NOVEMBER 2020

A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran? Assessing the EU's Options

Cornelius Adebahr and Barbara Mittelhammer

A Feminist Foreign Policy to Deal with Iran? Assessing the EU's Options

Cornelius Adebahr and Barbara Mittelhammer

+ CONTENTS

Summary

Disputed nuclear activities, regional proxy wars, and a regime built on discrimination against women and other marginalized groups: Iran hardly seems like a policy field that would be amenable to a feminist approach. Yet this is precisely what the European Union (EU) needs today: fresh thinking to help develop a new strategy toward Iran. Feminist foreign policy critically reflects international power structures, focuses on the needs of all groups of people, and puts human security and human rights at the center of the discussion.

Applying a feminist lens to the EU policy toward Iran and the Persian Gulf region can improve foreign policy thinking and practice. This approach builds on three central principles of feminist perspectives on diplomacy and security:

- Broadening the understanding of security

- Decoding (international) power relations

- Recognizing women's political agency

Feminist foreign policy begins at home. To start with, the EU would need to ensure that its strategies and policies do not recreate inherent gender inequalities, such as those found in the gendered and prioritizing distinction between "hard" and "soft" power. This critical method includes considering the impact of an oftentimes securitized foreign policy on the ground, and an honest reckoning with the use of broad economic sanctions as a foreign policy tool. In the long run, a critical reflection of the EU's global role would have to include a reassessment of member states' diverse positions on nuclear weapons.

With regard to its current Iran policy, the EU should therefore implement three key changes:

- **Broaden and regionalize the approach**, which implies a fundamental shift away from the current focus on nuclear concerns to include issues like the environment, migration, and pandemic relief. Such a wider notion of security will not only allow the EU to facilitate regional discussions on myriad issues but also open the way to indirectly support women's organizations in Iran. Precisely because of Tehran's dismal record on women's rights, EU policy toward Iran should be particularly gender aware.

- **Decrease barriers to representation and participation** of women and other marginalized actors in EU foreign policy making. On top of promoting diversity in numbers, this response requires cultural change to overcome a gender-stereotypical security discourse that inherently limits policy options. The EU needs to substantially transform its organizational setup in order to facilitate equal representation and a more gender-aware allocation of resources.

- **Strengthen and work with civil society** at home and abroad. The EU should aim to include civil society voices and local actors, such as Iranian or European women's networks, in the development of Iran-specific or regional strategies.

"It is important to have a wide diversity of voices—not because we want to be politically correct, but because we want to be accurate."
—Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in a talk at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2018

Time for a Paradigm Shift

In 2016, a brief window of opportunity opened on what has come to be seen as the Iran file in international affairs. The beginning implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in January that year took the looming threat from Iran's disputed nuclear program off the table and allowed Europe in particular to broaden its approach to engagement with Iran. However, the U.S. presidential election in November that year changed the course of events, Donald Trump's incoming administration's rejection of its predecessor's policies foreshadowed the coming "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran—which would begin in earnest with Washington's withdrawal from the deal in May 2018.[1]

Four years later, the mutual hostilities have only worsened. The U.S. attempt to reinstate United Nations (UN) sanctions against Iran, although unsuccessful, seemed to be a final attempt to destroy the nuclear deal.[2] At the same time, Iran has skirted its own obligations under the agreement, all while provoking further conflict and escalation in the region. To date, the European Union (EU) has sought to uphold the deal, but it has been unable to counter the stringent U.S. sanctions regime against Iran.[3]

While the election of Joe Biden as U.S. president opens up the spectrum to rethink current strategies, even a Democratic White House does not mean an easy return to the status quo ante. The Europeans should therefore focus on finding a way to strengthen their room of maneuver and broaden their political repertoire. This is particularly true in the face of further worrisome trends converging on Iran and its neighbors: proxy wars are heating up, and the great power rivalries of the United States, China, and Russia are stirring up greater strife in the wider Persian Gulf region.

A feminist foreign policy promises a wholly different perspective on the matter and potentially offers new solutions, brought to light by looking at security in a more holistic way and incorporating the effects of its policies on people (including women and other marginalized groups) on the ground.

Interestingly, female negotiators played a crucial role in concluding the JCPOA. On the EU side, first Catherine Ashton and then Federica Mogherini served as the EU high representative, and throughout the process Helga Schmid headed the negotiation team from the European External

Action Service (EEAS), the EU's quasi-foreign ministry. On the U.S. side, Wendy Sherman served as the lead negotiator.[4] However, the presence and central role of women in the negotiations has not rendered the EU's overall Iran policy feminist.

There currently is strong momentum to test such an approach on the matter. The year 2020 is a pivotal time for gender equality and women's rights. It marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform; the twentieth anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS); and the tenth anniversary of UN Women, the agency responsible for the UN's work on gender equality and women's empowerment. It is also the fifth anniversary of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which gender equality is a key goal.

EU-level policy considerations have to some extent shown a stronger interest in and progress on gender equality and even feminist foreign policy.[5] Several analyses have focused on evaluating the EU's foreign policy from a feminist perspective with recommendations on how to develop and implement a comprehensive feminist foreign policy framework for the EU.[6] On October 22, 2020, the European Parliament debated necessary reforms and instruments to achieve gender equality in EU foreign and security policy based on a report put forward by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Foreign Affairs.[7] Yet the EU's policies are far from being gender aware, and its Iran strategy certainly does not take the need of all genders into account.

So what would a feminist perspective on the EU's strategy toward Iran look like? A specific analysis of the nuclear file from a feminist perspective has not been pursued so far, but feminist thought has made a damning assessment of weapons of mass destruction in general (for more on this, see the text box further down).[8] The analysis in this paper breaks down such broad assumptions to find answers to the specific challenges of the Iran file. It highlights the importance of looking at "hard security" topics such a nuclear nonproliferation and regional military escalation from a feminist perspective. This specific approach should contribute to a programmatic refinement of feminist foreign policy as such and to efforts to strengthen the debate between feminist analysts and the "traditional" security community.

This paper focuses on and seeks to inform EU policymaking. It does not analyze the situation of women, or feminism, in Iran as a whole.[9] However, women's rights activists have long been drivers of social change in Iran.[10] The women's movement in Iran is by no means limited to the fight against the compulsory wearing of the hijab, though this issue remains a prominent example.[11] In recent years, women have led acts of civil disobedience on a scale rarely seen since the Islamic Revolution in 1978–1979.[12] Currently, Iran also has a growing MeToo movement, which has sparked a much wider civic discussion about sexual violence and harassment in the wake of severe allegations that have been made against some of the country's prominent public figures.[13] These important developments are not considered further here, but they undoubtedly can help to inform EU policymaking.

Moreover, examining a feminist approach for European Iran policy does not in any way imply positioning the EU as savior of Iranian women. Nor does it mean that such a policy can only be executed by women. Instead, a feminist foreign policy considers the agency of women and other marginalized groups in and of themselves, something every policymaker can and should do. It simply takes society as a whole into account, whether considering policy at home or abroad.

Defining Feminist Foreign Policy

Feminist foreign policy is based on the recognition that women and men experience conflict and war differently. Because of their currently different roles and positions in society, they face different consequences from war and also contribute differently to peacebuilding. Traditional approaches to foreign and security policy, by contrast, are in essence gender blind and do not consider these differences on any real scale. This imbalance leads to incomplete political analyses and continued gender inequalities.

From Women's Peace Activism to Feminist Foreign Policy

Although the concept of feminist foreign policy as a political framework is relatively new, feminist approaches to international affairs are rooted in a tradition of feminist thinking and women's peace activism dating back to World War I.[14] At the heart of this tradition lies the fundamental principle of gender equality, as well as awareness of the fact that, until today, (foreign) policymaking has failed to include and consider the voices, needs, and interests of all affected—girls, boys, men, and women alike. Feminist academics and practitioners have stimulated one another over past decades: from fighting for women's rights and feminist peace at both domestic and international levels to the gender turn in social sciences, and from grassroots movements leading on the WPS agenda to progressive governments declaring their foreign policies to be feminist.[15]

Gender equality is first and foremost a human right in itself. At the same time, it is beneficial for society as a whole. Research strongly indicates that gender equality contributes to the economic and social development of a country, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and the advancement not only of national security but international peace.[16] More concretely, the participation of women in peace negotiations increases the durability of peace agreements and the quality of peace.[17] Peace negotiations in which women play key roles place less emphasis on purely military aspects and instead facilitate agreements aimed at political, social, and economic reforms; greater progress; and sustainable ways to create more equal, stable, and peaceful societies.[18] In line with a broader understanding of peace and security, and of women as active peacebuilders and not only victims of violence, inclusive security paves the way for sustainable and comprehensive conflict resolution.[19]

Feminist foreign policy as political program builds upon a framework of human rights, women's rights, and the WPS agenda.[20] The latter is specified in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions, which focus on the protection of women and girls from conflict and related gender-based violence, and the inclusion of women in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding.[21] Moreover, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" forms a standalone part of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goal 5).[22]

Even as researchers and policymakers have become more aware of the role that gender plays in international peace and security, there has been no substantial progress when it comes to participation and representation of women at all levels in foreign and security policy.[23] In major peace processes between 1992 and 2018, women made up only 3 percent of mediators, 4 percent of signatories, and 13 percent of negotiators.[24] Strikingly, the number of women signatories of peace agreements has not increased since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000.[25] Most peace agreements since 1990 have failed to address gender issues.[26]

At the same time, feminist foreign policy, particularly the WPS agenda, has been gaining momentum on the global level. A handful of countries, beginning with Sweden in 2014 and subsequently joined by Canada, France, and Mexico, have opted for a feminist approach as a key element of their foreign or development policies, to varying degrees. Other governments, such as that of Spain, are following suit, or are at least considering ways to include feminist elements in their foreign policy agendas.[27]

