Explaining Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions:

The Role of Female Peacekeepers and Gender Equality in Contributing Countries

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Abstract

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is an endemic problem in UN peacekeeping missions. It is not only a gross human rights violation, but also threatens to challenge the legitimacy of the peacekeeping mission, poses a health problem, and undermines the promotion of gender equality in host countries. We examine if the composition of peacekeeping forces along two dimensions—the proportion of women and the records of gender (in)equality in the contributing countries—helps explain variation in SEA allegations. Analysis of mission-level information from 2009 to 2013 indicates that including higher proportions of both female peacekeepers and personnel from countries with better records of gender equality is associated with lower levels of SEA allegations reported against military contingents. We conclude that substantial reductions in SEA perpetrated by peacekeepers requires cultivation of a value for gender equality among all peacekeepers—improving the representation of women may help but still stops short of addressing the root of the problem.

Introduction

Despite the UN's zero tolerance policy and explicit messaging against SEA, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peacekeepers is a major problem for peacekeeping missions. On 15 May 2015, the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) released an evaluation of efforts to confront SEA in UN peacekeeping operations that made headlines worldwide after it was released in June 2015. After chronicling the severity of the problem, the OIOS report arrived at the conclusion that 'the effectiveness of enforcement against sexual exploitation and abuse is hindered by a complex architecture, prolonged delays, unknown and varying outcomes and severely deficient victim assistance' (OIOS, 2015: 27).

The UN defines sexual exploitation as 'any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another,' and it defines sexual abuse as 'the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions' (UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, ST/SGB/2003/13).[1] In this way, the UN considers SEA as actions that include peacekeeper involvement in transactional sex and peacekeeper involvement in sexual violence (Csaky, 2008; Gilliard, 2012).

SEA in peacekeeping missions is a major problem for multiple reasons. Engaging in such practice is a gross human rights violation on the part of peacekeepers that leaves individual survivors traumatized. In addition to the obvious physical and psychological trauma inflicted on the survivors, SEA may be especially damaging to the human security of the communities to which peacekeeping missions deploy, and are a source of mistrust between local populations and the peacekeeping missions. In this regard, Grady (2010) suggests that when peacekeepers commit SEA, they breach the principle of impartiality.

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[1] See also "Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Overview"

<http://www.un.org/en/pseataskforce/overview.shtml> (January 12, 2015).

As the local population experiences this abuse, they may find the peacekeeping mission less beneficial and therefore less legitimate.

Second, SEA poses a major health threat. If peacekeeper have multiple partners and do not use proper precaution, whether they are engaging in transactional sex or abusing the local population, they create a health risk that the local public health infrastructure may not be able to handle. The introduction of cholera by UN peacekeepers Haiti, killing some 6,000 people, serves as a tragic reminder that peacekeepers can be agents of the spread of disease (Frerichs et al., 2012). The prevalence of AIDS in Africa, the relatively large number of UN missions there and the correlation between transactional sex and the spread of disease makes SEA a particularly important problem for missions.

Finally, SEA hinders the promotion of gender equality locally.[2] If peacekeepers are supposed to promote gender equality, as a part of enhanced mandates that invoke UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, then SEA significantly hampers these efforts. UNSCR 1325 calls for the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes; gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping; the protection of women; and gender mainstreaming in United Nations reporting systems and programmatic implementation mechanisms.[3] In many multidimensional missions, a large component of the peacebuilding activities involve promoting gender equality through the UNSCR 1325 mandate (Kronsell, 2012; Olsson, 2009; Olsson and Truggestad, 2001), which means that if peacekeeping personnel are involved in activities that violate gender equality, locals may not take these programs seriously. Moreover, such behavior and activity only serves

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[2] Gender equality is defined as the belief that men and women are equal in society in all roles and responsibilities. Below it is measured as the presence of women in public society and the legal and institutional protections for women in a country.

[3] Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, six other resolutions have been passed related to women in conflict. See Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, and 2122.

to perpetuate patriarchal structures within the host country. For example, there is anecdotal evidence that this behavior by peacekeepers may foster the growth of an illicit sex industry and its associated problems (Atwood, 2011; Jennings, 2010; Kronsell, 2012). In order for the promotion of gender equality to have any effect, peacekeepers must lead the way by example.

Up until now, prevention of SEA by peacekeepers has not been studied in depth quantitatively. One exceptional study has looked at the conditions under which SEA might be more or less likely. Nordås and Rustad (2013) find that SEA is more frequently reported in situations with lower levels of battle-related deaths, in larger operations, in more recent operations, the less developed the country hosting the mission, and in operations where the conflict involved high levels of sexual violence. This work has helped characterize the important structural conditions that create a better opportunity for SEA abuses to occur.

We consider whether the composition of mission personnel might also affect the levels of SEA in UN peacekeeping missions. Our arguments and analysis focus on two factors related to mission composition. Specifically, both the representation of women in missions and the norms and practices related to gender equality in the force contributing countries can potentially shape the proclivity for SEA. In order to examine these expectations, we collected data on the number of SEA allegations reported to the UN, the proportions of women in each mission, and measures of gender equality in contributing countries from 2009 until 2013. We find that the inclusion of higher proportions of female peacekeepers does have an association with fewer SEA allegations, as does the inclusion of more personnel from countries with better records of gender equality. We conclude that substantial reductions in SEA perpetrated by peacekeepers requires cultivation of a value for egalitarianism among all peacekeepers—improving the representation of women can help but still stops short of addressing the root of the problem.

