

**THE REASONS OF SWEDEN CONCERNING FEMINIST NORMS IN
FOREIGN POLICY IN 2015**

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Abstract

Gender equality is the condition when women and men have the same power to shape society in their own life. One of the countries that concern a lot on gender equality is Sweden. The government of Sweden implements feminist norms in their government system both national and international policy for the gender equality purposes. Sweden was the first feminist government in the world which means that the major priority in resources allocation and decision making were put for gender equality purposes. The question emerged when Sweden faced dilemmatic condition to keep implementing feminist norms as its foreign policy while at the same time it means that Sweden indirectly denounced certain countries as the world's human rights violator and made the relations between Sweden and those countries became worst although that country had important role in Sweden economic.

The objective of this research is to analyze the reason of Sweden in implementing feminist norms as its foreign policy. The writer used constructivism theory as the main theoretical framework. Furthermore, the method that was used by the writer was

qualitative methods by using secondary data such as journal, article, e-book and others literacy sources.

As the findings, this research proves that the reasons of Sweden adopting feminist norms in foreign policy such as supporting multilateral organizations, development cooperation budget, Swedish Foreign Service Action Plans is due to get access to decision makers in every country in the world and the opportunity to influence the shape of the strategies and the work plan, show its identity as humanitarian superpower and the desire of Sweden to make gender equality as reality by preventing and combating all forms of violence and discrimination.

Keywords:

Constructivism, Feminist Foreign Policy, Gender Equality, Human Rights.

Introduction.

Sweden has been known as the feminist government in the world, this means the major priority in resources allocation and decision making of Sweden government is gender equality where women and men have the same power to shape society on their own life. Sweden government as the feminist government ensures that women and girl can enjoy their fundamental human rights both nationally and internationally. A feminist government also ensures that gender equality is brought into policy-making on a broad front, both nationally and internationally (A feminist government, 2015).

Nowadays, the problems of gender in the world are still increasing. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Women in 2015 (Women in parliaments, 2016), the number of women's contributions to the politics in the worlds were still less than men's contribution. Women in the parliamentary was only 22,7 percent and men was 77,3 percent; women member of government was 17,7 percent and for men was 82,3 percent; Women Heads of state was only 6,6 percent and men as Heads of state was 93,4 percent; Then for Women Heads of government was only 7,3 percent and for men was 92,7 percent as Heads of government.

According to United Nations (UN) women, women continue to participate in labor markets on an unequal basis with men. In 2013, the male employment-to-population ratio stood at 72.2 percent, while the ratio for females was 47.1 per cent.

Globally, women are paid less than men. Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 percent of men's wages (Women, 2016). Gender inequalities in time use are still large and persistent in all countries. Especially women in developing countries, if women paid work and unpaid work are combined, women work more than men and they also tend to have less time for leisure, education, self-care and political participation. More than fifty years, each day men in every country spend time on leisure more than women because each day women spend more their time on doing unpaid housework.

Reports about the humanitarian conditions in international level highlight increase in gender-based and sexual violence against women which were totally contradictive with what had already applied in Sweden domestic policy. Many women are forced to live in public places, such as train stations, bus stations, etc. where some of the actors are people who have fought in the ongoing conflict. In the conflict area such as Syria, the girls and women are raped and held in sexual slavery. Furthermore, as the impact of armed conflict, women who were supposed to be protected faced serious abuse including extrajudicial executions, kidnapping and torture.

Seeing those conditions, Sweden government that has already succeed applying domestic policy and achieved gender equality in domestic level started to put concern in the international scope including the case in Syria under the new

minister of foreign affairs, Margot Wallstrom. However, when Sweden tried to implement feminist norm in its' foreign policy to support international humanity, at the same time, Wallstrom also indirectly denounced certain countries as the world's human rights violator and made the relations between Sweden and those countries became worst although that country had important role in Sweden economic. It put Sweden in dilemmatic position to choose whether to continue its' decision to implement foreign policy for supporting humanity or to maintain the relation between Sweden and other countries for economic purposes.

