for domestic violence shelters. According to Philipson, women are prone to suffer from a lack of access to public services, social protection, and safety.

This issue shed more light on the lack of coherence between Mexico's foreign and domestic policy. Mexico's current domestic policies draw attention to Marcelo Ebrard's proclaimed image of Mexico being a feminist country. Peralta (2020) argues that eradicating gender violence and femicide, which are strongly ongoing in Mexico, is another big issue that should be addressed. She further argues that Mexico's feminist foreign policy is consistent with the current country's steps to protect Mexico's vulnerable communities. Her statements reveal how Lopez Obrador's measure to reduce subsidies for domestic shelters exposes women to more violent manifestations like sexual harassment and domestic violence. For a government that claims to be feminist, the president's action is not seen as appropriate for pursuing the same goal regarding the international aspect of its foreign policy. Peralta is aware of the challenge for Mexico when she argues that femicide is a daily and the highest

form of violence women in Mexico experience. In addition, a painful and unacceptable truth that Mexico continues to face and this reality weighs heavily on the conscience of society. The world has made considerable progress on the human rights front, but these rights hang in a fragile state of balance and, therefore, require permanent oversight.

The National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) also showed concern about the high risks of violence and human rights violations of women by shedding light on the gravity of the suspension of subsidies. The CNDH considers that the suspension of subsidies that care for women in situations of extreme violence and their daughters and sons make them more vulnerable and leave them in a state of greater defenselessness regarding the protection of their fundamental rights (CNDH, 2019).

As established throughout this essay, the war against drugs is also an important factor to consider when discussing the increase in widespread violence against women. Because they are likely to be vulnerable to sexual violence and death during this specific period. Findings show that the homicide rate of men is higher than that of women. The difference can be seen in the number of death between 2007 and 2017. Men represent 88.4% of homicide cases, while women 11.2 % of the total number of killings. However, attention is drawn to women because their homicide rate rapidly increases due to Lopez Obrador's militarised war policy against drugs.

Studies show that the Mexican president's decision to eliminate social security and healthcare program put a particular group of people at risk. These groups are women, the poorest of the country, and the unemployed. In November 2019, the Mexican government modified the General Health Law by creating a Health Institute that replaces the social security and healthcare program (Seguro Popular). According to Georgina Jimenez (2019), two main arguments surround Lopez Obrador's new health policy. On the one hand, the opposition reflects on the huge number of people served by Seguro Popular and the risk of eliminating this policy. On the other hand, President Lopez Obrador states that the new policy INSABI will provide free medical care to all Mexicans without the need for affiliation. Thanks to the analysis provided by Data Cívica, one can understand how women are affected by this public policy if not implemented effectively (Jimenez, 2020). Data Civica is an organization that reveals data as tools for the defense of human rights and citizen empowerment to trigger change.

According to Data Cívica findings, the old policy Seguro Popular was put in place in 2004 with the purpose of providing people who lack Social Security with access to health services. Access to social security is closely connected to socioeconomic status, given that

half of Mexicans work informally. Seguro Popular intends to serve these people. According to the data retrieved from [datos.gob.mx](https://datos.gob.mx), when the program was implemented in 2004, the Mexican population who had Popular Insurance moved from 5.2 million to 52 million people in 2019, which is half the Mexican population. Even though Seguro Popular serves as social security to disadvantaged groups, President Lopez Obrador repeatedly comments that the program is “neither safe nor popular”. However, data contradicts the President's claims. In the poorest areas of Mexico, out of every ten women, nine are affiliated to Seguro Popular, and only 5 out of every ten women are in the richest areas.

Regarding gender inequality, since the implementation of Seguro Popular, more women are affiliated with this program than men are (Jimenez, 2020). In 2015, about 72% of women had Seguro Popular, 64% of men had it. In the richest areas, men have more access to social security. However, in general, women have less social security than men do in Mexico. This is not surprising because only 44% of working-age women are employed while men represent 75%. By reviewing the background of Popular Seguro, it is clear that this policy serves as social security to women and the poorest people in Mexico. Women and the poorest in Mexico are groups of people who are either unemployed or not active in formal jobs. Therefore, the lack of access to health provided by Seguro Popular leaves them unprotected. They are likely to suffer from government actions due to the lack of public service, social protection, and safety. The government promised that the new program National Institute of Well-being would benefit the majority of Mexican. If the president does not follow through with his promise, this new policy will harm women and the poorest in Mexico. Recently, reports reveal that hospital fees have increased rather than disappearing as the President promised. This implies that the elimination of Seguro Popular is not a wise choice.