In what follows, we highlight the extent of the problem, consider how mission composition might shape SEA, and then provide our research design and analyses. We conclude with several recommendations for the UN if it is to prevent SEA in peacekeeping missions.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) in UN Peacekeeping Missions

The UN's record on SEA is checkered. Allegations about peacekeepers' involvement in widespread sexual misconduct initially emerged in the UN mission in Cambodia (1993), and was followed by reports from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), East Timor, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Despite the fact that many allegations emerged before 2000, it was not until 2003 that the UN Secretary-General announced a zero-tolerance policy that forbade peacekeepers from exchanging money, food, help, or anything of value for sex.[4] And, it was not until 2005 that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) established the Conduct and Discipline Team to train peacekeepers about the new policy, to enforce it, and to conduct investigations of violations of it.[5] In 2007 the policy was extended to all UN personnel (not just peacekeepers) and the Conduct and Discipline Team within UN DPKO became the Conduct and Discipline Unit within the UN's Department of Field Support. This means that the UN did not start collecting data on SEA allegations until 2006, over a decade after indications of an endemic problem arose.

Despite the UN's measures, the UN notes that SEA allegations are still a major problem for peacekeeping operations (OIOS, 2015). For example, there exists a high level of transactional sex between peacekeepers and local women. The OIOS report cites a representative study by (Beber et al, forthcoming), who found that over one-fourth of women aged 18 to 30 in greater Monrovia, Liberia have engaged in transactional sex with

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[4] The "zero-tolerance policy" bans almost all sexual activity between UN peacekeeping personnel and local women in order to prevent "sexual exploitation". The bans do not only prohibit any "exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex" but also "strongly discourage sexual relationships between UN staff and beneficiaries of assistance since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics."

[5] For more details, see UN General Assembly, A Comprehensive Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, A/59/710 (March 24, 2005), prepared by Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein. See Stern (2015) for an assessment of the so-called "Zeid Report" a decade in progress.

a peacekeeper and about half of the sexual transactions that occur in Monrovia are with UN personnel. While transactional sex is only a form of SEA (Kanetake, 2010; Simic, 2009; Simm, 2013), there are clear power dynamics associated with peacekeepers and local women. Moreover, when men engage in transactional sex, they may be more prone to commit sexual abuse or rape (Dunkle et al., 2006).

Figure 1 presents a graph of the level of SEA over time, demonstrating that SEA is still a problem in both military and police contingents despite the UN's zero-tolerance policy. Although the numbers of reported SEA offenses in 2012 and 2013 were much less than those from 2007 to 2009, thirty reported military offenses in 2013 still indicates a problem.[6] Moreover, the count of military SEA allegations increased by more than 50 percent from 2012 to 2013, with a mean of two allegations per mission in 2013. With many fewer deployed personnel, allegations against police personnel are lower than military allegations, with a mean of just under 0.5 allegations per mission in 2013. It is important to note that SEA allegations are almost certainly a gross undercount of actual SEA offenses because most victims do not feel comfortable reporting (Csaky, 2008; Jennings, 2008).

<FIGURE 1 HERE>

Explaining SEA through Militarized Masculinity and Patriarchy

SEA in the context of security forces may be a major symptom of militarized masculinity, an aggressive form of masculinity needed for warrior culture to flourish (Enloe, 1990).[7] It is pervasive in military institutions because the military's organizational structure is divided based on gender (division of labor), it is male dominated (proportionately), and the military uses the gender dichotomy and hegemonic

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[6] These trends are consistent with those reported in Stern (2015), who similarly finds that progress is being made to reduce SEA offenses but also that much remains to be done.

[7] It is important to keep in mind that SEA can be committed by women as well as men—it is a problem that is not unique to male offenders even if it is, in part, a manifestation of male dominance in security institutions.

masculinities as a way to gain legitimacy over the use of violence (Stiehm, 2001). Sjoberg and Via (2010) note that effective combat requires the privileging of hegemonic masculinities—aggressiveness, courage, obedience, patriotism, stoicism, and loyalty—over feminine behavior.[8] Enloe (1990) highlights the problems that militarism creates for male sexuality and misconduct, and observes that sexual misconduct by security forces is common in areas with military bases or other large congregations of security sector officials.

In addition to the general link between militarized masculinity and SEA in the security sector writ large, an additional link pertains to peacekeeping forces. With the evolution of more complex and multidimensional peacekeeping operations,[9] peacekeeping asks soldiers to do work that might normally be done by civilians—e.g., promote human rights and organize elections. That soldiers are expected to do what some consider to be more mundane work might contribute to 'identity crises' that are manifested in sexual exploitation and abuse (Carreiras, 2010). Whitworth (2007) argues that when soldiers are unable to fulfill their function as soldiers conditioned for combat, they may resort to sexual exploitation of the local population, violence against the local population, sexual harassment of other members of the UN mission, or even participate in human trafficking rings.[10]

Moreover, Higate and Henry (2004) have argued that sexual relationships in missions are central to men's identity in missions, and that men construct their identity in relation to local women. With sexual relationships so tied to male peacekeeper identities, Martin (2005) has suggested that a 'hyper-masculine' culture that encourages tolerance

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[8] As this list of masculine characteristics demonstrates, multiple types of masculinity can be hegemonic. For example, there are forms of masculinity that privilege physical strength, aggressiveness, and a "macho attitude" and there are those that privilege rational thought, objectivity, and restraint. For multiple masculinities, see Barrett (1996). For multiple femininities, see Enloe (2000).