As the political framework has gained traction, civil society actors globally are refining definitions and concepts, working together to create a common standard of what constitutes a feminist foreign policy. With the EU as the point of departure, the work of Nina Bernarding and Kristina Lunz is particularly useful for this analysis. They define an EU feminist foreign policy as

> the external action of the EU that defines its interactions vis-a-vis states, supranational organisations, multilateral forums, civil society, and movements in a manner that prioritises gender equality, enshrines the human rights of women and other politically marginalised groups and wholeheartedly pursues feminist peace.[28]

This definition includes Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement's broader understanding of feminism as a means "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."[29] It thus becomes clear that feminist foreign policy pursues not merely new ways of doing diplomacy, but rather a paradigmatic shift in thinking and conducting foreign policy.[30]

Moreover, a feminist approach to foreign policy provides an analytical tool for looking at foreign policy, as well a political framework prescribing guidelines and instruments to deal with that challenge.[31] Although it is close to other critical or ethical strands of international relations theory, such as social constructivism and postcolonial development approaches, it offers major analytical benefits. For one, feminist foreign policy aims to pervade and inform the mainstream foreign policy discourse, whereas the other mentioned approaches often remain in their respective topical niche, couched in a highly academic context. For another, feminist foreign policy addresses the gender blindness of traditional approaches that tend to perpetuate established dynamics of power imbalance and inequality.[32]

In the end, the ambition of feminist foreign policy is to fundamentally change policymaking across all international domains. In this sense, a feminist foreign policy approach can inform and enrich the EU's policymaking today, even though its comprehensive implementation will remain a work in progress for some time to come.

Three Elements Constitute a Foreign Policy Different From 'Business as Usual'

Three key elements constitute the approach's transformational character, distinguishing it from the "business as usual" of diplomacy and foreign policy.[33] These elements are expanding the definition of security, decoding power relations, and recognizing women's political agency.

Expanding the definition of security
A feminist definition of security is rooted in human security approaches.[34] At the same time, it recognizes and questions deeply gendered understandings of peace and security. It challenges the perception of security as militarily enforced and stereotypically characterized as masculine, whereas peace is often framed as feminine and thus in need of being protected—typically by and from men. Such a framing is often ingrained in wording and language, based on an implicit but fundamental understanding of whose security is paramount to society and policymakers. It makes assumptions about what types of security are considered "normal" and whose insecurities are "problematic."

Understanding security simply as the end of armed conflict disregards the fact that violence, particularly for women, often continues in postconflict societies. This fact leads to another aspect of gendered misconceptions of security: the differentiation between "hard" and "soft" security, and the resulting prioritization of the former. Devaluing "soft" security topics as optional add-ons to be included only after the "hard" security parameters are well established leads to incomplete conflict analyses and imperfect policies.

A feminist definition of security therefore strongly deemphasizes military and other coercive measures as a means of achieving security. Peace and security are not defined through the absence of war but rather as constitutive elements of a positive peace.[35] This perspective goes beyond the cessation of hostilities and includes issues of sustainable development such as economic, health, and environmental security, and social justice.[36] Violence is not seen as an isolated phenomenon but as a symptom of "structural violence."[37] This means that systemic inequalities and unequal distribution of power and resources can be root causes of violence. To turn violent conflict into sustainable peace, these causes need to be addressed. As a result, a feminist definition of security shifts the focus from merely trying to make areas of conflict safer to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Decoding power relations
Many power structures, once closely examined, are found to be based on patriarchal normative frameworks. Moreover, existing peace and security institutions often rely on unequal political economies that perpetuate certain power imbalances. A feminist foreign policy aims to transform gender power relations by actively engaging with them.[38] Although gender equality is at the core of any feminist approach, a feminist analysis looks at the wider context to understand and decode power relations. It dissects systemic or institutionalized imbalances as much as actor-specific power dynamics, asking "who holds the power and why they are unwilling to give it up."[39]

A fundamental principle undergirding this critical analysis of power relations is intersectionality: the understanding that different forms of inequality—such as racism, classism, nationality, and sexism—can compound each other.[40] An intersectional approach thus highlights how gender inequalities are intertwined with other social divisions, which sheds light on processes of "Othering" within policymaking. Specific identity markers such as gender and origin lead to the distinction of "us" versus "them" and imply a normative hierarchy with a framework of superiority and inferiority.[41] This framework translates into moral judgment and affects policymaking, such as when decades of patriarchal development programming are slowly giving way to the economic empowerment of women, which then still contains traces of Othering in how the latter are supposed to be in need of support.

Recognizing women's political agency
Women are agents of peace and security, and they should be recognized as multifaceted security providers rather than merely as victims in need of protection. A feminist perspective on security thus aims to decrease barriers that impede the equal participation of women and other marginalized actors.[42] This approach does not mean simply adding women to a negotiation table and continuing with business as usual. Instead, recognizing women as political agents is about ensuring that they have the necessary tools, information, and resources to influence political decisionmaking at different levels.

In addition, recognizing women as political agents also means creating an enabling environment for their participation. Civil society must have space in all parts of the policy cycle, from analyzing circumstances to collecting and interpreting information to consulting on decisionmaking and policy implementation. Making policies gender aware means to account for the short- and long-term effects that these policies may have on women or gender issues.[43] This consideration also facilitates structural change to ensure policies are responsive to the needs of a diverse group of women, not only women in leadership.

Women's movements and organizations in civil society have been key drivers of feminist foreign policy and continue to play a central role in the implementation of this framework. A feminist foreign policy thus strengthens and includes civil society, both at home and abroad, in policy formulation and implementation. It ensures that those affected by different policies are included in the policy formulation process and facilitates a multidimensional approach to any given issue.

A Case in Point: A Feminist Perspective on Nuclear Weapons and Nonproliferation

The feminist analysis on nuclear weapons draws attention to gendered concepts of peace and security. It exposes the impact of these misconceptions on international discourse. Political and military power are often equated with sexual potency, which underlines deeply gendered conceptions of peace and security and consolidates a strongly hierarchical international order.[44] The possession of nuclear weapons is associated with domination and absolute power.[45]

Gender analysis can help clarify the motives behind acquiring—or deterring other countries' acquisition of—nuclear weapons.[46] It is one thing that the international nonproliferation regime distinguishes those states that legitimately possess nuclear weapons from those that do not. It is quite another to assume that the former are rational actors but the latter are "emotional, unpredictable, irrational, immature, [or] misbehaving" when resisting this separation.[47] This portrayal perpetuates a patronizing ("Orientalist") thinking of the Other as inherently underdeveloped and in need of (Western) enlightenment.[48]

More generally, such a distinction also carries gender stereotypical attributions of "feminine" (irrational) and "masculine" (rational) actors. "Hegemonic masculinity" favors stereotypically male associated behavior over stereotypically female conduct. Hence, any policies associated

with stereotypical feminine ideas, such as looking at or prioritizing the human costs of nuclear weapons instead of deterrence and power dynamics, are discarded as emotional or irrational.[49]

A feminist perspective, in contrast, looks at the long-term consequences of nuclear weapons on human lives, health, the environment, and economic development.[50] It emphasizes the need for comprehensive security, based on the understanding of security as—in the words of former Swedish prime minister Olof Palme—"joint survival, not mutual destruction."[51] Feminist analysis of the subject is normative in the sense that it aims to progress from a logic of deterrence to the abolishment of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Analyzing the EU's Iran Policy Through the Lens of Feminist Foreign Policy

Research conducted on feminist foreign policy often focuses on the implementation and refinement of the WPS agenda.[52] Existing practical frameworks on feminist foreign policy—going beyond the WPS agenda, such as the one established by the Swedish government or the one outlined by Lyric Thompson—focus on how to implement specific policies.[53] These are important steps to further develop feminist foreign policy as a political agenda, but the intent of this paper is to look at existing policies through the feminist perspective. It will evaluate the extent to which the transformative character of feminist foreign policy can present feasible policy recommendations on the Iran file—even if circumstances are far from ideal.

The following section examines the EU's Iran policy using the three principles identified earlier as key to the transformational character of feminist foreign policy. The main takeaways are threefold. First, the EU has mostly focused on Iran's nuclear weapons program, owing to a narrow conception of security. Where it has shifted to a human security approach, it has failed to include a gender perspective. Second, while the EU is portrayed as a soft power—in a gendered and stereotypical manner framed as "Europe as Venus" (an analogy that will be discussed in greater detail later)—with qualities such as international understanding, the EU's actual policy approach often is anything but. In fact, it contains elements of Othering, which, as Edward Said's work suggests, can lend to an "Orientalist" portrayal of Iran. Third, even though senior negotiators in the JCPOA process were women, the EU never prioritized women's agency or applied a gender perspective in its dialogue with Iran. More generally, civil society has mostly been absent from EU policymaking on Iran, given that

the high-stakes negotiations on the nuclear program crowded out any other concerns, including for human rights, most of the time.

Expanding the Definition of Security

As mentioned earlier, a broader security understanding in line with feminist foreign policy is based on a positive definition of security, one that is not merely the absence of conflict. It deemphasizes military means in a securitized foreign policy environment and stresses the importance of sustainable development, human rights, and gender analysis. Whereas the unraveling of the nuclear deal as a result of Washington's "maximum pressure" policy has prevented the EU and its member states from implementing such a broad-based approach vis-à-vis Iran, the EU still has a long way to go to comply with its own policy goals, particularly when it comes to pursuing a more comprehensive approach and rendering its strategic foreign policy documents and programs gender aware.

