Re-Evaluating Peacekeeping Effectiveness: Does Gender Neutrality Inhibit Progress?*

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Abstract

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, more female peacekeepers are participating in peacekeeping missions than ever before. Nevertheless, the current literature on peacekeeping effectiveness is largely gender neutral, discounting the unique role female peacekeepers may play in peacekeeping operations. This article addresses this missing piece in the literature by assessing how female peacekeepers and locals view the role of women in peacekeeping operations. Using interviews and focus groups conducted with peacekeepers in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and original surveys conducted in Liberian communities, it finds that there is an "access gap" that prevents female peacekeepers from fully contributing to the mission's operations, and therefore prevents the peacekeeping mission from reaching its full potential. The findings have broader implications for how to improve peacekeeping missions' effectiveness moving forward.

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Introduction

The unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in 2000 marks the first time the UN has formally recognized distinct role women can play in conflict resolution and security provision, and calls for the greater participation of women in the reconstruction of post-conflict countries.[1] One area where UNSCR 1325 has had an impact is in increasing the participation of female peacekeepers globally. With the passing of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, the proportion of women in peacekeeping has steadily increased. There has been a positive trend in the numbers of female peacekeepers for both military and police divisions since 2006 and 2009 respectively, and it is becoming rare for missions to not have any female peacekeepers at all (Olsson and Gizelis 2015; Karim and Beardsley 2013, 2015, 2017). According to the UN, between 1957 and 1989 a total of only twenty women served as UN peacekeeper but in 2014, women constituted 3% of military personnel and 10% of police personnel in UN peacekeeping missions.

The importance of increasing the participation of female peacekeepers is echoed in recent evaluations of peacekeeping operations. In 2015, a High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations made a comprehensive assessment to the state of peacekeeping operations globally, and a major focus of the review was on the role of women in peacekeeping operations. It stated, "recent peacekeeping experience confirms that uniformed female personnel play a vital role in reaching out and gaining the trust of women and girls within local communities, understanding and detecting their unique protection needs and tailoring the responses of peace operations" (United Nations 2015: 67). This quote highlights how female peacekeepers may uniquely contribute to operational effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

While the peacekeeping literature finds that peacekeeping presence leads to long-term peace (Fortna 2008; Gilligan and Sergenti 2008; Howard 2007), may mitigate the potential for conflict to spread from one state to the next (Beardsley 2011), and that larger missions may reduce levels of civilian casualties (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013),

[1] Since then there have been six other UN Security Council Resolutions that highlight the importance of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda.

this literature remains largely gender neutral, suggesting that men's and women's contributions to mission effectiveness and men's and women's experiences are the same. However, because security forces are male dominated institutions, a gender-neutral approach more accurately describes the experiences of male peacekeepers. In explaining mission evolution and effectiveness, many existing studies rely on the views and narratives of male peacekeepers, often ignoring the specific and perhaps unique contributions and experiences of female peacekeepers, as well as locals who may perceive male and female peacekeepers distinctly.

Thus, this article fills an important gap in the peacekeeping literature by re-evaluating peacekeeping effectiveness using a gendered approach. Using qualitative focus groups and interviews with peacekeepers in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), in addition to original surveys conducted in Liberia, this study answers two important questions related to the expanding role of female peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations. First, do female peacekeepers perceive themselves as making peacekeeping missions more effective? Increasing women's representation in peacekeeping missions means that women are integrated into traditionally masculine institutions. Understanding their experience is important for the efficacy of peacekeeping missions. The study finds that female peacekeepers believe that they play a unique role in peacekeeping operations, but that they face significant barriers that prevent them from fully participating in the mission, particularly when it comes to interacting with locals, thereby jeopardizing peacekeeping effectiveness.