[9] See the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2000) or the "Brahimi Report."

[10] See Bolkovac and Lynn (2011) for an account of human trafficking in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.

for extreme sexual behaviors has evolved within peacekeeping missions. Indeed, for a long time, the military (and peacekeeping missions) has shrugged off misbehavior as normal for male-oriented institutions. For example, in Cambodia in the early 1990s, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi responded to NGO concerns about sexual misconduct by UN peacekeepers by saying 'boys will be boys' (Simm, 2013).

Militarized masculinity, however, does not fully capture the patterns of SEA in UN peace operations when considering that, on a per-personnel deployed basis, SEA allegations are actually more prevalent among UN civilian personnel (OIOS, 2015). Moreover, Nordås and Rustad's (2013) findings—that variation in the vulnerability of local populations to exploitation, as well as the potential for mission oversight, well explain patterns of abuse—suggest that SEA also arises from a form of opportunism.

With multiple potential origins of SEA by peacekeepers, we examine separately the dynamics within military and police components.[11] On the one hand, personnel in police components are less 'militarized' than personnel in military components (Smith, Hold, and Durch, 2007), and face less of a gap between their roles as UNPOL officers and their roles as police officers in their home countries. That is, military personnel face greater exposure to institutionalized hyper-masculinity and a greater disconnect between their expectations as soldiers and their expectations as peacekeepers. On the other hand, personnel in police operations have greater access to and engagement with local populations, which mean greater opportunities for SEA of local communities. Patterns of SEA are thus likely to vary across the police and military components of peacekeeping operations.

While militarized masculinity and general opportunism in security institutions may play an important role in the perpetration of SEA by peacekeeping personnel, we still need more explanatory power in order to account for the variation in SEA across individuals and across missions. Not all soldiers engage in the SEA of locals. Thus, we

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[11] Note that our larger argument about patriarchy and gender equality may pertain to civilians as well. However, we are unable to test whether the argument on UN civilians holds, due to a lack of data.

also focus on patriarchal beliefs as an important factor that makes some individuals more prone to committing exploitation and abuse than others. Patriarchy is a social system in which males dominate nearly all aspects of life, and it implies the institutionalization of male rule and privilege, and is dependent on female subordination.[12] It is a social system that produces and reproduces social mechanisms that exert male dominance over women.

An intimate connection exists between patriarchy and the physical security of women; previous work suggests that there is a link between norms of gender equality and reduced levels of abuse against women (Hunnicutt, 2009). It is possible that when men believe that they can and even have the right to dominate women, they may be more abusive towards them. Cohen, Hoover-Green, and Wood (2013) argue that patriarchy is a necessary, but insufficient condition for sexual violence, especially as it relates to the security forces. To some extent, all societies are patriarchal, but variation exists in the level of and various forms of patriarchy in different societies, which means there may also be variation in the level of sexual violence that occurs across countries. Moreover, patriarchy is not fixed over time, as many societies are engaged in efforts to address the pernicious entrenchment of patriarchy (Schuler et al., 1996). We surmise that the more patriarchal the social norms, the more common SEA may be in a society. As such, on average, individuals from more patriarchal societies measured in terms of gender equality within the state may be more likely to hold patriarchal values and thus more prone to commit SEA or at least less willing to denounce it.

We contend that the problem of SEA in peacekeeping operations has roots in both militarized masculinity and patriarchy. If there is variation in the level of patriarchy in society and if military institutions adopt a heightened sense of hyper masculinity, then one expectation is for security forces that come from more patriarchal countries to be more likely to commit SEA. Consequently, we expect for the composition of peacekeeping missions, to the extent that it relates to the norms of gender equality amongst the personnel, to well inform the levels of SEA accusations against the missions.

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[12] While we recognize there are numerous theories on patriarchy in the feminist literature, we opt for this simple definition, which allows us to set gender equality and patriarchy as converses. When individuals hold more gender equal beliefs, they are less patriarchal and vice versa.

By focusing on mission composition, we not only explore the underlying foundations of SEA variation across missions but we also gain traction on possible policy approaches to help reduce SEA.

Two approaches: Increasing Women's Representation and Improving Gender Equality

While a number of suggestions have been made to reduce the levels of SEA such as increasing recreational activity among peacekeepers, physically barring them from interacting with locals, and more drastic penalties for committing SEA (Jennings, 2008), we focus on two ways to mitigate SEA related to reducing patriarchy and militarized masculinity through the composition of the forces: increasing the proportion of female peacekeepers and increasing the proportion of peacekeepers that have had substantial exposure to the practice of gender equality. The former mechanism has been touted as a means to change the patriarchal and hyper-masculine norms that may perpetuate SEA in peacekeeping missions, but we posit a number of reasons why such expectations should be bounded. We suggest that a more holistic approach to enhancing gender equality within and through peacekeeping missions can more substantially address the underlying causes of SEA. This would include both increasing the representation of women in peacekeeping operations and, perhaps more importantly, enhancing the norms of gender equality among all peacekeeping personnel regardless of sex.