Broadening and narrowing—the EU recalibrates its approach to Iran
The EU developed a framework for its Iran policy even before it had properly instituted its Common Foreign and Security Policy. In the conclusions of its December 1992 meeting, the European Council identified different areas of concern in the EU's relations with Iran, including human rights, terrorism, Tehran's arms procurements, and Iran's role in the Middle East peace process. It also acknowledged "Iran's importance in the region" and its right "to acquire the means to defend themselves."[54]

The EU's initial list of concerns focused on narrowly defined security issues. In 1998, the EU revamped its "critical dialogue" with Iran, expanding into a comprehensive dialogue.[55] This broader dialogue aimed to tackle global issues (terrorism, human rights, and proliferation), regional issues (Iraq, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and the Middle East peace process), and possible areas of EU-Iran cooperation (drugs, refugees, energy, trade, and investment). The idea behind the shift was to "promote the reform process in Iran and contribute to greater regional stability," including by linking the proposal for a Trade and Cooperation Agreement with Iran to progress in four areas: human rights, nonproliferation, terrorism, and the Middle East peace process.[56]

Unsurprisingly, neither the 1992 council conclusions nor the comprehensive dialogue offer a gender analysis of EU-Iran relations, nor do they include a specific focus on women's rights. Subsumed under the topic of human rights, the 2001 Communication from the European Commission identifies the "position of women" in Iran as challenging for EU-Iran relations; however, it does not include policy recommendations on how to deal with this particular challenge.[57] Generally speaking, it appears evident that EU-Iran relations evolved to become more comprehensive, yet they have remained—until today—gender blind.

The same is true for the EU's broader conception of security. By the 1990s, the EU had fully embraced the concept of human security, unshackled from the narrowly (and antagonistically) defined national security of states. Both policymakers and academics sought to broaden the understanding of security to include economic, social, and environmental aspects.[58] The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), the EU's first such document, was steeped in this broader understanding, though this policy already was marked by the changing world order after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, with its greater focus on terrorist threats.[59] Around the same time, the EU began acknowledging women and gender as a foreign policy issue, yet this shift did not translate to an inclusive or even feminist security approach.

The EU's conception of security, as rooted in EU strategies and policy documents and the discourse shaped by them, remains deeply gendered and often gender blind. Agency continues to be implicitly portrayed as male while women remain victimized and passive, and gender mainstreaming merely is work in progress. This flawed perspective leads to gender-blind strategies and policies such as the EU's counterterrorism strategy, which even fails to mention women, men, or gender.[60]

It therefore does not come as a surprise that the EU's approach to Iran is also gender blind and dominated by a concern over nuclear proliferation. The ESS does not mention Iran, but it identifies the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as "potentially the greatest threat to our security."[61] The strategy was written at a time when France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (the so-called E3) had first initiated talks with Tehran over its previously unveiled clandestine nuclear program. The EU called off trade talks with Iran in late 2003 because of the concerns over "perceived limited Iranian progress" in the areas of human rights, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, the Middle East, and in particular the nature and scope of its nuclear program.[62] From that point, until the signing of the JCPOA, the nuclear file dominated the EU's approach to Iran.

Focusing on the nuclear negotiations and international sanctions
The years of stuck negotiations and increasing international sanctions following the breakdown of European-Iranian talks in 2005 led a number of Western scholars to question the prioritization of a (coercive) securitization discourse over that of democracy promotion and cultural diplomacy.[63] Ruth Hanau Santini notes, without using the word, the gendered juxtaposition of "the West (mainly, but not only, Europe) . . . portrayed as a tireless, generous and normative actor" and the Iranian leadership described as "untrustworthy" and with "unpredictable behaviour."[64] Also Iranian officials and scholars have criticized the West's focus on Iran's nuclear program and its potential to build a nuclear weapon as a "securitized" approach.[65]

That said, the same criticism of gendered discourse and securitization applies to the Iranian leadership itself. It, too, likes to portray Western as well as fellow Muslim governments from Arab coun-

tries as "irrational."[66] It also engages in securitization to "rally nationalist opinion and to legitimate the regime."[67] In doing so, Tehran uses highly gendered, nationalist-paternalist language, such as emphasizing honor and dignity and arguing for the need to protect the nation's "dear sons" (in this case, the nuclear scientists) from "strangers" (the international inspectors).[68] The rhetorical similarities highlight the gender stereotypical attributions of the concepts of feminine and masculine actors and gendered concepts of peace and security.

Although the Europeans have sought to prevent another war in the Middle East after the disastrous 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, and thus promoted negotiations with Iran instead of using military options, they have also resorted to coercive diplomacy, including sanctions. The EU supported and implemented international sanctions from 2006 onward when the UN Security Council began to address Iran's nuclear ambitions as a threat to international peace and security. In particular, after the last round of UN sanctions in mid-2009, the Europeans together with the United States imposed autonomous (or supplementary) sanctions to force Iran to limit, if not roll back, its nuclear program.[69]

Contemporary analysis has framed these sanctions as a key driver that encouraged Iran to remain at the negotiating table and end the drawn-out negotiations over the JCPOA in 2015. However, from a feminist perspective, this sanctions policy is controversial to say the least. Considered "illegitimate" by Iran and its supporters in the developing world, some Western scholars also labeled them as "ineffective" or "counterproductive" until the breakthrough in negotiations in 2013.[70] A feminist critique from 2012, however, goes further, arguing that sanctions "inflict great damage on the Iranian people, civil society and women [while prompting] repressive state policies and [thus diminishing] the possibility of promoting reform in Iran."[71]

In defense of the EU's approach, one might point out actions by the European Parliament. It has continuously pushed against the council's monothematic approach by focusing on human rights in Iran, asking for civil society to be involved in the process, and generally questioning the outsized role of the nuclear file in the EU's Iran policy.[72] In the past two years alone, the parliament has adopted several resolutions criticizing the situation of human rights and women's rights defenders in Iran.[73] It has made a case of highlighting the work—and suffering—of Iranian human rights defenders like Nasrin Sotoudeh, recipient of the European Parliament's 2012 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. However, the parliament has only a limited role in EU foreign policy making: it can influence the discourse, but its initiatives remain largely symbolic in reach and impact.

Broadening the policy issues, but remaining gender blind
Once the nuclear deal was signed, the EU reengaged Iran across a variety of policy issues and tried to broaden relations. In the spring of 2016, a high-level EU delegation traveled to Tehran to talk about bilateral cooperation ranging from political, human rights, macroeconomic, and finance dialogues to

agriculture, transport, and the environment to science, education, and culture.[74] A joint statement by the EU high representative Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif at the time established new programmatic guidelines and areas of priority for EU-Iran relations.[75]

The EU's current foreign policy framework toward Iran does not account for a gender-aware approach of inclusive security. The Council Conclusions of February 2019 affirm the EU's commitment "to equal rights of women and girls and persons belonging to minorities" and "calls upon Iran to implement the relevant international treaties."[76] However, this statement fails to reference the specific cases of imprisoned human rights defenders or women's activists.[77] The European Parliament's 2016 strategy does mention the role of women and gender equality, and recognizes achievements made by Iranian women rather than merely emphasizing their need for protection. Yet gender issues appear only at the end of a list with more than fifty points of interest—and, worse, does so only in relation to Iran, not with regard to the EU's own disposition.[78]

Despite formal adherence to gender mainstreaming, these strategies do not include a gender perspective when talking about a broader political dialogue, sectoral cooperation, regional security, or migration and refugees. Supplemental documents such as the EU-Iran Framework for a Comprehensive Dialogue on Migration and Refugee Issues do not mention women or gender at all.[79] This framework focuses on regulating migration flows, promoting voluntary repatriation, and improving border management, but it omits humanitarian assistance in providing support and protection. The policy perspective as well as the concluded political objectives are highly securitized, while gender-specific challenges such as gender-based violence remain unaddressed.

It must be said that the EU has broadened its approach toward Iran in recent years and has tried to include a variety of policy areas beyond the nuclear file. However, it has failed to either mainstream a gender perspective in EU-Iran relations or consistently apply a comprehensive, let alone feminist, approach.

Decoding Power Relations

With regard to power dynamics, a feminist approach looks at both systemic (global and regional) and institutional imbalances, as well as at actor-specific dynamics, in an effort to detect patriarchal normative frameworks and intersectional inequality. Such analysis can help to better understand underlying drivers and interests of different actors, and thus contribute to more effective policies that address root causes of conflicts rather than curing symptoms.

Applying this framework to European Iran policy means to look at power at the global level, in Iran's regional context, and within the European foreign policy environment. It includes taking a critical

stance at Europe's own position within global power dynamics and with regard to Iran. At present, the EU has been striving to break out of the existing state-centered, U.S.-dominated, security-focused mold, but has not been able to go more than halfway for want of the right strategies and tools.

Ideally, a comprehensive analysis of power relations also requires a look at the national (or member-state) level. This perspective must deconstruct the gendered dynamics influencing each respective state's external policies, such as the use of language and modes of policymaking, the current political climate, upcoming elections, and the overall impact of toxic masculinity. Such an in-depth analysis, however, cannot be provided here.

Dissecting global and regional power relations

Put crudely, continued U.S. dominance fosters the international system's inherent political and economic imbalances. Following the end of the Cold War, Washington first enjoyed a "unipolar moment," only to have that moment shattered by 9/11.[80] The resulting response led to two decades of "forever wars" and a new degree of military entanglement in the Middle East, marked by profound enmity with Iran.[81] Meanwhile, China has risen to near-superpower status, poised to overtake the United States in terms of economic power over the coming decade. China's expansionist model, known as the Belt and Road Initiative, regards Iran as an important waypoint.[82] Russia, in turn, is a revisionist power aiming to restore its global status from before the fall of the Berlin Wall. To achieve this, Moscow is balancing Washington's influence where it can, and recently has begun to reestablish itself as a player in the Middle East—including by partnering with Iran.[83]

Such resurgent rivalry leaves the EU, a multifaceted non-nation-state actor that subscribes to multilateralism and diplomacy, in an uncomfortable position. Long primed to only use its proverbial soft power, it recently has shifted to a more assertive approach. As Ursula von der Leyen, then European Commission president-elect, claimed in November 2019, Europe "must also 'learn the language of power'" to assert itself in the world.[84] This goal, however, fails to consider the gendered bias inherent in the terminology of power, to reflect on its own interpretation of power and assertion, or to rethink its role in international affairs. A more insightful approach would require outside-the-box thinking when dealing with complex cases such as Iran, where the EU is merely at the beginning of a learning process.

