CHAPTER TWO

CREATING A FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this book is to contribute to expanding our systematic knowledge of effects of peace operations and gender power-relations, that is, to build theory.¹ To realize the theory-building purpose, this project has to fill the gaps pertaining to both our understanding of gender power-relations and the effects of peace operations. That is, both the concepts and their potential relationships must be clarified. As a first step to build theory, suggestions and ideas from previous research are organized into an analytical framework.² The study will then assess and develop this framework in the analysis of Timor-Leste.

This chapter structures previous research into the analytical framework. The first section, ‘Positioning the basic ideas’, outlines the differences between the two utilized research fields—mainstream and feminist research—to clarify how the framework should be understood. To address the gaps identified in mainstream research on peace operations, this project draws on gender-specific suggestions from feminist research. Because of the differences between mainstream and feminist research, however, utilizing feminist suggestions in a mainstream-based framework requires a clarification.

The second section, ‘Understanding gender power-relations’, organizes and develops the concept of gender power-relations to enhance our ability to trace changes in the power balance between men and women. The section clarifies the distinction between gender power-relations and the concepts used in feminist research. In addition, it advances our current use of equality within the mainstream literature on armed conflict and its resolution. Two dimensions of gender power-relations are then identified to be of the greatest importance for this project: political equality and security equality. It is in these dimensions we primarily expect peace operations to have effects.

¹ In the view of this project, a theory consists of identified relationships between clearly defined concepts. This can be used to deduce reliable, valid, and falsifiable, propositions corresponding to empirical facts (Eckstein 1975, 86–90).
The third section focuses on the question ‘What causes change in gender power-relations?’ This section systematizes suggestions on potentially relevant peace-operation factors, and considers competing explanations. Previous research is even more under-developed in this area than for gender power-relations. Mainstream research has continuously progressed, providing an increasingly detailed understanding of the different components of peace operations, their use, and their effects on conflict resolution. However, as mainstream research does not differentiate between the situation for men and women, this limits its applicability. More gender-specific insights are instead generated from feminist research. Previous feminist research has developed around two themes. The first focuses primarily on equality within operations, and consequences of operation characteristics for local women. This approach is more empirical, and, in Sandra Whitworth’s perspective, uses gender as a tool to better understand and improve operations. The second research theme focuses on norms, ideologies/cultures, and gender constructions. Masculinity and militarism are central elements.

Despite fundamental differences between mainstream research on peace operations and feminist research, they have in common the assumption that when a peace operation intervenes, it does so in an already existing local power context. This observation is not least important when using an in-depth approach, where the analysis of the material will have to rely, to some extent, on contra-factual considerations. That is, what would have happened if peace had been established without a peace operation? To reduce the risk that context-induced consequences are mistaken for effects of operation factors, and to identify relevant contextual factors, the section on what causes gender power-relations to vary begins with a discussion on potential contextual factors in previous research.

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3 This literature is wide and encompassing (see Challenges Project 2002; Crocker, Hampson, and Aall 2001; Diehl 1997a; Doyle 2001; Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Fetherston 1994; Fetherston 2000; Otunnu and Doyle 1998; Paris 1997; Paris 2001a; Paris 2001b; Paris 2004; Stedman, Rothchild, and Cousens 2002; Thakur and Schnabel 2001; Woodhouse, Bruce, and Dando 1998). Research has contributed to the continuous debate on peace operations in the UN (Eide et al. 2005; United Nations 2000b). In addition, critical research on peace operations has grown. Researchers have, for example, critiqued what they perceive as operations not being adapted to the local context, the interference of contributing states’ self-interests, and the lack of a developed plan for what the UN should accomplish with its peacebuilding and state-building assignments; see, for example, David Chandler (2001; 2006).