UN officials have suggested that increasing the number of female peacekeepers may have an effect in reducing SEA (Bridges and Horsfalls, 2009; Hull et al., 2009).[13] A possible connection between increasing women's representation in peacekeeping missions and SEA offenses might be expected from a number of different angles. Most straightforward is the expectation that men are the predominant—though not the sole—SEA offenders, so increasing the representation of women simply shrinks the pool of likely offenders. This approach to attenuating SEA offenses, however, is quite limited because the proportion of women in peacekeeping missions is very low, especially for military contingents, and is unlikely to increase in the near future, because there are more

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[13] For critique of this positions, see Simić (2010) and Jennings (2008, 2011).

men in military institutions than women (Crawford, Lebovic, and Macdonald, 2015; Karim and Beardsley, 2013, 2015). So, even if more women were included in peacekeeping operations, the numbers may still be too low to make any meaningful difference for SEA allegations. Such an approach aimed at trying to reduce the pool of potential perpetrators also overlooks the potential for women to perpetrate sexual violence or SEA (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007).

Less straightforward is the expectation that including more women can mitigate the combination of militarized masculinity and patriarchy within groups that foster sexual misconduct. If SEA abuses are symptomatic of a male-dominant culture in the missions, we then need a connection between the participation of women and changes in the mission culture. One such argument contends that the women being included are both highly feminine and influential in diluting the militarized masculinity with their femininity. For example, Simic (2010: 193) reports that Comfort Lamptey, a gender adviser in the UN DPKO, argued that 'the presence of more women can actually help dilute a macho approach to peacekeeping.'

Another strand of argument connecting the inclusion of more women to reductions in SEA offenses could stem from an expectation that men will be less likely to engage in abusive actions when more woman are present to possibly report the infractions or more proactively confront the potential offenders with the moral argument for why abuse is wrong. In his report on SEA to the UN General Assembly, Prince Zeid argued that a higher number of female peacekeepers was required to facilitate an environment that discouraged sexual exploitation and abuse. Bridges and Horsfall (2009) have argued that the presence of women can have a deterrent effect—women may police their male counterparts and deter such behavior when they are present. This explanation assumes a general solidarity between women in a cross-cultural context. That is, female peacekeepers will take actions to mitigate patriarchy in the mission, because they believe it hurts local women and gender equality in the mission.

These latter claims could be critiqued, however, from the position that women entering the security sector might not in fact be well characterized as feminine, and, even those that are might not be able to much affect the male-dominant culture, because that culture is likely to curtail their influence (Kronsell, 2012; Valenius, 2007). Women are

actually quite limited in their potential to shape the mission environments because there are few of them (Crawford, Lebovic, and Macdonald, 2015), and they are often not deployed to the missions with the most vulnerable local populations (Karim and Beardsley, 2013, 2015). Additionally, SEA abuses might often be well hidden from female group members, reducing the opportunities for improvements in intra-group accountability (Kronsell, 2012). And even if SEA abuses are observed, female group members might not be more likely than their male counterparts to report them because country loyalty could trump loyalty to local women (Jennings, 2008). Additionally, women face pressures in the job and may feel intimidated to report any misconduct, especially because women must overcome gender biases to prove that they are team players (Lutz et al., 2009). Even more importantly, relying on increasing the proportion of women in missions as the primary vehicle to address SEA places the burden onto the small numbers of women deployed and overlooks the potential for both women and men to value gender equality (Kronsell, 2012; Simic, 2010). Over-investment in improving the representation of women places the entire burden on the women—the men who comprise the vast majority of personnel members are oddly taken out of the equation.

A reliance on increasing the representation of women in peacekeeping missions as the key policy lever, thus, can miss valuable policy instruments related to gender mainstreaming when they do quite well toward advancing gender equality. For example, Kronsell (2012) argues that Sweden has done well to intentionally develop, through training programs and regulations, a gender-aware post-national defense despite not achieving substantial gains in increasing the representation of women in its military forces. A more holistic approach that looks beyond increasing the representation of women is also important to avoid an overcorrection where men, and masculinity in general, is denigrated to the detriment of male engagement with mission goals and sanguine relations between men and women.

Aside from improving the representation of women in missions, another solution arises out of a focus on gender mainstreaming and prioritizes the recruitment of individuals with strong values for gender equality. When more individuals in missions believe in gender equality, patriarchal and hyper-masculine norms within the mission may be mitigated. If values for gender equality vary across men (and women), and if

they can be enhanced among male (and female) peacekeepers, then men and women can share in the reform process—an especially important policy objective, because men will likely comprise the majority of peacekeeping personnel for the foreseeable future. We expect that as peacekeeping missions consist of personnel with higher esteem for gender equality, we should observe fewer instances of SEA abuse within those missions.

It is worth noting that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Increasing the proportion of women while also recruiting more individuals with higher values for gender equality can be done simultaneously. Our purpose is not to pit one mechanism against the other, but rather to evaluate the individual success of each approach with regards to mitigating SEA.[14]

Research Design

We examine the variation in SEA allegations across missions and across years, from 2009 to 2013.[15] As the outcome measure, the UN reports data on the number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in each mission, and also separates whether the allegation pertains to the military, police or civilian members of the mission.[16] We thus use the yearly counts of military and police SEA allegations in each mission as the dependent variable. We then model the effects of our explanatory variables on such allegations using a negative binomial regression model, which is able to account for the types of distributions found in count data.[17]

In these data, two-thirds of the observations (mission years) had no SEA allegations related to the military units, and three-quarters of the mission years did not

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[14] We considered the possibility for there to be an interactive effect of the force composition and proportion of women indicators described below but only found evidence for additive effects.