Second, do locals perceive female peacekeepers as bringing an added benefit to peacekeeping missions? Although some attempts have been made to understand local perceptions of peacekeeping missions, the "new" focus on gender in peacekeeping operations could affect how locals perceive peacekeeping mission and the women in them. In general, locals appear to have mixed feelings about (male) peacekeeping missions, as perceptions are tempered by local expectations and peacekeeping behavior (Pugh 2010; Pouligny 2006; Higate and Henry 2009; Cockburn and Hubic 2002). These studies are also largely "gender neutral," as they do not assess whether the sex of the peacekeeper affects perceptions of peacekeeping. Statements by international policy makers and scholars suggest that female peacekeepers may assuage some of the negative perceptions

of peacekeeping missions. Yet, the study finds that locals have mixed views about the impact of female peacekeepers. Overall, the findings suggest that the full potential of peacekeeping mission effectiveness has yet to be achieved given the "access gap" between female peacekeepers and locals.

These two questions are particularly important given that the UN's justification for integrating women into peacekeeping missions has often rested on arguments about operational effectiveness: female peacekeepers uniquely contribute to achieving mission mandates. Yet, to understand how female peacekeepers make missions more effective, it is important to not only ask policy makers at the UN about the effectiveness of female peacekeepers, but also to understand the perspectives of female peacekeepers and those in the communities they serve. In this way, this "triangulation" gives a voice to those that have been excluded in discussions of peacekeeping effectiveness and who play an important role in ensuring and determining whether peacekeeping missions are effective.

Gender and Peacekeeping Operations

The women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda has been an integral part of UN Department of Peacekeeping (UN DPKO) since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in October of 2000. It legally mandates peacekeeping operations to include women in decision-making roles in all aspects of the peacekeeping and peace building processes. UNSCR 1325 was the product of a broad coalition of NGOs, social movements, and states that worked together to convince member states that the "women as victims of war" and "women as creators of peace" narratives should be institutionalized through UN Resolution(s). Due to UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent resolutions, gender is now mentioned in almost every mandate authorizing peacekeeping missions (Karim and Beardsley 2013).

UN peacekeeping operations have implemented UNSCR 1325 by increasing the proportion of women in peacekeeping missions. In addition to pushing for additional female personnel, one of the more noticeable innovations with regard to women and peacekeeping has been the deployment of all-female peacekeeping units. On January 31, 2007, India deployed one hundred and five Indian policewomen to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), becoming the first country in the world to deploy an all-female unit to

a peacekeeping mission. All-female formed police units (FPUs) have deployed to UNMIL since 2007, and they have inspired all-female FPUs from Bangladesh to deploy to Haiti and the DRC.[2] Some scholarly work has focused on the all-female formed police units, suggesting that they are useful for addressing gendered problems such as sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) (Pruitt 2013, 2016). The recent innovations to peacekeeping with regard to gender suggest that a thorough exploration of the role of women in peacekeeping missions is necessary in order to parcel out the potential positive effects on host communities and potential negative effects for female peacekeepers.

There has been a burgeoning body of scholarly work on gender and peacekeeping due to these reforms. The research on gender and peacekeeping includes understanding how gender reforms in peacekeeping—increasing women's representation in peacekeeping missions and gender mainstreaming—have changed over time (Kronsell 2012; Olsson and Tryggestad 2001; Olsson 2009; Olsson and Gizelis 2015; Mazurana et al 2007; Higate and Henry 2009; Higate 2012). These studies focus on the factors that influence gender reforms, and on how the reforms have affected peacekeeping missions, whether through "gendered spaces" (Higate and Henry 2009; Higate 2012) or through changes in operations (Olsson and Tryggestad 2001; Olsson 2009; Kronsell 2012; Olsson and Gizelis 2015, Karim and Beardsley 2013, 2015), or on sexual explotiaton and abuse (Karim and Beardlsey 2016). What is missing from these works is a perspective of peacekeeping mission effecriveness from the two important actors: female peacekeepers themselves and the local population.