The competitive imbalance in geopolitics also bleeds into the geoeconomic realm. It is U.S. dominance of the financial world that has allowed it to determine what is permissible trade—in this case, with Iran—through economic coercion.[85] The EU has struggled to articulate a measured response to what it deems unacceptable policies on the Iranian side; meanwhile, China has followed a more robust policy of openly siding with Iran while still leaving Tehran disappointed economically.[86] Iran, in turn, has taken recourse in what the regime has called a "resistance economy," which it had been practicing already at the height of international sanctions in 2011–2013.[87]

This focus on resistance also dominates the power dynamics in the region. The Iranian regime views these dynamics through the lens of narrowly defined national (security) interests. It is particularly the American presence in the Persian Gulf and beyond that Tehran has fought against since the Islamic Revolution. Resistance to what the regime terms "the global arrogance"—lumping together the United States, Israel, and to a lesser degree the United Kingdom—has been engrained into Iran's political system.[88] Israel is here in a singular position as a regional actor, whose legitimacy Iran does not recognize, as well as an undeclared nuclear power.

At the same time, Tehran itself strives for regional hegemony, which pits it against Saudi Arabia and its allies. This rivalry extends to many fronts, including intra-Muslim competition (Sunni vs. Shia) as well as systemic opposition (monarchy vs. republic). Riyadh has been the leader of fellow Arab monarchies since it shepherded the foundation of the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981, aimed to create a united front against Iran. However, this alliance has shown cracks following the so far unsuccessful attempt to isolate Iran-friendly Qatar, as illustrated by the recent establishment of overt ties between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as well as Israel and Bahrain.

Decoding institutional imbalances

When it comes to institutional imbalances, an obvious one is that between the permanent members of the UN Security Council—the five victorious powers of 1945, or P5—and everyone else. These five countries share a UN Charter–based responsibility for international peace and security, and their status gives them real-world power over the international response to interstate conflicts. It is no coincidence that the P5 members simultaneously are the five recognized nuclear weapons states under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), lending them superior rights and power over all other states. Iran has continuously argued against this unequal state of affairs.

On the nuclear file, too, states receive special powers from their membership on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This UN-mandated body oversees both the peaceful use of nuclear energy and a party's adherence to its NPT safeguards agreement to prevent nuclear proliferation. Western countries have been continuously represented on the Board of the IAEA, as they are among "the most advanced in atomic energy technology."[89] This position of influence allowed the Europeans and the Americans to first deal with the Iran file at the IAEA during the 2003–2005 negotiations, and then escalate it to the UN Security Council in 2006 when they began viewing Iran's nuclear progress as a threat to international peace and security.

This short rundown of systemic and institutional power relations shows how great powers are engaging in narrowly security-focused zero-sum games. Any deconstructing power analysis would highlight how global power struggles influence inherent perceptions of the Other, and how these perceptions affect policymaking. The EU as a union of states wedded to multilateralism, for example, does not

follow the same approach, even though it occupies—mainly through its member states—considerable positions of power in international institutions. In fact, its lack of internal unity most often prevents it from bringing the latent power of its position to bear. Yet the EU is not immune to Othering Iran, and owing to the power imbalance within the transatlantic dyad, it is particularly vulnerable to the effects of America's engrained enmity with Iran on its own policies.

Analyzing actor-specific power dynamics
The feminist framework also invites us to question the meaning of ascribed categories or designations. In this case, it means to dissect what is often summarily called "Europe" or "the Europeans." In the context of Iran policy, "Europe" can refer to the EU as a whole, the E3 as the three countries sitting alongside the EU in the nuclear negotiations (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom), or the list of twenty-seven member states (with the added difficulty that the United Kingdom is no longer an EU member as of January 2020 but continues to work under the E3 format). It can also mean the European Parliament, or the cumulative effect of what EU-based companies are doing or not. Such distinctions matter a great deal, because these various actors have different positions and interests that will have to be combined under an umbrella called "European action."

This plurality of approaches becomes obvious with respect to nuclear policy. One EU member state, France, has nuclear weapons. Some receive the protection of the U.S. security umbrella, namely the twenty-one EU member states that are also members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Some, including Austria and Ireland, have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which will enter into force on January 21, 2021, but has so far only fifty state parties (none of which is a nuclear power). As a result, individual EU member states have diverging positions on nuclear disarmament. In contrast, with all EU members being party to the NPT, they have managed to formulate a common EU approach to nonproliferation.[90] Similarly, each member state's disposition toward the United States heavily influences its respective government's stance on the EU's Iran policy, given the central dyad of U.S.-Iranian enmity. These factors make a unified and coherent European policy on Iran often hard to come by—which is why the EU's consistency on the nuclear file has been so remarkable.

Beyond the specific nuclear file, a feminist perspective reveals that the discourse about the EU's actorness is in itself highly gendered. This begins with the continent's founding myth of Phoenician princess Europa being abducted by the ancient Greek god Zeus (no doubt about the power relations there) and continues through Robert Kagan's famous depiction of Europe as "Venus" opposing the American "Mars" in the harsh post-9/11 world.[91] Yet the continent appears to struggle with its self-ascribed "feminine" qualities: these can be hailed as a willingness to engage in international cooperation and use diplomatic and civilian means, but are just as often devalued in their ascribed ability to actively shape international affairs.

The EU, both a mirror image of its member states and a projection for postnational policies, often wants to have it both ways. For example, a feminist reading of the 2003 ESS—written in the immediate aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and with precisely Kagan's gendered diatribe in mind—reveals how much this document portrays Europe in masculine terms: As an island of order bordering regions of chaos, and as a reasoned community threatened by irrational barbarians.[92] The more recent EU Global Strategy changes the tone from aspiring for a "better world" (as per the title of the 2003 ESS) to promoting a "stronger Europe" that protects its citizens. The strategy does mention the need "to systemically mainstream human rights and gender issues across policy sectors and institutions," but it does not specify how the gender dimensions of conflict could be analyzed or included in policymaking.[93] It also employs an exclusive, patriarchal discourse Othering much of the non-European world. Thus, it implicitly differentiates between "professional, middle-class, predominantly White European women" on one side and "infantilised, vulnerable, weak and passive [female] recipients of European largesse" on the other, as Laura Davis from the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office writes.[94]

In sum, the EU may not be as "manly" as the American Mars, but at times apparently aspires to become so—reproducing itself through gender-stereotypical ascriptions. Or at least, it strives to develop into the "muscular but suave" *metrosexual superpower*, as political scientist Parag Khanna only half-jokingly describes the middle ground between masculinity and femininity in international politics.[95] In the case of Iran, this approach still implies an "Orientalist" portrayal of Iranian reasoning. It reveals the evident mismatch between the EU's perception of Iranian women as victims of an abusive regime in need of the EU's protection and the crippling effect that international sanctions have had on Iranian civil society, greatly limiting the space for Iranian women's rights activists to develop agency on their own. In the EU's foreign policy, this disposition appears to include a specific type of woman in existing—often militarized—policy frameworks, while Othering non-Western women outside of Europe, devaluing their role as self-empowered actors.[96] The following section will explore this point in more detail.

Recognizing the Diversity in Women's Political Agency

The feminist approach not only focuses on the role of women as political actors but also on the necessity of diversity in policymaking. It thus also recognizes civil society actors as important stakeholders in international affairs. European Iran policy has only half-heartedly embraced these tenets. The EU professes (in the most general terms) to include women and civil society organizations in policymaking and does so in several fields at the UN level, such as in pursuing the WPS agenda. Yet this ambition is not present in the potential responses to the manifold challenges posed by Iran. To the contrary, the focus on the nuclear file and the resulting monothematic approach to EU-Iran relations has sidelined women's rights and civil society support.

Following a state-centered approach

With regard to agency, the EU's Iran policy has been primarily state-centric, with little thought for the role of women or the involvement of civil society organizations. Admittedly, the Iran file is a circumscribed policy field with distinct characteristics:

- For most of the past fifteen years, policy toward Iran has been captured by the high-level politics of the nuclear confrontation. Many of the actors concerned—Iran, the United States, Russia, and China, to name a few—conceive their security through a narrow lens. With demanding negotiations spanning more than a decade, there was little appetite to follow feminist thinking and include nonstate actors in a more comprehensive approach.

- For the EU to be effective, it must work with world powers, including two European ones, in the UN Security Council on sanctions and diplomacy. The EU's member states, in particular the E3 as the key interlocutors, have preferred to keep the issue at the intergovernmental level. For example, when the Swedish government, as part of its half-year EU presidency in 2009, aimed to promote greater engagement for civil society following the Green Movement protests in Iran, other member states, the EU, and the United States remained reluctant.[97]

- On the EU side, policies were devised by a small team of advisers around lead negotiator Helga Schmid in close collaboration with the foreign ministries of the E3 as well as the United States, China, and Russia. There was no attempt to seek broad policy input from other actors inside or outside the EU. Instead, the process was managed in a confidential way, trying to make the (seemingly) impossible—a diplomatic solution to the confrontation over Iran's nuclear program—possible.

- Finally, there is no EU delegation in Tehran, which could help insert an understanding of Iran's domestic politics and regional activities into Brussels-based policymaking.[98] A post-JCPOA attempt to set up a liaison office within a bilateral embassy failed to bring about lasting change. Consequently, the EU continues to rely on on-the-ground information from member states.

Although the Iran deal itself has become famous for being driven by women, both on the European and U.S. side, this was not part of a deliberate strategy of female empowerment. Catherine Ashton's appointment as the EU's first high representative for foreign affairs and security policy in 2009 was no deliberate decision to position a woman in this role. Rather, the other top EU posts were already filled with men—and she immediately faced significant "latent sexism," as she told a journalist.[99] In an early speech, marking the tenth anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, she duly complained that, when the Foreign Affairs Council would meet, she was "the only woman in the room with 27 male . . . ministers—even if . . . I was in charge."[100] Both she and her successor,

Federica Mogherini, a former Italian foreign minister, would conduct the Iran negotiations mostly with other men. Then U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton was the lone woman among the E3+3 foreign ministers before John Kerry took over in 2013.