Finally, Sweden government implemented Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015 – 2018 including focus areas for 2016 in 2015. This paper will describe the reasons of Sweden government adopt feminist norms in foreign policy in 2015.

Constructivism Theory

Constructivism is the claim that significant aspects of international relations are historically and socially constructed, rather than inevitable consequences of human nature or other essential characteristics of world politics (Thaddeus Jackson & H.Nexon, 2002).According to constructivism philosophy, the social world is not given: it is not something 'out there' that exist independent of the thoughts and ideas of the people involved in it (Robert & Georg, Introduction to international relations theories and approaches, 2003). It is not an external reality whose laws can be

discovered by scientific research and explained by scientific theory as behaviorists and positivists argue. The social world is an inter-subjective domain: it is meaningful to the people who made it and live in it, and who understand it precisely because they made it and they are at home in it (Robert & Georg, Introduction to international relations theories and approaches, 2003).

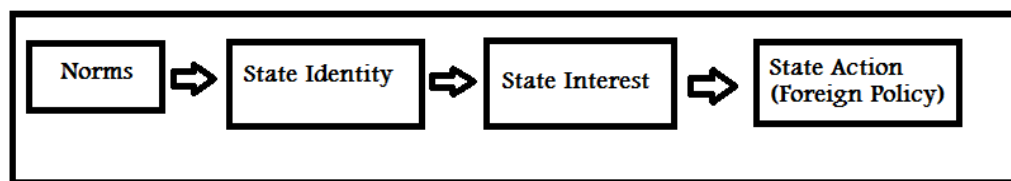
The social world is in part constructed of physical entities, but it is ideas and beliefs behind those entities which are most important: what those entities signify in the minds of people. Shares constitutes and express the interest and identities of certain people: the way that a group of people conceive of themselves and think of themselves in their relations with other group of people who are deemed to be in some significant ways different from themselves. In short, National Identities are constituted by distinctive inter-subjective beliefs which only extend a certain distance in space and time and no farther (Robert & Georg, Introduction to international relations theories and approaches, 2003).

According to Peter J.Katzenstein (J.Katzeinstein, 1996), interests are constructed through a process of social interaction. The concept of norms is to describe collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors with a given identity. In some situations norms operate like rules that define the identity of an actor, thus having "constitutive effects" that specify what actions will cause relevant others to recognize a particular identity. In other situations norms operate as standards

that specify the proper enactment of an already defined identity. In such instances norms have "regulative" effects that specify standards of proper behavior. Norms thus either define (or constitute) identities or prescribe (or regulate) behavior, or they do both (J.Katzeinstein, 1996).

According to Ted Hopf(Hopf, 1998), the identity of a state implies its preferences and consequent actions. A state understands others according to the identity it attributes to them, while simultaneously reproducing its own identity through daily social practice. Any state identity in world politics is partly the product of the social practices that constitute that identity at home. In this way, identity politics at home constrain and enable state identity, interests, and actions abroad (Hopf, 1998)

Figure 1.1-The scheme of conventional constructivist approach



Source: The Concept of State Identity in International Relations: A Theoretical Analysis(Maxym, 2003)

Constructivist theoretical formulation claimed that the social environment determines forms of the identity of the actor. Then, the identity will determine the interests of the actor, and the interests will determine a form of the behavior, actions

or policies from the actor. From the explanation above about constructivism theory, it is related to the process of Sweden implementing feminist in foreign policy.

In relating the theory to with the reasons of Sweden government adopt feminist norms in foreign policy.



Feminist norms are the norms which expect gender equality as its proper behavior. Feminist norms were constructed by Sweden government and the society to achieve gender equality and prosperity. However, due to these feminist norms, the form of the Sweden identity has been changed into a ‘humanitarian superpower’. Humanitarian superpower means an extremely powerful nation that having concern for or helping to improve the welfare and happiness of peoples, especially one capable of influencing international events and the acts and policies of less powerful nations. Then, Sweden’s identity as a humanitarian superpower determines the interests of the Sweden’s government, which in turn guide state behavior, actions or policies. In 2014, Sweden governments were declared to implement feminist foreign

policy. A feminist foreign policy is a foreign policy that focuses on gender equality, such as strengthens women's rights, representation and access to resources.