[15] Data on the representation of women in UN missions that is disaggregated by country is only available starting in 2009. The UN started collecting data on SEA allegations starting in 2007, which is why some descriptive statics cover 2007-2013.

[16] In this study, we only look at military and police allegations, because the UN DPKO data on force composition does not cover civilian personnel.

[17] Log-likelihood tests of the dispersion parameter indicate that a Poisson model would be inferior because of over-dispersion.

have any SEA allegations related to police units. The highest numbers of yearly military SEA allegations came from the MONUC/MONUSCO mission, which consistently led all missions and peaked at 40 in 2009. With regard to yearly police SEA allegations, MONUC/MONUSCO also had the highest amount in a single year, with seven in 2007, but other missions such as UNMIL, UNMIS, MINUSTAH and UNMIT, also had yearly totals that were noticeably higher than other missions. Table I presents the missions with non-zero SEA allegations related to the military and police components, and those with zero allegations in the time period between 2007 and 2013.

< TABLE I HERE>

It is important to note that a standard process exists for collecting allegations in missions.[18] An allegation is an unproven report of alleged misconduct, which may not necessarily lead to a full-scale investigation. Each mission has a Conduct and Discipline Unit that is responsible for tracking allegations and reporting them to the Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) within a ten-day window (OIOS, 2015). Missions have established a range of reporting mechanisms, including locked drop-boxes, private meeting rooms to allow reporting in a confidential setting, telephone hotlines, secure email addresses, regional focal points, local women's organizations and the local UN-NGO network. OIOS provides the aggregate statistics on allegations of SEA monthly. Thus, the standard for the definition of SEA and for compliance with the zero tolerance policy are consistent across all missions, although it is possible for norms of reporting abuse to be inconsistent across missions.

Host-country variables may also be a factor in reporting allegations. Csaky (2008) concludes that local dependence on the peacekeepers is one of the key factors preventing more victims from reporting SEA. Access to the peacekeeping mission may vary based on individual socio-economic status. Thus, we control for the level of income in the host

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[18] See: UN Conduct and Discipline Unit < https://cdu.unlb.org/> (January 12, 2015).

countries, as noted below, to account for differences in economic dependence across missions.[19]

In order to test whether missions with a stronger representation of women tend to commit SEA at lower rates, the first explanatory variable is the proportion of women in the military (or police) contingents. The UN DPKO reports these for each mission on a monthly basis, and we choose the maximum monthly ratio as the yearly indicator.

We use country-level characteristics of the contributing countries to approximate the extent to which the societies from which the peacekeepers originate practice and value gender equality. Melander (2005b) and Hudson et al. (2012) similarly use country-level characteristics related to observable indicators of gender equality to measure societal gender norms and find that countries that do well on observable indicators of gender equality tend to have less propensity for violent conflict.[20]

We focus on measuring two dimensions of gender equality in the contributing countries.[21] First, the visible presence of women in society is an important factor because

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[19] Additionally, including a measure of the population sizes of the host countries—which might relate to access to the peacekeeping missions—does not show this to be a relevant variable in explaining the variation in SEA across missions.

[20] We note that there are many different theories and indictors that may be used to measure the level of patriarchy in society. See for example Bjarnegård and Melander (2011); Caprioli (2005); Caprioli and Boyer (2001); Caprioli (2000, 2003); Melander (2005a, 2005b).

[21] We use multiple measures of the practice of gender equality, allowing for multiple glimpses at the underlying societal norms and beliefs that should manifest themselves in the observed gender dynamics. Note that Melander (2005a) uses a higher-education attainment ratio and the proportion of women in parliament as alternative measures, but we choose not to use the former because a number states with prima facie poor records on women's rights (Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia) are some of the best performers on this measure, and we choose not to use the latter because parliamentary quotas are likely to skew the ability for this measure to represent day-to-day gender equality in the society. Regressions with these two measures indicate that the proportion of women in parliament does correlate negatively and significantly ($p = .002$) with SEA military allegations, but the association with higher-education attainment is not statistically significant.

it both indicates sex-specific constraints on women and allows men (and women) to observe that women are just as capable as men in many societal tasks. To measure the public visibility of girls and women in society, the proportion of women in the labor force helps indicate the value placed on women seeking gainful employment. It is possible that as more women are present publically in roles that were traditionally considered for men, egalitarian values may be more widespread in society.[22] In addition, the ratio of girls to boys in primary school provides a measure of early gender differentiation in societal participation, such that patriarchal societies are expected to exhibit lower values on this indicator.[23]

Second, the degree to which there are legal institutional protections for women is indicative of another potential dimension of patriarchy in society. Legal institutions are important because they demonstrate that the state is committed to protecting women's rights; moreover, these institutions may, in turn, further improve the norms and practices of gender equality. Indeed, existing scholarship has used legal standards as a measure of violence against women (Htun and Weldon, 2012). To measure the institutional and legal protections for women, we use a physical security of women indicator that provides information on whether the legal and institutional infrastructures are oriented in such a way to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of women.[24] This indicator provides an idea about how much of a potential problem sexual abuse and violence is in the home country and the government's degree of acceptance of abuse and violence institutionally.