The two drivers of the JCPOA, however, were the two women behind the Ashton/Mogherini and Clinton/Kerry principals. Helga Schmid, a former adviser to German foreign minister Joschka Fischer during the early nuclear negotiations in 2003, led the EU negotiation team as deputy secretary general and, later, secretary general of the EEAS. Likewise, Wendy Sherman, U.S. under secretary of state for political affairs from 2011 to 2015, steered the most intense period—and the conclusion—of the negotiations for her government.[101]

From the representation of women to a transformation of politics
Female representation is one key element of feminist foreign policy, but the participation of women alone does not constitute a feminist approach to policy. Men can equally develop and implement feminist policies. Moreover, feminism does by no means stipulate that women need to be included because they are better negotiators or better policymakers.[102] Such an implication would neglect the systemic changes required to achieve the transformational potential of a feminist approach. Indeed, it is policymaking itself that needs to be transformed to achieve more comprehensive outcomes by including a gender perspective. That should be the ultimate goal of the EU's embracing, in principle, of "women's leadership and agency in all areas of policy and programming related to peace and security," as codified in the 2018 EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security and the corresponding Council conclusions.[103]

In addition to not expressly empowering women, the EU also failed to protect them against the unintended effects of the international sanctions regime. As outlined earlier, EU-supported sanctions had direct effects on Iran's citizens, including women and other marginalized groups as well as civil society organizations. A gender-sensitive analysis would have accounted for the effects of this sanctions policy on all parts of society: shrinking spaces for civil society in the face of increased governmental pressure, further marginalization of the most economically vulnerable groups of society such as single-headed households (often by women), the impact on service industry sectors mainly dominated by women, and international isolation that prevented Iranian women and women's organizations from building global feminist networks on a global scale.[104] Even more starkly and in light of the most recent wave of civil unrest in Iran, prominent exiled activist Masih Alinejad warned that "[burying] women's rights under the nuclear deal . . . gives power to the government of Iran to oppress the protesters."[105]

Involving civil society organizations, including but not limited to women's organizations, in policy formulation could help prevent such detrimental effects. However, this comes with difficult choices

to make on who to support. Most of the vocal civil society organizations in Europe that deal with Iran have obvious political agendas. This is true for the National Resistance Council of Iran, which is the umbrella organization of the cult-like People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran, as well as United Against Nuclear Iran and Stop the Bomb, which both hail from the neoconservative camp advocating for regime change. These organizations have little to no support within Iran. At the same time, Iranian civil society organized at the UN can be overly close to government structures. Supporting them would extend the regime's reach rather than provide an alternative to it.[106]

Moreover, the EU does not have a history of engaging with Iranian civil society. Much of the EU's efforts to maintain a vibrant civil society in the face of authoritarian governments relates to its own enlargement and countries within the European neighborhood.[107] These are states with which the EU has established political and funding relations from which to draw leverage, not the delicate state of affairs of its approach to Iran.

Inside the country, efforts to support civil society organizations come with their own set of difficulties, from possibly exposing one's interlocutors to the authorities to tying infrequent visits into a broader strategy combining both engagement and pressure. When then EU high representative Catherine Ashton traveled to Tehran and met with female activists and human rights defenders on International Women's Day in 2014, the Iranian leadership was furious.[108] Ironically, she was also criticized for making the trip at all—the first by an EU high representative since 2008—as this was perceived as bowing to the regime.[109] Worse, one of Ashton's interlocutors, Narges Mohammadi, was arrested two weeks after their encounter.[110] An earlier trip by members of the European Parliament had provoked a similar backlash in both directions, after the delegation met with female parliamentarians as well as with environmental, feminist, and citizen groups.[111]

These episodes illustrate the need to tie such meetings into a broader engagement strategy including human rights, instead of focusing narrowly on the nuclear file.[112] Expectations were high when, in April 2016, then high representative Federica Mogherini flew to Tehran only a few months after the nuclear deal had been implemented. She was leading a strong commission delegation to lay the groundwork for a new "'dialogue of the 4 C's': comprehensive, cooperative, critical if needed, constructive always."[113] Instead of meeting human rights activists, Mogherini launched an official human rights dialogue with Iran—a formal EU procedure involving not only a country's government but also its judiciary. Yet, given Iran's systemic abuses of human rights, and in particular women's rights, there is little to talk about during such official interchanges.

Once Washington left the deal, however, even this new and broad-based approach fell flat. It is true that human rights is among the issues addressed in the EU's High-level Dialogue with Iran at the level of deputy foreign minister and EEAS secretary general.[114] However, the defense of the nuclear

deal has taken priority, and the EU's inability to maintain trade ties does not leave much room to criticize the regime for its rights violations or to actively support civil society for fear of angering the Iranian authorities.

What a Feminist EU Iran Policy Could Look Like

This study has looked at the EU's Iran policy from the angle of a feminist foreign policy and high-lighted the analytical benefits of this approach. Yet a sustainable feminist approach that pursues a transformational shift in the making of foreign policy must go further than simply adding women here and some procedures there. Instead, a holistic feminist approach is needed, albeit one that can be applied to concrete policy challenges.

A benevolent reading of the EU's principles for peace and security would find them largely compatible with the feminist peace concept espoused by feminist theory. In fact, adopting a number of feminist principles can help make this idea of a "European Peace" come about, including on the Iran file. These principles include investments in gender-aware political analysis, organizational reform, and transformed policymaking.

How a Feminist Perspective Changes (Foreign) Policy Priorities

A feminist foreign policy in action and attitude does not manifest itself only externally; it must start at home. This obviously begins with elements described in depth in the study of European feminist foreign policy by Lunz and Bernarding, from increasing the representation of women and providing the necessary financial and human resources to breaking down the male-dominated hierarchy in foreign policymaking, deemphasizing military means, and reimagining the EU's securitized approach to foreign policy.[115] The above-mentioned initiatives within the European Parliament form an important part of this. The European Council and Commission should make use of the substantive input provided.[116] It also includes acknowledging that the distinction between hard and soft power or security is in itself gendered, just as the assumption that there is a "realistic" (that is, male) approach to think about security and another one based on (female) "wishful thinking." Embracing a feminist foreign policy means conducting rigorous gender analysis at all levels so that strategies and policies do not recreate inherent gender inequalities.

A feminist approach demands critical reflection on the EU's role in global power relations and with regard to the Middle East. It will involve a straightforward self-assessment of the European stance on nuclear weapons and nonproliferation, looking at both the differing views of the member states,

including on the use of nuclear deterrence, and the common EU positions. Sooner or later, a statist defense of nuclear weapons stemming from the Cold War and the U.S. security umbrella will no longer be tenable. Any reformulation should acknowledge fundamental feminist opposition to nuclear weapons.

In addition, an honest assessment of the use of economic sanctions is overdue. Long viewed as blunt tools that harm a country's population more than the targeted regime, their apparent effect in "bringing Iran to the table" has made them more palatable. However, what long-term costs have these sanctions had on Iran's people and civil society? It is one thing to resist the unilaterally reimposed U.S. sanctions regime post-2018, as it runs counter to the EU's declared interests; it is quite another to critically assess the extended impact of the EU's own pre-2015 sanctions on Iran. The EU should therefore ask for an independent analysis of how its increased use of sanctions—on Iran and other countries—has helped or hindered its own policy goals. Going forward, it should refrain from using a broad sanctions mechanism as a foreign policy instrument and include gender-aware impact-analysis beforehand. For more targeted sanctions against human rights violators, the EU should equip itself with a "horizontal sanctions regime," or European Magnitsky Act, as envisaged by the council that would put individuals in or close to power in the spotlight.[117]

Some member states' governments have formally adopted a feminist foreign policy, and the EU should prepare to embrace the same approach—including through debates in the European Parliament, between governments, and with civil society. The European Commission should build on its presentation of the "3rd Gender Action Plan 2021-25" before the end of the year to provide clear guidelines in this regard. Such a predefined framework for a responsible EU foreign policy would not only do justice to the ambitions the EU has set for itself, but also ensure stability and peace in a region of importance to the EU.

Feminist Guidance for Iran-Related Policy Goals

In addition to informing overall policy priorities, a feminist foreign policy framework offers guidance on a number of concrete changes to the EU's current Iran policy: broadening its scope and regionalizing its approach, decreasing barriers for representation and participation of women and other marginalized groups in policymaking and negotiations, and strengthening as well as working more directly with civil society. Given that feminism remains a taboo topic in Iran, the EU need not directly confront the authorities with such an approach. However, it should use existing opportunities to empower women beyond the realm of women's rights and feminism by finding creative means of giving them a voice and supporting them through economic, social, and regional initiatives.

Broadening and regionalizing the EU's approach

Rather than making conflict safe (as it were) and merely ensuring the equal participation of women in an often-militarized security architecture, the EU needs to fully embrace a broad security definition and invest more in regional conflict prevention. In the case of Iran, a broader approach would include issues ranging from environmental degradation and access to water to education and migration. What is more, regional cooperation in areas such as environment, maritime security, migration, and religious tourism could be a stepping stone to the much harder to achieve goal of security cooperation.[118] Given the advances of neighboring countries on nuclear energy, with Saudi Arabia building nuclear reactors and the UAE recently having brought its reactors online, steps should be made toward a regional nonproliferation scheme.