The Added Benefit from Incorporating Female Peacekeepers into Missions

One of the main ways that female entry into peacekeeping has been justified is that women serve a unique purpose in missions and may help make peacekeeping operations more effective (Egnell 2014). Policymakers and scholars alike have suggested that female peacekeepers may make a unique contribution to peacekeeping missions. These contributions are all positive, as women may 1) make the peacekeeping missions more

[2] For a closer look on all-female units, see Pruitt (2016).

approachable for the host population; 2) help mitigate rape (and other gender based violence) in the host country; and 3) help promote gender equality in the host country.

The UN explicitly states that "the increased recruitment of women is critical for: empowering women in the host community; addressing specific needs of female ex-combatants during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life; helping make the peacekeeping force approachable to women in the community; interviewing survivors of gender-based violence; mentoring female cadets at police and military academies; and interacting with women in societies where women are prohibited from speaking to men."[3] The UN argues that "the presence of women peacekeepers can also: help to reduce conflict and confrontation; improve access and support for local women; provide role models for women in the community; provide a greater sense of security to local populations, including women and children; and broaden the skill set available within a peacekeeping mission." [4]

Policymakers have argued that "women peacekeepers ensure a more compassionate or empathetic response to victimized women and children, especially those that have been sexually assaulted, as it is often claimed that it is 'easier' for a raped woman to talk to another woman about her assault (Jennings 2011: 3)." Female peacekeepers will enhance protection as "PKOs with more women peacekeepers are better able to protect citizens, especially women and children, because women peacekeepers bring a greater awareness of and sensitivity to their particular needs and challenges, and because women peacekeepers are less intimidating or provocative than men peacekeepers" (Jennings 2011:3). And, female peacekeepers will provide inspiration as "women peacekeepers help contribute to more equitable gender relations within the local society by serving as role models or mentors for local women and girls" (Jennings 2011:3).[5]

[3] See "Women and Peacekeeping" http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml (December 20, 2015)
[4] See "Women and Peacekeeping" http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml (December 20, 2015)
[5] See also the "High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations" 2015. A/70/95–S/2015/446, http://www.un.org/sg/pdf/HIPPO_Report_1_June_2015.pdf, June 17, pg. 67. (December 10, 2015).

Scholars have echoed policymakers in suggesting that women bring these particular advantages to peacekeeping operations (DeGroot 2001; Mazurana 2003).[6] Bridges and Horsfall (2009) argue that increasing the representation of women will help combat sexual misconduct perpetrated by some male soldiers, and will engender trust, and improve the reputation of peacekeepers among local populations. Mazurana (2003: 70) suggests that female peacekeepers may "alter the perception and willingness to engage with peacekeepers on the part of the elements of the local population, most notably local women." Other scholars have suggested that peacekeeping missions, particularly through female peacekeepers, can be vehicles for promoting gender equality in the host country, particularly by inspiring them to join their local security forces (Olsson 2009; Olsson and Truggestad 2001; Kronsell 2012; Karim and Beardsley 2017).

Policymakers and scholars have particular beliefs about the effectiveness of female peacekeepers, especially in the areas of protection and gender equality. In this way, according to policymakers and some scholars, female peacekeepers may bring added value to peacekeeping missions, making them better and more effective than current male-dominated missions.[7] If female peacekeepers' perceptions of themselves and their roles in peacekeeping missions align with policy maker's perceptions of them, then *we should expect that female peacekeepers perceive the role of women in peacekeeping missions to at least be partially focused on building trust with the local population, preventing rape in the host country, and helping to promote gender equality in the host country.*

This belief in "self-efficacy" on the part of female peacekeepers may be a necessary condition for female peacekeepers to achieve these outcomes—increase trust in the mission, reduce violence, and promote gender equality. Psychologists have long suggested that "self-efficacy" is important for particular, goal-oriented action (Bandura 1982). Thus,

[6] There is set of literature that criticizes the need to evaluate female peacekeepers or justify their integration (Jennings 2008; Jennings 2011; Simic 2009, 2010; Sion 2008; Karim and Beardsley 2017; Henry 2012; Higate 2007; Higate and Henry 2004, 2009).

