

New Institutions, New Gender Rules? A Feminist Institutionalist Lens on Women and Power-Sharing

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Introduction

- **Starting Point: DfID Political Settlements Research Programme (PRSP) gender stream**
- **Added value of FI** for understanding political settlements?
- Attention on how, why and what questions surrounding gender provisions in peace agreements
- Less attention on **how specific gender provisions sit within wider political settlements**
- How do we understand **new formal gender rules within the wider rule set** and in practice?
- Rise of **power-sharing at the same time as WPS**

Puzzle: Women, Gender and Power-Sharing

- In the work done to date on women, gender and power-sharing: **gap between theory, quantitative and qualitative research**
- **Theory:** 'Mantra' that power-sharing is bad for women (Bell, 2015)
- **Quantitative:** Landmark study using PA-X database (Bell, 2015) suggests positive association between power-sharing and women's political participation
- **Qualitative:** Research suggests considerable tensions between pursuit of gender equality and power-sharing
- Debate both between feminist and power-sharing scholars and among feminist scholars

An FI Lens

Suggest we should look at new formal gender rules in political settlements in terms of:

- **Nestedness** of new gender rules within wider social and economic contexts and past and ongoing legacies
- **Interplay between formal and informal institutions** including “rules in use”
- **Gendered logic of appropriateness**
- **Role of actors** in the process of the making of settlements and the daily practice of new institutions, both formal and informal

Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

- **Opportunity** inherent in peace agreements: “constitutional ‘big bang’” (Bell & O’Rourke, 2007: 295-296).
- Impact of **UNSCR 1325** and its sister resolutions
- **Limits:** women remain largely absent from peace negotiations (Coomaraswamy, 2015); gap between provisions and implementation (Bell, 2015; Bell & O’Rourke, 2010)

PA-X Peace Agreement Access Tool (PA-X Women), Bell (2015)

- **Database of peace agreements** from 1990-present which contain **provisions for women and gender**
- 169 such framework/substantive 1990-present; 55 pre UNSCR 1325; 114 post UNSCR 1325

	Pre-1325	Post-1325	Total
Gender Quotas	4 (7%)	27 (24%)	31(18%)
1325	----	4 (4%)	4 (4%)
Institutions for Women	3 (6%)	9 (8%)	12 (7%)

Source: www.peaceagreements.org

Gender Provisions within Wider Institutional Context

- **Gap in WPS literature:** how do these specific provisions fit with wider political and economic structures, especially power-sharing frameworks?

Power-sharing

- **Consociational power-sharing:** model of choice in international peacebuilding and post-conflict institutional design, coinciding with the rise of the WPS agenda
- **4 conditions of consociation:** grand coalition; group autonomy; proportional representation; minority veto (Lijphart, 1977)
- **Theoretical refinements:** corporate vs liberal consociation (McGarry & O'Leary 2006; 2009, 2007; McCulloch, 2014; Nagle, 2011)

WPS and Power-Sharing

3 **theoretical** tensions/disjunctures:

1. Identity

- Primacy of ethno-national identity vs. gender identity (Rebouche' & Fearon, 2005)
- Nature of identity: fixed vs fluid, multiple, cross-cutting

2. Level of analysis

- Elite vs grassroots (Byrne & McCulloch, 2017; Kennedy, Pierson & Thomson, 2016)

3. Normative assumptions

- Stability vs transformation? (Brown & Ni Aolain, 2014)
- Peace vs justice?

WPS and Power-Sharing (continued)

- Feminist analysis suggests power-sharing creates **inimical conditions** for the pursuit of gender equality
- But, others point **potential overlap** in the principles underpinning WPS and power-sharing:
 - **political inclusion** of under-represented groups
 - **accommodation of difference**

(Byrne & McCulloch, 2012: 566; Byrne & McCulloch, 2017; Rebouche' & Fearon, 2005: 163)

WPS and Power-Sharing: Quantitative Analysis

Bell, 2015: analysis of the Peace Agreement Access tool (PA-X)

- PA-X Women limited to gender specific provision
- Little evidence that power-sharing exerts a detrimental impact on women's political participation on paper; indeed the model can be **compatible with gender equal representation measures**, e.g. quotas
- Out of 26 conflicts which provided for political power-sharing, 21 provided for **legislative quotas** for women (**80%**)
- Quotas are often implemented in the **post-agreement phase of power-sharing**
- **Power-sharing is not going away**; feminist scholars must engage with it

WPS and Power-Sharing: Qualitative Analyses

Power-sharing gives primacy to **ethno-national identities**

Fosters ethno-nationalism as dominant **political discourse** and dominant **dynamic of party competition**

In this way, power-sharing can work to:

- **Marginalise** gender issues (Deiana, 2016; Kennedy, Peierson & Thomson, 2016)
- **Undermine** gender commitments (Rebouche & Fearon, 2003)
- **Contest** and de-legitimise gender politics (Helms, 2007)
- **Co-opt** gender equality agenda (Nagle, 2016; Thomson, 2016)

WPS and Power-Sharing: Qualitative Analyses (cont.)

Deiana, 2016: when it comes to the impact of power-sharing on women we need to look **beyond the “strictly institutional dimension”** to capture broader dynamics shaping women’s experiences

We believe it’s not ‘either/or’ – institutional/cultural - but ‘**both/and**’

Case Study I: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Formal institutional context: Dayton Peace Agreement 1995; heavily internationalised settlement prescribing rigidly consociational power-sharing system with federal elements

Opportunities: Law on Gender Equality 2003 (quotas); National Gender Action Plan 2006; First NAP on UNSCR 1325, 2010; Women's parliamentary caucus, FBiH, 2013

Constraints: Ethno-national discursive strategies; centralised internal party culture; NGO-isation of civil society; clientelism and patronage.



Bosnia and Herzegovina: An FI Application

Nested newness: Formal gender rules **nested** in **formal and informal** rules of power-sharing e.g. sanctions for ‘traitors’ (Deiana, 2016; 2017)

Formal-Informal interplay: Clash between **formal provisions for women** and **formal and informal rules of power-sharing**, e.g. status of survivors of wartime sexual violence

Erosion of formal rules, e.g. scrapping of Adviser on Gender Equality by OHR, 2001

Gendered logics of appropriateness: **XXX**

Role of actors: international and domestic actors’ role in maintaining **gendered status quo** in the name of **stability**

Women’s agency in seizing WPS agenda and exploiting cooperation with international community to secure gains, e.g. quotas; Women’s parliamentary caucus in FBiH.

Conclusions: Added Value of FI

To the women and power-sharing debate we believe an **FI lens** provides:

- a **more systematic account** of why, despite its promises, power-sharing often fails to deliver positive outcomes for women in practice
- a **deeper explanation of the constraints** women face within power-sharing systems
- an **appreciation of the opportunities** and soft spots actors can exploit in these institutional settings
- an illustration of the **temporal dimensions** of women's experiences of power-sharing
- the **possibility to celebrate small wins** for the WPS agenda in post-settlement trajectories