A feminist approach also opens up opportunities, in line with the broader understanding of security, in light of the coronavirus pandemic. The latter has hit Iran very hard, with disastrous effects on an already weak economy. The EU should evaluate broadening the humanitarian trade option under the JCPOA agreement to address shortages of medicine in Iran and in particular to enable a targeted recovery program designed to specifically empower women. Such a program would account for the fact that the economic repercussions of crises often disproportionately affect women, and misguided gendered policies make it harder for them to bounce back.[119] For example, there are growing service industry sectors in Iran that are dominated by women and have been hit hard by the deterioration of the overall economic situation. Consulting with on-the-ground experts to develop instruments to address these concerns would indirectly also contribute to women's economic (and, ultimately, political) empowerment.

Perceiving health security risks and crisis management as a security threat can also pave the way for increased regional cooperation. First steps have been made, with the UAE helping to transfer humanitarian aid and opening up political and security channels with Iran.[120] Such moves could allow parties to start thinking about regional cooperation—even on matters of national security.

Broadening the scope, however, remains incomplete without rendering policymaking at all levels gender aware. Therefore, the EU needs to integrate gender into its wide-ranging dialogue with Iran. Again, this approach does not mean including the situation of women's rights and support for feminist organizations in a multilateral agreement like the JCPOA. However, involving the EEAS principal adviser on gender and on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in policy formulation on Iran would be a first step. At a later stage, creating dedicated gender focal points in the EU's bilateral relations as well as in its regional approach would provide for continuous policy evaluation and input, if adequate staff and resources are provided.

Decreasing barriers to representation and participation of women in policymaking
Although women have been well represented in the Iran nuclear negotiations specifically, the EU as a whole needs to strengthen the representation and participation of women and other marginalized actors in its external relations. This applies to senior-level positions in the EEAS as well as to EU delegations abroad. In particular, decision- and policymaking on nuclear weapons and nonproliferation ought to benefit from a broad array of knowledge.

The intersectional character of feminist foreign policy becomes highly important, as women's inclusion in policymaking is as important as the diversity of views represented. More than merely promoting diversity (whether of gender, ethnicity, education, political affiliation, religion, belief, or other categories) exclusively from a numbers perspective, a feminist approach demands work toward cultural change to overcome a gender-stereotypical security discourse. A purely instrumental approach counting the women around the table would overlook the forms and structures of decisionmaking—that is, the "black box" of foreign policymaking.[121] If, in the end, policymaking is primarily conducted by white, upper-class, and mainstream decisionmakers—be they women or men—then different policies may not necessarily come to the forefront. Broader diversity is therefore crucial.

Most of this work on personnel diversity will have to be done at home, as proper leadership is essential to change organizational culture. And there is plenty of room for improvement on the EU side. Taking the European Parliament's Iran delegation as an illustrative example, it is far from parity with only four of twenty-one members being women.[122] At the same time, having European female negotiators, such as Ashton, Mogherini, or Schmid, meet their Iranian counterparts does leave an impression on the Iranian domestic audience regarding the value of women in politics. So, while Brussels cannot dictate the composition of the Iranian or any other negotiation team, EU member states can lead by example and make a point of sending more female ambassadors to represent their interests in Tehran.

Moreover, beginning at home is in the EU's own interest in terms of being able to achieve better policies. When formulating policies, the full array of options should be considered, and no one option should be valued over the others. This revised position would help to implement security and foreign policies that do not perpetuate the masculinity of dominance and power that has permeated this field until today.[123]

Nonetheless, the EU should press Tehran on ratifying or implementing, respectively, the relevant UN mechanisms in support of women's rights and representation. Enforcing, for example, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) would

help civil society and women on the ground, as it gives them both international recognition and some potential leverage in domestic affairs.

Beyond the legally tangible, symbolism also plays a role, especially at the UN level, where Iran has over the years built relative resistance to international scrutiny. For example, Tehran has refused to allow the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran—a position re-introduced in 2011 after an initial mandate from 1984 to 2002—to visit the country.[124] Moreover, granting Iran a four-year stint on the UN women's rights commission (2015–2019), for example, devalues the authority of this body just as much as the current presence of Saudi Arabia (2018–2022) does. Precisely because such fraught compromises appear to still be necessary within the UN family, the EU should implement guidelines to empower women both within its own bureaucracy and among its partners.

Strengthening, and working with, civil society
A feminist foreign policy approach follows a needs-based approach and formulates policies in cooperation with civil society. Particularly in the Iran case, inclusion of civil society can also be an opportunity to involve more women in policymaking. Therefore, while the EU generally supports and exchanges with civil society organizations in its external relations, it should aim to include such voices and actors in its policy toward Iran in particular. Given the regime's repressive character and the deeply intertwined connections between the government and civil society actors tolerated by the regime, this proposed inclusivity will require creative thinking.

Unlike in Eastern European and North African countries, the EU has no track record for direct civil society support in Iran. Moreover, it cannot rely solely on civil society groups in exile to gain a complete picture of what is going on in the country. Instead, lawyers and bar associations can be partners on the ground. If possible, the EU should also use funds provided under the 2021–2027 Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument to support civil society organizations and human rights defenders in Iran. Where such direct support is not advisable, it should at the least amplify the voices of women and other oppressed groups on the international stage.

Personal meetings of EU officials with civil society representatives put the latter in danger, and the EU cannot provide any protection. Instead, so-called track 2 (nonofficial) talks with representatives of academia, civil society, as well as semi-government think tanks, many of them women, can begin to address political topics in a nonsecuritized, nonconfrontational way. Outside of the immediately political—and thus highly contested—sphere, such dialogues can address environmental issues and natural resources management, support for small enterprises and rural cooperatives, and cultural

heritage preservation and tourism promotion. Moreover, addressing the economic and social effects of the coronavirus pandemic offers an opportunity to support civil society organizations, including Iranian or European women's networks.

Beyond targeted support of individual organizations, the EU should address the shrinking civic space in Iran through policies that (unlike sanctions) foster a vibrant society. Picking up on a number of recommendations made to improve the EU's support for civil society in general, this response would begin with a broadened understanding of civil society that allows for engaging with unfamiliar partners.[125] Moreover, to foster conversations happening at civil society level but without enforcing existing power dynamics (namely, through proximity to the government), the EU should make extra efforts to include civic actors into economic, technical assistance, and cultural programs (that is, those not labeled as civil society support).

Lastly, the EU had better connect civil society input to its own policies, not least by assessing the latter's impact on civil activity on the ground. For example, the EU should analyze the impact of Iran's dire economic situation on civil society in general and women's organizations in particular in order to better inform policy formulation. When evaluating relevant support mechanisms, it should include gender analysis in its measures. These steps would allow the EU to develop better policies that can more effectively contribute to reach its long-term goals—whether on Iran or any other foreign policy issue.

About the Authors

Cornelius Adebahr is a nonresident fellow at Carnegie Europe. A political analyst and entrepreneur based in Berlin, he works on European foreign policy, global governance, and citizens' engagement. He also is an associate fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e. V.; DGAP) and a member of the European Commission's experts' network, Team Europe.

Since 2005, he has taught at various international universities, including Tehran University in Iran, the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. He is the author of *Europe and Iran: The Nuclear Deal and Beyond* (Routledge, 2017) and *Learning and Change in European Foreign Policy: The Case of the EU Special Representatives* (Nomos, 2009).

Barbara Mittelhammer is an independent political analyst and consultant based in Berlin, and, inter alia, an affiliated expert at Lanosec. She focuses on human security, and the gender, peace and security agenda. She has a well-versed background in foreign and security policy and extensive experience in multi-stakeholder management, political analysis and consulting as well as programme development.

She has worked in a leading position with a political consultancy, managing the consultancy's Berlin office and think tank unit. Prior to that, she was press officer and project manager with the Munich Security Conference, one of the world's leading platforms for debating international security policy.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1   U.S. Department of State, "Advancing the U.S. Maximum Pressure Campaign on Iran," April 22, 2019, https://www.state.gov/advancing-the-u-s-maximum-pressure-campaign-on-iran/.

2   International Crisis Group, "Iran: The U.S. Brings Maximum Pressure to the UN," Middle East Report no. 218, International Crisis Group, August 2020.

3   European External Action Service, "Chair's Statement Following the 1 September Meeting of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," European External Action Service (EEAS), 2020.

4   Maïa de la Baume, "The Women Behind the Iran Nuclear Deal," POLITICO Europe, July 17, 2015, http://www.politico.eu/article/the-women-behind-the-nuclear-deal/; and Suzanne Kianpour, "Iran Negotiations: The Women Who Made the Iran Nuclear Deal Happen," BBC News, August 5, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33728879.

5   Nina Bernarding and Kristina Lunz, "A Feminist Foreign Policy for the European Union," The Greens/ EFA in the European Parliament, 2020; and Patricia Kruse and Tobias Pietz, "Frauen an der Spitze von EU-Friedensmissionen? Eine Frage des politischen Willens" [Women at the helm of EU peace missions ? A question of political will], PeaceLab Blog, June 2020, https://peacelab.blog/2020/06/frauen-an-der-spitze-von-eu-friedensmissionen-eine-frage-des-politischen-willens.

6   Bernarding and Lunz, "A Feminist Foreign Policy for the European Union"; Laura Davis, "Kissing the Frog: Gender Equality in EU Conflict Prevention and Other Fairy Tales," European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, 2018; and Maria Stern, "Gender and Race in the European Security Strategy: Europe as a 'Force for Good'?," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 14 (2011): 28–59.

7   European Parliament, 2020, *Report on Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy (2019/2167(INI)).* (European Parliament, Brussels).

8   Marissa Conway, "A Feminist Analysis of Nuclear Weapons: Part 1 - Hegemonic Masculinity," Center for Feminist Foreign Policy, 2016; Kristin Henderson, "A Feminist Alternative to Trump's Chest Beating on Iran," Foreign Policy in Focus, December 20, 2019, https://fpif.org/a-feminist-alternative-to-trumps-chest-beating-on-iran/; and Maysam Behravesh, "The Gender Politics of Iran's Nuclear Policy," *Guardian*, June 9, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/iran-blog/2015/jun/09/iran-gender-politics-and-nuclear-policy. On weapons of mass destruction, see Carol Cohn and Sarah Ruddick, "A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction," Working Paper no. 104, Consortium on Gender, Security, and Human Rights, 2003, https://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/carol_cohn_and_sara_ruddick_working_paper_104.pdf.