From the explanations above, this theory could be implemented in analyzing why Sweden government adopt feminist norms in foreign policy. Constructivism theory could be used to analyze the reasons of Sweden government adopt feminist norms in foreign policy in 2015.

THE ANALYSIS OF SWEDEN FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY ADOPTIONS.

Based on the explanation about constructivism theory above, in explaining the reasons of Sweden government adopt feminist norms in foreign policy in 2015. The writers analyze that there are several reasons makes Swedens implement feminist norms in their own foreign policy.

A. Sweden's Gender Inequality Awareness in International Level.

Sweden government was implementing feminist foreign policy was in 2105. In the same time, Sweden was became the first country in the world in implementing feminist norms in their own foreign policy. Sweden believes that gender inequality is important issues, because it is related with justice for men and female. According United Nation Women (Women, 2016), 35 percent of women have worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual

violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives. More than 700 million women alive today were married as children (below 18 years of age), from those women some 250 million were married before 15 years old. In the European Union one of ten women reported having experience cyber-harassment since age of 15, such as offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, or offensive, inappropriate advances on social networking sites. This harassment usually happens to among young women between 18 and 29 years of age(Women, 2016).

Availability of data on violence against women has increased significantly in recent years. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo reported that the extent of conflict-related sexual violence range 18 percent to 40 percent among women and girls, and between 4 and 24 percent among men and boys. In 2012, Study conducted in New Delhi found that 92 percent of women reported having experienced some form of sexual violence in public spaces in their lifetime and 88 percent of women reported having experienced some form of verbal sexual harassment (whistling, leering or making obscene gesture) in their lifetime. At least 119 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, 125 have laws on sexual harassment and 52 have laws on marital rape. However, even when laws exist, this does not mean they are always compliant with international standards and recommendation or implemented. Then, one in four household of all Syrian refugees families in Egypt,

Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan are headed by women. In Mali, more than 50 percent of displaced families are headed by women. (Women, 2016).

Women participations in peace process was still less than men's participation. Although in 2000 the pioneering UN Security Council resolution 1325 recognized that war impacts women differently and stressed the need to increase women's participation in peace talk. At the peace table from 1992 to 2011 women's Negotiators was only 9 percent, women's Chief Mediators was only 2 percent and 4 percent was Witnesses and Signatories. When women are included in peace processes there is a 20 percent increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 2 years, and a 35 percent increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 15 years(Women, 2016).

In the labor market, women continue to participate in the labor on an equal basis with men. In 2013, the male employment to population ration stood at 72.2 percent, while the ratio for females was 47.1 percent. More women than men work in vulnerable, low paid or undervalued jobs. 49.1 percent of the world's working women were in vulnerable employment, often unprotected by labor legislation, compared to 46.9 percent of men. Women were far more likely than men to be in vulnerable employment in East Asia (50.3 percent versus 42.3 percent), South-East Asia and the Pacific (63.1 percent versus 56 percent), South Asia (80.9 percent versus 74.4 percent), North Africa (54.7 percent versus 30.2 percent), the Middle East (33.2 percent

versus 23.7 percent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (nearly 65.5 percent versus 70.5 percent). Globally, women are paid less than men. Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 percent of men's wages(Women, 2016).

In the parliamentary women continue to participate also an unequal basis with men, According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Women in 2015 (Women in parliaments, 2016), the number of women's contributions to the politics in the worlds was still less than men's contribution. Women in the parliamentary was only 22,7 percent and men was 77,3 percent; women member of government was 17,7 percent and for men was 82,3 percent; Women Heads of state was only 6,6 percent and men as Heads of state was 93,4 percent; Then for Women Heads of government was only 7,3 percent and for men was 92,7 percent as Heads of government.