Another decision of the government that has been judged as a non-feminist action is when Lopez Obrador deployed the armed forces to stop migrants on the southern border. Between June and September 2019, these guards were deployed because Mexico is under pressure from the government of the United States. It is reported by *El Universal* (2019) that around 61 000 migrants, mostly from Central America, Africa, and Haiti, were stopped at the border by the 27 000 elements of the National Guards deployed on the northern and southern borders of Mexico. Alberto Xicotencatl, who is in charge of the migrant shelter, Saltillo, pointed out that these migrants have suffered harassment from elements of the National Guard and the federal and municipal authorities (El universal, 2019). Concerning the migrant situation, organizations of human rights and the Washington Office on Latin America, the Jesuit Conference of Justice and Ecology, and Latin America Working Group (LAWG) have

shown their concern for the intimidation and harassment inflicted on the migrants by the National Guard. In addition, complaints have been filed with the CNDH, which in turn issued general recommendations against the National Guard and the municipal guards.

Mexico's domestic policies are not doing so great. Mexico has the challenge to act on the agenda of its feminist foreign policy. Moreover, the government is doing little to address issues related to gender-based violence. The government will have to demonstrate more commitment and action in the years. As established in the section above, a country's foreign policy needs to be coherent with domestic policy. However, the Mexican experience reveals that it is not always the case. It is one thing to preach gender equality, but it is also another thing to practice what is being preached. This is the reality of FFP.

However, Mexico is not the only country facing criticism. In recent days, the word “feminist” start evoking a negative reaction. Sometimes it is met with either giggle or scepticism in other countries. Contradictions and critical voices regarding FFP are common among countries that contain an FFP but in a different manner.

According to Aggestam and Rosamond (2016), “there is an inherent tension between idealism and pragmatism in the practice of a feminist foreign policy” (Aggestam and Rosamond, 2016). Because an FFP is placed within a feminist ethical framework, its agenda aspires to goals and expectations that make visible gender-sensitive results. However, Mexico cannot fundamentally or drastically change rooted practices such as patriarchal structures and gender-based violence. Aggestam and Rosamond (2016) predict that patriarchal structures, gender bias, and international institutions are long time goals that will encounter considerable global resistance. In their own words, they further argue that:

The practice of foreign policy is often mediated through a variety of policy options and compromises, some of which might be inconsistent with the explicit ethical ideals and feminist principles that underpin feminist foreign policy. These tensions may result in a lot of contradictions (Aggestam and Rosamond, 2016).

Findings demonstrate that even though Sweden is generally regarded as a leader in promoting gender norms, the country’s success as a norm entrepreneur is still questioned (Sundström and Elgström, 2020). Sweden faces similar challenges and criticism just like Mexico but within a different context. For instance, the Swedish government is criticized for not being up to its feminist foreign policy duty during the recent migration crisis. When the country welcomed around 160,000 asylum seekers, it is noted that the restrictions and controls imposed at the border are prone to affect women and men in a different manner (Aggestam

and Rosamond, 2016). Women are likely to suffer from the lack of identification documentation required to enter the country. Therefore, they are stuck in refugee camps in the Middle East while their husbands enter the Swedish shores. As an impact, about 30 percent of Sweden's development assistance budget that is supposed to be directed to the global south was redirected towards managing the migration influx (Aggestam and Rosamond, 2016). Consequently, development programs for women and children in the Global South are at risk of losing donor assistance from Sweden.

Another incongruence found in the Swedish practice of FFP similar to Mexico is the export of arms. The country has been criticized for promoting justice, peace while exporting arms to authoritarian states. Aggestam and Rosamond (2019) further elaborate on the extent to which Swedish Sweden's FFP is incoherent by arguing that the incongruent practice of FFP has caused dissonance in terms of Sweden's international and self-perceived image. While the government considers itself as a humanitarian superpower pursuing a feminist-oriented foreign policy, Swedish-made exported weapons are often fuelling and enabling gender-based violence and the repression of women (Aggestam and Rosamond, 2019).