9   Marziyeh Bakhshizadeh, "Women's Rights in Iran and CEDAW: A Comparison," in *Changing Gender Norms in Islam Between Reason and Revelation*, ed. Marziyeh Bakhshizadeh (Berlin: Budrich UniPress, 2018), 61–100.

10   Nayereh Tohidi, "Women's Rights and Feminist Movements in Iran," *Sur - International Journal on Human Rights* 13, no. 24 (2016): 75–89; and VolunteerActivists, "Civil Society in Iran and its Future Prospects: A Case Study," Volunteer Activists Institute, 2018.

11   Nassim Hatam, "Iranian Women Threw Off the Hijab - What Happened Next?," BBC News, May 18, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44040236.

12   Roya Hakakian, "The Flame of Feminism is Alive in Iran," *Foreign Policy*, March 7, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/07/the-flame-of-feminism-is-alive-in-iran-international-womens-day/.

13   Nazila Fatih, "Iran's '#MeToo' Moment," Middle East Institute, August 28, 2020, https://www.mei.edu/publications/irans-metoo-moment.

14   Ibid.

15   John Paull, "The Women Who Tried to Stop the Great War: The International Congress of Women at The Hague 1915," in *Global Leadership Initiatives for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding*, ed. Andrew H. Campbell (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2018), 249–66.

16   Jamille Bigio and Rachel B. Vogelstein, "Understanding Gender Equality in Foreign Policy," CFR Discussion Paper, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), June 2020, https://www.cfr.org/report/understanding-gender-equality-foreign-policy; and Alisha Haridasani Gupta, "What Do Sweden and Mexico Have in Common? A Feminist Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, July 28, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/us/sweden-feminist-foreign-policy.html.

17   Jana Krause, Werner Krause, and Piia Bränfors, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace," *International Interactions* 44, no. 6 (2018): 985–1016; and Valerie M. Hudson, "What Sex Means for World Peace," *Foreign Policy*, April 24, 2012, https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/04/24/what-sex-means-for-world-peace/.

18   Krause, Krause, and Bränfors, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations."

19   Ann Tickner, "Peace and Security from a Feminist Perspective," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, ed. Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 15–25.

20   Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (New York: United Nations, 1979); and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (New York/Beijing: The Fourth World Conference on Women, United Nations, 1995).

21   United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, *Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security*, October 31, 2000, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), "The Resolutions," Peace Women, n.d., http://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions; and Sarah E. Davies and Jacqui True, "WPS: A Transformative Agenda?," in Davies and True, *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, 3–14.

22   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development Goal 5, https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5.

23   H. Neumann, H. and L. Hopgood, 2020, *The SHEcurity Index. Edition 2020* (http://shecurity.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SHEcurity-Index-final.pdf).

24   CFR, "Women's Participation in Peace Processes," CFR Interactive Report, 2019, https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/; and Kruse and Pietz, "Frauen an der Spitze von EU-Friedensmissionen?"

25   Krause, Krause, and Bränfors, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations."

26   CFR, "Women's Participation in Peace Processes."

27   Lyric Thompson and Rachel Clement, "Defining Feminist Foreign Policy," International Center for Research on Women, 2019.

28   Bernarding and Lunz, "A Feminist Foreign Policy for the European Union."

29   Thompson and Clement, "Defining Feminist Foreign Policy."

30   Bernarding and Lunz, "A Feminist Foreign Policy for the European Union."

31   Marissa Conway, "A Feminist Nuclear Policy: A New Vision for US Nuclear Policy," Ploughshares Fund, 2019.

32   Karin Aggestam, Annika Bergman Rosamond, and Annica Kronsell, "Theorising Feminist Foreign Policy," *International Relations* 33, no. 1 (2019): 23–39.

33   Lyric Thompson, "Feminist Foreign Policy. A Framework," International Center for Research on Women, 2020.

34   The seminal 1994 report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) included seven areas of human security: (1) economic security (assured basic income for individuals), (2) food security (physical and economic access to basic food), (3) health security (minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles), (4) environmental security (protection from manmade or other threats to the natural environment), (5) personal security (protection from physical violence, including crime), (6) community security (protection from the loss of traditional relationships and values, and from sectarian and ethnic violence), and (7) political security (respect for people's basic human rights); see UNDP, "Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security," https://www.un.org/humansecurity/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/What-is-Human-Security.pdf.

35   J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

36   Ibid.

37   Ibid.

38   Davies and True, "WPS."

39   Conway, "A Feminist Nuclear Policy"; and Davies and True, "WPS".

40   The concept of intersectionality is based on Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8. See also Fred Dervin, "Discourses of Othering," in *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*, ed. Karen Tracy, Cornelia Ilie, and Todd Sandel (New York: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2015); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247–72.

41   Davis, "Kissing the Frog."

42   Davies and True, "WPS"; and Hannah Neumann, "More Women, More Peace: Opportunities at the EU Level," PeaceLab Blog, April 22, 2020, https://peacelab.blog/2020/04/more-women-more-peace-opportunities-at-the-eu-level.

43   Karin Aggestam and Jacqui True, "Gendering Foreign Policy: A Comparative Framework for Analysis," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16, no. 2 (2020): 143–62.

44   Cohn and Ruddick, "A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction"; and Conway, "A Feminist Analysis of Nuclear Weapons: Part 1."

45   Jennifer Nordstrom and Felicity Hill, "A Gender Perspective," in *Nuclear Disorder or Cooperative Security? U.S. Weapons of Terror, the Global Proliferation Crisis, and Paths to Peace*, ed. John Burroughs and Michael Spies (New York: Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, 2007); 165–68.

46   Ibid.

47   Conway, "A Feminist Analysis of Nuclear Weapons: Part 1." See also the discourse on "nuclear apartheid" by Jaswant Singh, "Against Nuclear Apartheid," *Foreign Affairs* 77 (1998): 40–52; and Hugh Gusterson, "Nuclear Weapons and the Other in the Western Imagination," *Cultural Anthropology* 14 (1999): 111–43.

48   Cohn and Ruddick, "A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction."

49   Conway, "A Feminist Analysis of Nuclear Weapons: Part 1."

50   Conway, "A Feminist Nuclear Policy."

51   Olof Palme, "Introduction," in *Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival*, ed. The Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), xi–xvii.

52   Jennifer Thomson, "The Growth of Feminist (?) Foreign Policy," E-International Relations, February 10, 2020, https://www.e-ir.info/2020/02/10/the-growth-of-feminist-foreign-policy/; Stephenie Foster, Susan Markham, Sahana Dharmapuri, "Operationalizing a Feminist Foreign Policy: Recommendations for the US Government," One Earth Future Policy Brief, One Earth Future, 2019; Bigio and Vogelstein, "Understanding Gender Equality in Foreign Policy"; and Kristina Lunz and Nina Bernarding, "Feminist Foreign Policy - Imperative for a More Secure and Just World," Heinrich Boell Foundation, 2019.

53   Government Offices of Sweden, *Handbook: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy* (Stockholm: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2019); and Thompson, "Feminist Foreign Policy."

54   European Council, "European Council in Edinburgh: Conclusions of the Presidency," European Council, 1992

55   Johannes Reissner, "Europe and Iran: Critical Dialogue," in *Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Richard N. Haass and Meghan L. O'Sullivan (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 33–50.

56   European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: EU Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran (COM(2001) 71 final)," (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, February 7, 2001), Bernd Kaussler, "From Engagement to Containment: EU–Iran Relations and the Nuclear Programme, 1992–2011," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14 (2012): 53–76.

57   European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: EU relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran (COM(2001) 71 final)."

58   Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 1998).

59   "Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world" and "The post Cold War environment is one of increasingly open borders in which the internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked"; see European Council, "European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World," European Union, 2003, pp. 1–2.

60   Bernarding and Lunz, "A Feminist Foreign Policy for the European Union"; Davis, "Kissing the Frog"; and Stern, "Gender and Race in the European Security Strategy."

61   European Council, "European Security Strategy."

62   European Commission, "EU/Iran Negotiations for Trade & Cooperation Agreement to restart on 12 January. Press Release, 11 January 2005 (IP/05/18)," External Relations Directorate, 2005.

63   Ruth Hanau Santini, "European Union Discourses and Practices on the Iranian Nuclear Programme," *European Security* 19 (2010): 467–89; Jarrod Hayes, "Identity and Securitization in the Democratic Peace: The United States and the Divergence of Response to India and Iran's Nuclear Programs," *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2009): 977–99; and Shampa Biswas, "Iran v 'the International Community': A Postcolonial Analysis of the Negotiations on the Iranian Nuclear Program," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 26, no. 3 (2018): 331–51.

64   Hanau Santini, "European Union Discourses and Practices on the Iranian Nuclear Programme."

65   Seyed Kazem Sajjadpour, "The Evolution of Iran's National Security Doctrine," in "Europe and Iran: Perspectives on Non-proliferation," SIPRI Research Report No. 21, ed. Shannon N. Kile, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2005, pp. 22–26; Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Free and Confined: Iran and the International System," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2011): 9–34; and Mohammad Javad Zarif, "What Iran Really Wants: Iranian Foreign Policy in the Rouhani Era," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 3 (2014): 49–59.

66   Maiike Warnaar, *Iranian Foreign Policy during Ahmadinejad: Ideology and Actions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

67   Shahram Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006). Iran's own security framing is underlined by the fact that for the first ten years of the talks, from 2003 until 2013, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council was the main nuclear negotiator (succeeded by Iran's foreign minister).