We aggregate these measures to the mission-year level, forming separate measures for the military and the police contingents. We take weighted averages of the respective contributing-country characteristics, where the weights are the proportions of total military or police personnel in the mission that were contributed by each country. We recognize the ecological inference problem of ascribing group characteristics (practice of gender equality in contributing countries) to components of the groups (peacekeeping personnel from the countries). But it gives us an observable implication

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[22] Carreiras (2008) makes a similar argument.

[23] Data on these two measures come from the World Bank and are lagged one year.

[24] This comes from the WomenStats Database of Hudson et al (2012).

that can be tested, such that failure to confirm the expectation should lead us to call into question whether or not peacekeepers that come from countries with strong records on gender equality are actually more likely to hold egalitarian values than peacekeepers that come from countries with weaker records. We should further emphasize that this assumption is not a statement about all peacekeepers from each country and does not preclude the likelihood that some peacekeepers from countries with poor records regarding gender equality can be quite egalitarian in their beliefs or that some peacekeepers from countries with strong records of gender equality can be quite patriarchal in their beliefs. Additionally, we do not deny that individuals that are more prone to militarism and patriarchy self-select into the military or police professions, and thus that peacekeepers from countries with strong records on gender equality are still quite prone to exhibit behaviors and profess beliefs that are consistent with patriarchy and militarized masculinity. Our argument is that, while gender hierarchies may be stronger among peacekeepers than among others outside the security sector in their home countries, the peacekeepers from those countries with better gender-equality records will have higher values for egalitarianism than peacekeepers from countries with poorer records. Our aggregate indicators are intended to capture this variation.

In estimating the regression models, we use standard errors that are robust to clustering on each mission because of the possibility that observations are not independent across the years of the missions.[25] We also control for the size of the mission because larger missions have more opportunities for personnel misconduct and possibly also have different types of contributing countries involved than the smaller missions. We also control for the per capita GDP in the host country in order to account for variation in the local levels of human-security vulnerability and institutional infrastructure to hold peacekeepers accountable, and also because local GDP per capita is also plausibly related to composition of the peacekeeping forces.[26] Finally, we control for the level of sexual violence in the preceding war, by using Cohen's (2013) four-point

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[25] The results are robust with regular standard errors.

[26] We considered controlling for the population size of the host country but did not find it to be a relevant variable, and the results remained robust with its inclusion.

index of wartime rape severity. This variable captures the vulnerability of the population to sexual violence and also the severity of sexual violence in the most recent season of fighting. Peacekeeping compositions might be structured to more intentionally address issues of sexual abuse and exploitation when there have been high rates of egregious abuses in the recent past.

For further exploration, we control for the weighted average of the GDP per capita (in constant US dollars, from the World Bank) in the contributing countries and the weighted average of the Polity combined 21-point index. The former allows us to parse out the levels of economic development in the contributing countries as distinct from other contributing-country characteristics related to the practice of gender equality. The latter allows us to parse out the levels of political liberalization in the contributing countries. In another robustness check, we control for the lagged count of SEA allegations in the previous year in order to additionally account for correlated errors in which high levels of previous allegations are likely to be followed by other years with high levels of allegations. This specifically helps reduce the possibility that different norms in whether to report PKO abuses might account for the findings—such norms would also be reflected in the previous year's allegation counts.[27]

Findings and Discussion

We find some support for the expectation that a greater representation of women in peacekeeping missions decreases the propensity for SEA allegations. Although the relationship is consistently negative in all of the models, it is not robustly statistically

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[27] We also ran models that separated out each of the variables into a between-effects variable (the unit-level means for the variables) and a within-effects variable (the "de-meaned" variables), similar to the approach by Bell and Jones (2015). We find that our primary-school indicator is significantly robust (p<0.01) for both within and between effects, while the others only have robust between-effect relationships.

significant across the various specifications, as seen in Tables II and III.[28] It is possible that the increases in the proportion of women in missions have yet to reach a high enough threshold to produce a robust measurable treatment effect with such a small sample; at present we can only tentatively conclude that increasing the proportion of women in missions substantially reduces levels of SEA in missions. Figure 2 depicts the relationship between the proportion of women in missions and military SEA allegations for one of the models.[29]

<FIGURE 2 HERE>

<FIGURE 3 HERE>

Similarly, the relationship between the proportion of women in the police contingents and the police SEA allegations is statistically significant in some but not all of the model specifications, as seen in Table IV. Figure 3 indicates that the substantive significance of the representation of women in the police contingents trails that found for the military contingents.[30] Increasing the proportion of women from 0 to 5% in military components reduces the expected counts of SEA allegations by more than half, while the same increase in police components only reduces the expected counts by about 10%.

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[28] Although our testable hypotheses are directional, we follow convention and report statistical significance in terms of a two-tailed test (p=0.1 in a two-tailed test is equivalent to p=0.05 in a one-tailed test).

[29] This figure comes from the model with the weighted average of the primary school female ratio balance as the measure of contributor-level egalitarianism (Model 1 in Table II). The plot reflects a military contingent of 10,000 personnel and a local GDP per capita of $1,000, with other variables held at their means.