Canada is not exempted from criticism. The country has been questioned due to the financial support it offers to extractive companies privately owned in Canada. The work of these extractive companies has destroyed indigenous populations and local ecosystems, including information that targets people who defend women's rights.

Based on the Swedish, Canadian and Mexican experience, two arguments can explain the incoherence found within governments regarding their FFP. On the one hand, some scholars argue that the reason for Sweden's pursuit of FFP is that "governments continue to pursue power by traditional means and only attempt to embed women into the system rather than adopting a comprehensive feminist policy"(Scheyer and Kumskova, 2019). On the other hand, others reflect that "feminist foreign policy is both an expression of ethical conduct and pragmatism, which at times may result in a political challenge and trigger policy contradictions and tensions"(Aggestam and Rosamond, 2016).

## **5. Conclusion**

This thesis aimed to study Mexico's capacity to regulate gender equality and include marginalized groups through the lens of a FFP, considering the country's failure to achieve gender equality at the domestic level. Based on qualitative research principles in support of

proponents of critical theory, it can be concluded that Mexico's FFP congruency with domestic policy is an important factor to consider when targeting issues such as gender equality and groups such as women and the LGBTQ community. The results indicate that the feminist foreign policy in Mexico causes mixed reactions (Deslandes, 2020). On the one hand, it can be defined as a tool that directly contributes to development. However, on the other hand, the FFP is a base of incongruence between international and domestic practice in Mexico. Mexico's FFP might be well-intended, but the federal government agenda constantly undermines women's and girls' rights and wellbeing.

By analysing Mexico's FFP, theories such as constructivism, globalization, and feminism explore important factors. They attempt to answer the research question and raise new and unexpected insights that contribute to understanding Mexico's ineffectiveness to achieve gender equality at the domestic level.

Constructivism provides us with an understanding of the social aspect of a FFP as a norm. It also shows how powerful actors, leaders, and institutions (Ministry of foreign affairs, NGOs) play a significant role in shaping and reshaping foreign policy by integrating feminists values into it.

Globalization provides this thesis with theoretical tools to analyse gender injustices in relation to the concept of globalization. These concepts link four important factors such as knowledge, resources, identity, and political growth. Knowledge-based economy and resource availability should incorporate ideas from actors in the state including women, and LGBTQ groups, because all these groups will help expand productivity. A robust production, in turn, will allow growth and deep-rooted political changes. In the case of Mexico, as it is seen, ideas from women and marginalized groups are often excluded in the economic field.

Feminism allows this thesis to explore the wide aspect of its dimension and consider critical factors such as gender inequalities, sexualities, and power relations that are likely to slow down Mexico FFP. While constructivists limit feminism in foreign policy to a norm, feminism as an approach provides additional insights. By combining feminism and constructivism, the thesis explored changes and the government actions related to gender equality work since the integration of feminism within Mexico's Foreign policy.

Mexico's capacity to achieve the objectives enshrined within the FFP can be evaluated from the four primary FFP ingredients highlighted in the study. Wright (2020) draws attention

to Mexico's Machismo culture with broad penetration in the country. The *Machismo* culture alludes that men are by nature superior to women. This culture has sustained male dominance in the country, challenging gender equality-focused policies to achieve their objective. This culture is currently a significant impedance to the FFP's efforts to achieve gender equality, self-governance for women and marginalized communities, and eradication of discrimination. It is almost impractical for the FFP to function if the traditional cultures perpetuating gender inequality are still embraced. Mexico's robust economy has a deep root in capitalism. Saucedo, Rullán, and Villafuerte (2015) term Mexico's capitalism as a hierarchical that has promoted monopoly and oligopoly. Social and Marxist feminists argue that gender inequality is a construct of capitalism. Men and capitalists exploit the existing resources for women and ensure that women provide uncompensated reproductive labour. Mexico's economy is reportedly moving towards the external market. This move hinders a possible economic growth beyond its current growth rate. Mexico will still need to rely on capitalism to sustain its economy. However, capitalism impedes the achievement of the adopted FFP goals. Social and Marxist theorists believe that equality can only be achieved when capitalism is eliminated. Currently, the country is not ready to detach itself from a capitalist system.