More people are living better lives than ever before but gender equality is still a vision, not a reality. Sweden's feminist government wants to make this vision a reality. Gender equality is a goal in itself but it is also essential for the achievement of the Government's other overall objectives, such as peace, security and sustainable development(Sweden M. o., 2015).Sweden's feminist foreign policy will help to achieve concrete results that enhance both gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.

B. Various Sweden Feminist Foreign Policies.

Sweden government has committed to makes equality for women and men not only nationally but also in internationally and it is proven by implementing feminist foreign policy. A feminist foreign policy is a foreign policy that focuses on gender equality such as strengthening women's rights, representation and access to resources. The goals of this feminist foreign policy are gender equality but it is also essential for the achievement of the Government's other overall objectives, such as peace, security and sustainable development.

1. Supporting Multilateral Organizations.

In 2015, Sweden government decide on core support to fifteen UN bodies and also active in fields such as the promotion of women's rights, reducing child mortality worldwide and people in distress. The purpose of Sweden's support to and involvement in the multilateral organization is to get access to decision makers in every country in the world and the opportunity to influence the shape of the strategies and the work plan. In addition, Sweden as the largest donor organizations support of the UN refugees agency (UNHCR), Sweden tried to provide rapid and vital protection assistance to people such as in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Philippines, Iraq, and Ukraine.

The core support has a role for Sweden, Sweden as the first country implement feminist foreign policy in the world and as a country which is very active in fighting for women's rights around the world. Sweden's support towards multilateral organizations also represents an important opportunity for Sweden to pursue the issue of women's rights and economic empowerment.

UN Women as active bodies in producing sustainable development goals, in which Sweden plays a central role as responsible for coordinating the UN bodies work on gender equality and as a key body in gender equality effort in the UN. Sweden has a contribution to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) as the largest donor and to the UN's World Food Program (WFP). UN Population Fund (UNFPA) worked to promote sexually and reproductive health and rights, focusing on women, girls and young people.

Table 1.2
Core Support

| Organizations | 2015(USD million) |
|---|--------------------------|
| (CERF) United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund | 48,6 |
| (GAVI) Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation | 41,5 |
| (ICRC) International Committee of the Red Cross | 5,9 |

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|--|------|
| (UN Women) United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women | 8,3 |
| (UNAIDS) Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS | 23,7 |
| (UNCDF) United Nations Capital Development Fund | 2,9 |
| (UNDP) United Nations Development Programme | 58,7 |
| (UNFPA) United Nations Population Fund | 57,5 |
| (UNHCR) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | 75,9 |
| (UNICEF) United Nations Children's Fund | 62,3 |
| (UNODC) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime | 4,2 |
| (PBF) United Nations Peace building Fund | 6,8 |
| (WFP) United Nations World Food Programme | 65,2 |
| (IDEA) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance | 5 |
| (OECD-DAC) Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee | 8 |

Sources: Supporting multilateral organizations (Ministry for Gender Equality, Ministry Foreign affairs, 2016).

2. Development Cooperation Budget.

As a country that has its identity as humanitarian superpower, Sweden government was increasing the development cooperation budget of Sweden in 2016 almost SEK 3 billion. The increasing development cooperation budget due to gross national income (GNI) increased and additional funding of SEK 866 million. In addition, the increasing development cooperation budget also because of the impact of the increasing humanitarian needs and critical situation in the Middle East.

According to the Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lovin, Sweden tried to strengthen their commitment in the Middle East and increasing the appropriation by SEK 355 million. Then, Sweden will soon have a new strategy for resolving Syrian crisis and the region as a whole to strengthening the opportunities for peace and democracy.