[30] This figure comes from the model with the weighted average of the primary school female ratio balance as the measure of contributor-level egalitarianism (Model 10 in Table IV). The plot reflects a police contingent of 1,500 personnel and a local GDP per capita of $1,000, with other variables held at their means.

<TABLE II HERE>

<TABLE III HERE>

<TABLE IV HERE>

The empirical results also reveal a strong relationship between two of our measures of gender equality in the contributing countries and lower SEA allegations in military units (Tables II and III). We see strong and consistent support for the argument that contingents from countries with better records of gender equality—especially when defined in terms of visibility—experience lower levels of military SEA allegations. When military contingents consist of more personnel from countries with high ratios of girls in primary school and high rates of the participation of women in the labor force, the expected counts of SEA allegations are substantially lower and the relationships are statistically significant. We also observe some but inconsistent support for the expectation that SEA allegations are lower when the legal protections of the physical security of women are better (when the index approaches 0). This variable is statistically significant in Model 6, and it remains positive in Models 3 and 9 but does not attain statistical significance. Figure 4 depicts the relationship between the weighted average of the girl-to-boy ratio in primary school enrollments in the contributing countries and military SEA allegations. Figure 5 shows the relationship using the labor-force-female-ratio balance, and Figure 6 uses the physical-security-of-women index (higher values indicate *less* security).[31]

Even while controlling for the proportion of women in missions, contingents that consist of military personnel predominantly from countries with strong records of gender equality are less prone to SEA allegations. While the expected absolute magnitudes of the

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[31] These figures come from Models 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Like above, the plots reflect a military contingent of 10,000 personnel, a local GDP per capita of $1,000, and other variables held at their means.

decreases in SEA allegations may not seem like a major decrease in reports, it is important to remember that the counts of allegations are likely to be underreported, such that the substantive effects are likely to be scaled up if we had better information about the extent of abuse. Additionally, most missions do not have high levels of reported SEA, which means that a drop in just a few allegations per year can be significant. In percentage terms, an increase in the average ratio of girls to boys in primary school from 0.7 to 0.9 decreases the expected count of SEA allegations against military personnel by more than half, as does an increase in the average percentage of women in the labor force from 40% to 55%.

<FIGURE 4 HERE>

<FIGURE 5 HERE>

<FIGURE 6 HERE>

With regard to police personnel, only one of the measures of the gender-equality records of the contributing countries—the measure of the proportion of women in the labor force—well explains SEA allegations within the police contingents (Table IV). Figure 7 depicts the substantive relationship, which is relatively strong. As the proportion of police personnel from contributing countries with strong participation of women in the labor force increases, the expected count of allegations against police contingents decreases sharply. An increase in the average percentage of women in the labor force from 40% to 55%, which we observed above to halve the expected counts of accusations for military components, decreases the expected counts of accusations for police components by more than two thirds. We do not, however, find much evidence in terms of either substantive or statistical significance for strong effects on police SEA allegations of the average ratios of girls to boys in primary school enrollments in the contributing countries or the average physical security index.

<FIGURE 7 HERE>

The smaller sample size for missions involving police contingents could explain some of the inability to confirm our expectations for police contingents, although it is important to note that the sign of the coefficients for the primary-school ratio and physical-protection-of-women variables are in the opposite direction from what we expected. It is also possible that military contingents, more so than police contingents, experience the type of militarized masculinity that would contribute to higher rates of SEA. If, as discussed above, militarized masculinity is not as strong in police contingents, because police personnel are less exposed to institutionalized militarization and their peacekeeping roles better match their roles in their home countries, then we might not observe the same countering effect of egalitarian norms as we do with the military contingents. Regardless, more work along these lines should be done to understand the determinants of SEA among UNPOL officers.

In looking at the control variables, we find, consistent with Nordås and Rustad (2013), that larger operations incur more SEA violations. However, somewhat contrary to their findings, our results show that GDP in the host country and the measure of sexual violence are negatively correlated with SEA, although these variables are not robust in statistical significance across the models.[32] One explanation for the divergent results might be that Nordås and Rustad (2013) use a different dataset based on reports of SEA covering 36 international peacekeeping missions by the UN, NATO, ECOWAS, and the African Union, active in the years 1999–2010. For them, the dependent variable is dichotomous—whether or not there were reports of SEA or not. Thus, they look at a different time span, different dependent variable, and include missions outside of the UN. This means that our results may only hold true for UN missions and UN-collected allegations.

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[32] We also ran models with a measure of conflict severity—the maximum count of battled deaths in the previous 10 years from the UCDP battle-deaths data—and found that it never approached statistical significance and did not affect the other relationships in the models.

A Closer Look at the MONUC/MONUSCO Missions and South Africa as a Contributing Country

To better understand the link between variation in the practices of gender equality in contributing countries and reduced levels of SEA in peacekeeping missions, or between the representation of women in missions and reduced levels of SEA, we examine two extreme cases: the MONUC/MONUSCO mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Africa as a force contributing country. The MONUC/MONUSCO mission is an outlier when it comes to SEA, as it has significantly higher rates of SEA than other missions (a total of 275 from 2007 to 2012). Military soldiers perpetrated most of the allegations in MONUC/MONUSCO and allegations of SEA in MONUC/MONUSCO came from the following contributing countries: India, Pakistan, Nepal, Morocco, Tunisia, South Africa, and Uruguay (Lynch, 2004; Gardiner, 2005). Notably, these are all high troop-contributing countries to the mission. Among these, the UN has identified South Africa, as having the highest number of allegations by any contributing country in general across all missions (OIOS, 2015).

