

EWIS 2020 Call for Papers

Applying Feminist institutionalist approaches to the study of International Relations

Workshop organisers:

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Feminist Institutionalism (FI) aims to understand and explain how power is distributed within institutions. Emphasising gender as a primary unit of analysis, FI's political project seeks to disrupt existing power settlements within institutions and facilitate change by identifying and challenging institutional barriers that maintain gender inequalities and other forms of discrimination. FI builds on New Institutionalism, which traces how institutional continuity and change occurs, but argues for the importance of incorporating gender into institutional-level analyses.

The emergence of FI within Political Science has provided an important challenge to mainstream, gender-blind institutionalist approaches, making a valuable contribution to understanding gender equality policies in the realm of employment and political participation. However, within feminist IR, attention to studying and conceptualising global power relations using an institutionalist approach has only recently begun to emerge, and has not yet replicated the feminist institutionalist challenge seen in Political Science (see Holmes et al 2019; also Thomson, 2018).

Feminist institutionalism provides a conceptual framework to explain how international, regional and national institutions are gendered in their day-to-day practices and policies, and the move by many of these actors to embrace a 'feminist' foreign policy. Yet, the strengths of feminist IR in the narrative approach, the everyday, and in engagement with postcolonial/decolonial and queer approaches have significant value for the broader feminist institutionalism project. They contribute to understandings of how the informal and formal interact within institutions that are influenced by, and are constitutive of, international relations. It is against this backdrop that this workshop asks, how can gender inform our understanding of institutions in the context of global power hierarchies?

We welcome papers which investigate how the application of FI to the study of global politics can help explain how gendered power relations manifest within and across the matrix of international, regional and national institutions. We encourage contributions drawing on innovative methodological and theoretical perspectives. We are looking for contributions addressing informal and formal institutions operating at the international level from both the Global South and Global North. Paper proposals can include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Change and continuity; the familiar and the strange
- Intersectional approaches
- Different global locations and perspectives on institutions
- The subaltern
- Gender-justice