The study of feminist foreign policy is an important tool to enumerate the communities' experiences. These experiences in a community have historical vulnerability and were excluded from the past practice that involves a foreign policy.

Mexico is the first country in the Global South to be involved in feminist foreign policy. The feminist foreign policy is an initiative that has different social, economic, and political realities. Therefore, Mexico adopting the feminist foreign policy forces it to agree to the complex needs of its diversity to the society and social interactions. This kind of recognition brings about a possible way of transforming and analysing its environment. Moreover, a part of collective opinion recognizes an open talk and acknowledges identity and gender as incomplete concepts in continuous transformation.

The number of states that are integrating pro-gender and feminist norms into their foreign policy, in some instances, Canada and Sweden are instructive countries since they have a feminist frame into their respective foreign policy. As the feminist foreign policy is still in its developmental stages, it should be a priority to critically take out feminist underpinnings in the current developments. Such a move requires a theoretical agenda to be developed as it creates key scholarship on feminist international relations, ethics about care,

and international ethics. Gender agenda and gender equity are two components of the foreign feminist policy. In these terms, the feminist foreign policy is involved in dismantling the current male-dominated systems in diplomacy, immigration, defense, trade, and foreign aid that sidelines the women and marginalized groups worldwide. The role of a feminist foreign policy is to re-envision the national interest of a country. It is because the national interests are moved from global dominance and military security to promote equality as a tool to a peaceful and healthy world.

The world will likely undergo some positive changes when more countries adopt feminist foreign policy into their government systems. Countries that are more in affiliation to gender equality will hardly be involved in civil war. There is a direct link between good governance and gender equality. Countries, where women face exploitation are unstable. Moreover, women have not yet reached a point where they are prioritized in foreign policy. Countries have started to write the foreign policies into their agenda. For instance, the move by Mexico to promulgate the Mexican Foreign policy is a strategy that will increase gender and help in the fight against gender-based violence. The adoption of the word feminist in the description of the foreign policy leaves room for flexibility. The flexibility is in terms of how a state will comprehend feminism and how it chooses to emphasize it. This kind of uptake occurs as feminist academics and theorists are critical in how private and state interests employ them. There has been a criticism of contemporary feminism since it is termed a handmaid of being a capitalist. Therefore, feminism which was a movement to ensure the liberation of women has taken a dangerous path. That is, feminism has liaised with neoliberal energies to build a society characterized by a free market. In the past feminist ideas were more radical, but today, they have been individualized.

This research illustrates how Mexico has demonstrated its determination to achieve gender equality since adopting the feminist foreign policy. Based on these conclusions, practitioners must avoid becoming tired as it focuses on the approach aimed at adding women. Mexico should also show commitment to other entities from various marginalized groups such as LGBTQ and indigenous communities. To fully understand Mexico's achievement since the adoption of the FFP, further studies could address Mexico's commitment to the LGBTQ community at the national and international levels.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Interview guide**

#### **The aim of the interview**

At the end of the interview, my intentions are to be equipped with the following knowledge:

1 -the actors and organisations that are involved and how they include a feminist approach in their work, the efforts or programmes or action plans to incorporate gender and sexuality in international policy.

2 -The difference it makes to view a foreign policy through a feminist lens.

3- A clear comparison of the Mexico Foreign Policy with a gender perspective and the FFP.

#### **Information on the following individual:**

A short presentation or a brief biography of the interviewee ( professional information such as position and where you hold the position and personal information such as full name)

#### **The story of how Mexico starts with this feminist foreign policy (FFP)**

-Where does the idea or initiative of FFP come from?

- Who promote this policy, when did the initiative start?

- As commonly known, human rights exemplify an alternative tradition of thinking in many fields, especially IR. It also engages with states and state practices, but which also challenges state-centric thinking. In the case of Mexico, what is the influence of the human rights or the UN on this policy?

-What visions do this feminist foreign policy has in order to tackle issues on women's and LGBT rights

- How do recent events affect the image of Mexico's feminist foreign policy (For example, the women's strike and feminists protest against femicide)

-When Sweden debuted the feminist foreign policy in 2014, it was met with "giggles" and suspicion at the time. What is the case of Mexico? Are there any oppositions and resistance to this new platform? What are these oppositions (local and international levels?)