Table V shows the top contributing countries to the MONUC/MONUSCO mission between the years 2007-2013, along with the gender equality indicators used above, and whether the troop contributing country (TCC) was accused of SEA allegations.[33] With the exception of Nepal and Uruguay, the table shows that most of the countries that received allegations do not score very well on labor-force participation, primary-school education, and physical security, relative to the countries that did not have any allegations against them (with the exception of Jordan and Egypt).

In addition to the gender-equality indicators, another measure included in Table V is whether the TCC military personnel experienced domestic allegations of its soldiers being involved in rape. This is based on media reports of rape allegations.[34] This gives

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[33] The average of the indicators is taken for all the years in the dataset.

[34] We collected the data by looking through media headlines from each country for the years 2007-2013. We searched media headlines into LexusNexus and searched for key terms such as rape and the country's military. It was outside the scope of this paper to collect this data for the entire dataset above. Future projects could collect these data on a wider scale.

an idea of the level of militarized masculinity within the institution. Again, those countries that were accused of SEA allegations more often had media reports of their militaries being involved in rape at home than countries that were not accused of SEA allegations.

Finally, Table V includes the proportions of female peacekeepers contributed by each country from our dataset. Here, there does not seem to be much difference between countries with or without allegations based on the proportion of female peacekeepers in each troop contributing country. For countries like South Africa or Uruguay, which both have proportionately higher than average ratios of women sent to the mission, the presence of female peacekeepers do not seem to make a difference in terms of reducing SEA allegations.

In fact, South Africa has the highest proportion of female peacekeepers sent to the mission—and is one of the highest contributors of women to UN peacekeeping missions (averaging nearly 15%) (Karim and Beardsley, 2013, 2015). However, South Africa has the highest number of allegations in all UN missions, including the MONUC/MONUSCO mission. This may suggest that women in the South African contingents do not much contribute to changing the contingent culture. While inconclusive, this evidence calls for further caution against strategies that highly emphasize improvements of the representation of women in security forces as a vehicle to mitigate SEA allegations, and looking more closely at the MONUC/MONUSCO mission, the evidence does seem to indicate that personnel from contributing countries with better records of gender equality may not engage in SEA to the same level as those from TCCs with poorer records of gender equality.

<TABLE V HERE>

Conclusion

We find that missions that consist of more military personnel from countries with better records of gender equality—better records on primary school education for girls and women's labor force participation—tend to experience fewer counts of SEA allegations.

These findings are consistent with the logic that gender equality is a value that both women and men can hold, and that increases in the extent to which it is held by mission personnel may reduce some of the pernicious manifestations of patriarchy and militarized masculinity such as SEA.

We also find some evidence to support the expectation that variation in the representation of women on peacekeeping missions helps shape the counts of SEA allegations. Indeed, a holistic approach to improve gender equality within and through peacekeeping missions should include improvements in the representation of women in the missions, which can yield additional dividends. That the negative relationship between the representation of women and SEA accusations is not a robust finding across the models suggests that improvements in the representation of women can only mitigate the dominance of patriarchy and militarized masculinity in the security sector so much and that reforms meant to curb SEA offenses should not stop at increasing women's representation in the security forces. Female peacekeepers may not be able to observe SEA offenses and may not be more likely to report them even if they did. Female peacekeepers also may not be able to counteract patriarchy and militarized masculinity if the institutional structures are responsible for bolstering militarized masculinities. And even when a greater representation of women can reduce the propensity for SEA, a policy that displaces the burden of solving a problem onto the shoulders of a minority group is likely to have limited efficacy in addressing the fundamental roots of the problem. Currently, the percentages of women in peacekeeping missions are so small that strategies, which try to use improvements in the representation of women to achieve ambitious downstream objectives, are likely to have limited efficacy.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate the importance of a more comprehensive approach to cultivating gender equality among troops and police in missions. In other words, individual characteristics such as the level of professionalism demonstrated by values for gender equality, and not just the descriptive representation of the individual, matters. Patriarchal beliefs are not static and can be changed. Indeed, that contributing-country gender-equality performance matters is consistent with the notion that a proclivity for SEA offenses is learned behavior and not essential to either men or military personnel. As learned behavior, it is possible for such proclivities to be

unlearned as well. Accordingly, as policy recommendations, in addition to continued efforts to improve the representation of women, we propose more stringent recruitment of peacekeepers. This means that recruitment should be targeted, and potential recruits should be evaluated, based on their values for gender equality. Currently, there are several requirements for individuals to join peacekeeping missions including proficiency in driving, using a computer, and achieving certain rank. Added on to these requirements could be a basic test on gender equality. Another suggestion is rigorous training and gender mainstreaming such as conducted by Sweden and Norway (Kronsell, 2012).

Thus, gender equality values can be learned and adopted as a part of the culture, thereby challenging the male-dominant culture in peacekeeping operations that may be contributing too much of the SEA that currently occurs. Positive dividends will emerge from more rigorous and institutionalized gender equality and professionalization training and gender mainstreaming as part of the participation in peace operations.

Data replication: The dataset and syntax files for the empirical analysis in this article can be found at http://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets.

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