This is the increasing appropriation in development cooperation framework for 2016. In the humanitarian filed, Humanitarian fund for UN bodies and Sida's humanitarian will be increased by SEK 485 million to SEK 5.34 billion and the appropriation UNHCR also increased by SEK 75 million. In country strategies, Sweden government will be increased their funding for Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Especially for the Middle East, Sweden government increasing their

funding up to 45 percent from SEK 735 million to SEK 1.07 billion. The last was in climate, Sweden government gives an additional SEK 886 million for the climate issue, includes SEK million for climate financing in developing countries. Sweden's development financier Swedfund also will give SEK 400 Million as a capital injection to enable investments in area of environment and climate.

3. Swedish Foreign Service Action Plan for Feminist Foreign Policy in 2015 – 2018 Including Focus Areas for 2017.

Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy in 2015 – 2018 including focus areas for 2017 were forms of the seriousness of Sweden government to make gender equality as a reality, not just a vision. This action plan was guided by six long-term objectives for Foreign Service to set directions and to take actions for the feminist foreign policy. This action plan will be allowing for Foreign Service to promote the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including by preventing and combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action.

This is six long-term objectives and the indicative that the measurement considered to contribute to each focus area of Swedish Foreign Service action plan for a feminist foreign policy, first are a full enjoyment of the human rights with focuses on strengthening the human

rights of females who are refugees or migrants in 2017(Sweden M. o., 2017). This is will be achieved by promote economic empowerment and access to health care, water, and hygiene and also promote the production use of statistics disaggregated by gender and age that are important for measure to help people who are refugees or migrants.

Second, Freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence with focuses on combating violence against female in close relationships. It will be achieved by ensuring that all states accede to and implement the Istanbul Convention, Not only that, the foreign service will combat impunity for violence in close relationship and increase female's access to the judicial system also strengthen the role of judicial sector.

Third, participation in preventing and resolving conflict, and post-conflict peace building with focuses on promoting the role of female in preventing conflict. These objectives will be achieved by the Foreign Service will pursue conflict prevention work and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security during Sweden became membership of the UN Security Council. Then, support women's organizations and other civil society organizations that work on conflict prevention, dialogue and confidence-building measures.

Fourth, political participation and influence in all areas of society which is focusing on promoting women's and girls' participation as a strategy against the shrinking democratic space and the double vulnerability of female. It will be achieved by promoting female's participation and influence in democratic political institutions and process and also continues to advance freedom of expression and freedom of opinion. Fifth, economic rights and empowerment which focuses on strengthen female's economic empowerment and influence, including by working towards non-discriminatory legislation. There are several actions that will be taken by Foreign Service such as Continuing to stress the importance of gender equality analyzes in the EU's negotiations on free trade agreements with third countries and also ensuring that the regulatory framework within the EU internal market contributes to women's influence and economic empowerment.

The last is sexual and reproductive health and rights which focuses on intensifying work for the sexual and reproductive rights of all people. These objectives will be achieved by ensuring EU and its Member States stand up for sexual and reproductive rights and agreed council conclusion in the area and also promoting sexual and reproductive rights through increased access to sex and relationship education, legal and safe abortion, etc. This action plan was the process of Sweden government to manifest

gender equality around the world. Although there are several problems on achieving the six-long term objectives, this action plan will help Sweden as guidelines and as starting point to promote gender equality. By achieving this means that Sweden will be able to create peace, security and sustainable development.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, based on the analyzed using constructivism theory, the reasons of Sweden in using feminist as its foreign policy is due to the desire of Sweden to spread feminist norms to achieve gender equality which is essential for the achievement of the government's other objectives proven by several foreign policies taken. The first policy is by supporting multilateral organizations. The purpose of Sweden's support and involvement in the multilateral organization is to get access to decision makers in every country in the world and the opportunity to influence the shape of the strategies and the work plan. The second foreign policy is the development cooperation budget as the way to show its identity as a humanitarian superpower in supporting gender equality. And the last foreign policy is Swedish Foreign Service Action Plan for Feminist Foreign Policy in 2015 – 2018 Including Focus Areas for 2017. This action plan will be allowing for Foreign Service to promote the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including by preventing and combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their

freedom of action. It is also the seriousness of Sweden government to make gender equality as a reality, not just a vision.

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