-Is there any mistrust or skepticism towards the adoption of this policy?

-Connection between FFP and the domestic one or the impact of the FFP on domestic policy (in regards to gender and sexuality)

-Given that the country already has a foreign policy with a gender perspective, what is the meaning of this foreign policy gender perspective? What are the challenges? What is its connection to a feminist foreign policy?

-I would like to know whether Mexico's feminist foreign policy as a new platform would affect previous priorities or the previous agenda.

-What are the key components (organizations, institutions, structure, and challenges) of Mexico's foreign policy? And how do these organizations, institutions, or structures under Mexico foreign policy change due to a feminist foreign policy

-Any other resistance or difficulty with the FFP?

-If any, what are they? How is the FFP planning to solve these difficulties?

### **Documents**

-What are the key documents to locate official and written documents on the FFP?

-Can you refer me to any material that deals with Mexico's foreign policy?

### **Ask questions about the statements held by important actors of this policy**

- According to Valdés, “Mexico will pay justice to a long overdue agenda on women’s and girls’ rights. How is the Ministry planning to do that? Are there any actions yet?

### **Mexico with local or international partners**

-What are Local and transnational networks in cooperation with Mexico's feminist foreign policy (in the region and outside Latin America).

-About the Generation equality forum, what are the actors involved in the conference? What is the importance of this conference, especially in regards to women and the LGBT community?

## **Résumé**

L'adoption d'une politique étrangère féministe (PEF) au Mexique présente des implications aux niveaux international et national. Les potentialités de cette PEF sont considérablement élevées, surtout si elle est en accord avec la politique intérieure du pays. Cependant, les critiques existantes exprimées à l'égard de la PEF laissent entrevoir de possibles failles qui pourraient la rendre inefficace dans la réalisation de ses objectifs. Cette étude vise à évaluer dans quelle mesure une politique étrangère peut réguler les écarts d'égalité entre les sexes au Mexique, compte tenu de l'échec retentissant de sa politique intérieure pour parvenir à cette régulation de l'égalité entre les sexes. L'étude fait appel à trois perspectives théoriques pour explorer les fondements de la politique étrangère féministe mexicaine. Des chercheuses spécialisées dans la théorie féministe fournissent un aperçu des racines de l'inégalité au Mexique et des solutions à y apporter. Les principes de la théorie du constructivisme permettent d'explorer comment le Mexique comprend son identité et son intérêt. La théorie explique également la manière dont le Mexique construit socialement la signification de questions telles que l'inégalité des sexes que la PEF cherche à traiter. Les approches globales du féminisme et des politiques féministes offrent un cadre pour synthétiser les injustices de genre liées à la mondialisation. L'étude fait appel aux principes de recherche qualitative défendus par les partisans de la théorie critique. Un plan de recherche exploratoire sera adopté pour examiner la documentation historique et la littérature spécialisée portant sur l'étude. Les données seront analysées par le biais de codes et triées en catégories de thèmes/codes pour en tirer du sens.

**Mots-clés :** politique étrangère féministe, politique intérieure, Mexique.

## **Abstract**

Mexico's adoption of a feminist foreign policy (FFP) presents implications at international and domestic levels. The prospects of this FFP are considerably high, especially if the policy strikes congruence with the domestic policy. However, existing critique suggests possible loopholes, which may render the FFP ineffective in achieving its objectives. This study aims to evaluate the capacity of a foreign policy to regulate Mexico's gender equality gaps, considering the tremendous failure of its domestic policy to achieve this gender equality regulation. The study employs three theoretical perspectives to explore the basics of Mexican feminist foreign policy. The proponents of feminist theory provide a background overview of the roots of inequality in Mexico and solutions to the inequity. The principles of constructivism theory explore Mexico's understanding of its identity and interest. The theory also explains Mexico's social construction of the meaning of issues like gender inequality that the FFP seeks to address. Globalization approaches to feminism and feminist policies lay out a framework for synthesizing the gender injustices related to globalization. The study employs qualitative research principles supported by the proponents of critical theory. An explorative research design will be adopted to explore historical and thematic literature on the study. The data will be analysed through codes and sorted into theme/code categories to draw meaning.

**Keywords:** feminist foreign policy, domestic policy, Mexico.