68   Behravesh, "The Gender Politics of Iran's Nuclear Policy."

69   Cornelius Adebahr, "Easing EU Sanctions on Iran," Atlantic Council Iran Task Force, June 2014.

70   International Crisis Group, "Spider Web: The Making and Unmaking of Iran Sanctions," Middle East Report no. 138, International Crisis Group, 2013; Suzanne Maloney, "Obama's Counterproductive New Iran Sanctions: How Washington Is Sliding Toward Regime Change," *Foreign Affairs*, January 5, 2012, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2012-01-05/obamas-counterproductive-new-iran-sanctions; and Thomas Biersteker and Clara Portela, "EU Sanctions in Context: Three Types," Brief No. 26, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2015.

71   International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), "What the Women Say: Killing them Softly: The Stark Impact of Sanctions on the Lives of Ordinary Iranians," ICAN Summer Brief, ICAN, 2012; and Tarja Cronberg, *Nuclear Multilateralism and Iran: Inside EU Negotiations* (London: Routledge, 2018).

72   Cornelius Adebahr, *Europe and Iran: The Nuclear Deal and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2017).

73   European Parliament, "EU-Iran: The Way Forward: Can the JCPOA Survive the Trump Presidency?," European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020.

74   EEAS, "Joint Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President of the European Union, Federica Mogherini and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javad Zarif (Tehran, 16 April 2016)," EEAS, 2016.

75   Ibid.

76   Council of the European Union, "Council Conclusions on Iran," General Secretariat of the Council, 2019.

77   Majid Golpour, "Building a Long-Term EU-Iran Strategic Relationship . . . and Putting Fundamental Human Rights Back on the Agenda," in "EU-Iran Relations after the Nuclear Deal," ed. Steven Blockmans, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Gawdat Bahgat, Center for European Policy Studies, 2016, pp. 52–56.

78   European Parliament, "European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2016 on the EU strategy towards Iran after the nuclear agreement (2015/2274(INI))," European Parliament, 2016.

79   Council of the European Union, "Framework for a Comprehensive Dialogue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union on Migration and Refugee Issues – Endorsement," General Secretariat of the Council, 2019.

80   Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70 (1990/1991), 23–33.

81   The Editorial Board, "America's Forever Wars," *New York Times*, October 22, 2017, https://www .nytimes.com/2017/10/22/opinion/americas-forever-wars.html; Fareed Zakaria, "The Self-Destruction of American Power: Washington Squandered the Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 98 (July-August 2019), 10–16.

82   Dara Conduit and Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Great Power-Middle Power Dynamics: The Case of China and Iran," *Journal of Contemporary China* 28, no. 117 (2019), 468–81.

83   Dmitri Trenin, *What Is Russia Up to in the Middle East?* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017).

84   European Commission, "Europe Address - Dr Ursula von der Leyen President-elect of the European Commission - Allianz Forum (Pariser Platz)," European Commission, 2019.

85   Jonathan Hackenbroich and Ellie Geranmayeh, "2020: The Year of Economic Coercion under Trump," European Council on Foreign Relations, February 17, 2020, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/ commentary_2020_the_year_of_economic_coercion_under_trump.

86   Conduit and Akbarzadeh, "Great Power-Middle Power Dynamics"; and Alex Vatanka, "The East Fails Iran," *Foreign Policy*, June 24, 2020, https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/24/iran-united-states-sanctions-economic-crisis-china-india-japan-south-korea/.

87   A. Karami, "Rouhani Endorses Ayatollah Khamenei's 'Resistance Economy'," *Iran Pulse* (blog), Al-Monitor, February 20, 2014; and Elizabeth Rosenberg, "Impact of U.S. Sanctions on Iran Oil*," Iran Primer* (blog), United States Institute of Peace, April 23, 2019, https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2019/apr/23/impact-us-sanctions-iran-oil.

88   Karim Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009).

89   See the IAEA website at https://www.iaea.org/about/governance/board-of-governors.

90   Council of the European Union, "Fight Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction - EU Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (15708/03)," European Union, 2003; and Clara Portela and Benjamin Kienzle, "European Union Non-Proliferation Policies Before and After the 2003 Strategy: Continuity and Change," in *The EU and the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Strategies, Policies, Actions* ed. Spyros Blavoukos, Dimitrious Bourantonis and Clara Portela (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 48–66.

91   Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review* 113 (2002): 3–28.

92   Stern, "Gender and Race in the European Security Strategy."

93   EEAS, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy," EEAS, 2016.

94   Davis, "Kissing the Frog."

95   Parag Khanna, "The Metrosexual Superpower," *Foreign Policy*, 66–68.

96   Davis, "Kissing the Frog"; and Stern, "Gender and Race in the European Security Strategy."

97   Riccardo Alcaro, *Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis. Lead Groups and EU Foreign Policy-Making* (Springer-Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

98   Cornelius Adebahr, "The Diplomatic Turn that Tehran Does Not Expect," DGAP Commentary 13, German Council on Foreign Relations, December 1, 2011, https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/diplomatic-turn-tehran-does-not-expect; and Rouzbeh Parsi and Dina Esfandiary, 2016, "An EU Strategy for Relations with Iran After the Nuclear Deal," European Parliament, 2016.

99   Merle Lefkoff, "Two Women, Catherine Ashton and Wendy Sherman, Key Shapers of Iran Deal," Foreign Policy in Focus, November 26, 2013, fpif.org/two-women-catherine-ashton-wendy-sherman-key-shapers-iran-deal/.

100   Catherine Ashton, "Speech on Women, Peace and Security" (Brussels: European Commission, September 9, 2010).

101   Laurent Fabius, "Inside the Iran Deal: A French Perspective," *Washington Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (2016): 7–38.

102   Notwithstanding the *Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security*'s praise for the JCPOA as an "example of women's negotiating skills": see Davies and True, *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*.

103   Council of the European Union, "Women, Peace and Security – Council Conclusions (10 December 2018)," General Secretariat of the Council, 2018.

104   ICAN, "What the Women Say"; Henderson, "A Feminist Alternative to Trump's Chest Beating on Iran"; and Thomas Carothers and Saskia Brechenmacher, "Closing Space: Democracy and Human Rights Support Under Fire," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014.

105 Masih Alinejad, "The Fight for Freedom in Modern Iran," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 14, 2018, https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/06/14/fight-for-freedom-in-modern-iran-event-6911.

106 VolunteerActivists, "Civil Society in Iran and its Future Prospects."

107 Richard Youngs, "New Directions for EU Civil Society Support: Lessons from Turkey, the Western Balkans, and Eastern Europe," Carnegie Europe, 2020.

108 Golnaz Esfandiari, " Ashton Under Fire For Meeting With Iran Rights Activists," Persian Letters blog, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, March 12, 2014, https://www.rferl.org/a/ashton-rights-iran-criticism-meeting-women/25293849.html.

109 Justyna Pawlak and Louis Charbonneau, "EU Defends Ashton's Meeting with Iranian Human Rights Activists," Reuters, March 18, 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-ashton/eu-defends-ashtons-meeting-with-iranian-human-rights-activists-idUSBREA2H1KF20140318.

110 The European Parliament has since repeatedly called for Mohammadi's and other human rights defenders' release, including Nasrin Sotoudeh. See European Parliament, "Resolution on Iran, Notably the Situation of Women's Rights Defenders and Imprisoned EU Dual Nationals," European Parliament, 2019. Mohammadi was released in October 2020 after her sentence was commuted; see Miriam Berger, "Leading Iranian Human Rights Advocate Freed from Prison Amid Fear of Contracting Coronavirus Behind Bars," *Washington Post*, October 8, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/10/08/narges-mohammadi-released-from-prison-iran-coronavirus-human-rights-death-penalty/.

111 Cronberg, *Nuclear Multilateralism and Iran*.

112 Eldar Mamedov, "Catherine Ashton's Iran Legacy," Lobelog, Institute for Policy Studies, June 2, 2014, https://lobelog.com/eu-catherine-ashtons-iran-legacy/.

113 Iran Task Force, "Mogherini Leads Commission Delegation to Iran: Launches 'Dialogue of the 4 C's'" (Brussels: EEAS, 2016).

114 European Parliament, "EU-Iran: The Way Forward"; and David Ramin Jalilvand, "EU-Iran Relations: Iranian Perceptions and European Policy," in *The Remaking of the Euro-Mediterranean Vision: Challenging Eurocentrism with Local Perceptions in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Aybars Görgülü and Gülşah Dark Kahyaoğlu (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019) 117–45.

115 Bernarding and Lunz, "A Feminist Foreign Policy for the European Union."

116 European Parliament, "Report on Gender Equality in EU's Foreign and Security Policy."

117 Council of the European Union, 2019, *Outcome of the 3738th Council meeting (Foreign Affairs, 14949/19)* (Council Press Office, Brussels), Barigazzi, J., 2019, EU to prepare Magnitsky-style human rights sanctions regime, POLITICO (POLITICO Europe, Brussels) https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-to-prepare-magnitsky-style-human-rights-sanctions-regime/.

118 Cornelius Adebahr, "Europe Needs a Regional Strategy on Iran," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020.

119 Alisha Haridasani Gupta, "Why Women May Face Greater Risk of Catching Coronavirus," *New York Times*, March 12, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/us/women-coronavirus-greater-risk.html.

120 Ellie Geranmayeh, "Reviving the Revolutionaries: How Trump's Maximum Pressure Is Shifting Iran's Domestic Politics," ECFR Policy Brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, June 2020, https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/reviving_the_revolutionaries_how_trumps_maximum_pressure_is_shifting_irans.

121 Karin Aggestam, "WPS, Peace Negotiations, and Peace Agreements," in Davies and True, *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, 815–28.

122 European Parliament Delegations: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-ir/members.

123 Conway, "A Feminist Nuclear Policy."

124 United Nations General Assembly, 2020, *Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/75/213)* (United Nations, New York, NY).

125 Youngs, "New Directions for EU Civil Society Support."

CARNEGIE EUROPE