[7] It is important to note that there are no specific expectations about male peacekeepers. Policymakers have not had to "justify" the presence of male peacekeepers in the same way (For a critique of this position, see Karim and Beardsley 2017). Thus, we should not expect that male peacekeepers bring an added benefit in the way that female peacekeepers may bring an added benefit. Their presence should not lead to gendered differences in perceptions about effectiveness, protection from gender-based violence, or empowerment. Thus, because peacekeeping operations are male dominated, expectation about male peacekeepers are thus akin to expectations about the peacekeeping mission as a whole. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

if female peacekeepers do not believe that they bring these added advantages to peacekeeping, then they may not accomplish the goals stated by the policymakers, but if their beliefs about their roles align, then female peacekeepers may actually bring the added advantages suggested by the policymakers and scholars, thereby increasing overall peacekeeping mission effective.

Barriers for Female Peacekeepers

While female peacekeepers may bring added benefits to peacekeeping missions, there are certain barriers that exist that may prevent them from achieving their full potential. These barriers stem from the fact that the institution in which women are being integrated into—peacekeeping operations—is "masculine" in nature because it is composed of mainly male personnel from militaries and police and dominated by a masculine culture (Enloe 1993; Cohn 2013). [8] Given that female peacekeepers are entering into a traditionally masculine institution, understanding their experience is important for the efficacy of peacekeeping missions. If women have a negative experience in the mission, they may not be effective in their job, but if their experience is positive, they may be able to bring an additional layer of operative success to peacekeeping missions.

There are at least two major challenges related to male dominance that female peacekeepers face in peacekeeping missions. First, female peacekeepers may be prevented from participating in the wide range of peacekeeping jobs. The roles that men and women play in different institutions are affected by perceptions of gender roles. Despite advancements in women's participation in the labor force and entry into traditionally masculine institutions, women's roles in them are often still relegated to feminine tasks because of the way these institutions are set up. Carreiras (2006) argues that in security institutions, rigid gender norms about women versus men's appropriate roles in society often lead to a gendered division of labor. Peacekeeping missions may be no different, as they are composed of military and police personnel.

[8] According to Cohn (2013), in general, men create and run most institutions, including security institutions, and thereby in the process of structuring them, privilege masculine needs and assets.

Additionally, women may be prevented from interacting with local communities, as venturing into communities may be perceived as too dangerous for women. This may be due to a gendered protection norm—women may be perceived as in need of protection despite the fact that they are soldiers and police officers (Karim and Beardsley 2013, 2015 2017). The gendered protection norm stems from gendered dichotomies. Enloe (1990: 12) states that in a world that is dangerous, men are expected to "become the protectors of this world," and "suppress their own fears, brace themselves and step forward to defend the weak, women and children," while women are expected to "turn gratefully and expectantly to their fathers, husbands, real or surrogate." The soldier is supposed to fight for mothers, wives, and daughters and defend them from the horror of war. As such, the dichotomy makes protection from violence a task for men, and assumes that women are programmed for a caring and nurturing role, and cannot therefore summon the aggressive impulses necessary for effective security provision. This means that women must be the ones protected. If gender dichotomies about women subsist in peacekeeping operations, *we should expect that female peacekeepers express that they are unable to performs a wide variety of tasks, particularly those that involve them going into the field and interacting with locals.*

As noted earlier, there has been an increase in the proportion of women in peacekeeping operations, particularly in policing. However, female peacekeepers tend to deploy to the safest missions, not necessarily ones where they may be most needed—such as where sexual and gender based violence rates are higher (Karim and Beardsley 2013, 2015, 2017). This means that female peacekeepers may be deployed to mission that are most amenable to women, and thus may not face the multitude of barriers mentioned. That peacekeeping mission are composed of military and police personnel, nevertheless, suggests that all peacekeeping missions may suffer from male dominance to some degree, thereby jeopardizing women's full participation.

Local Perceptions of (Female) Peacekeepers

As mentioned in a previous section, much of the justification for reforms to include women in peacekeeping operations rests on improving the effectiveness of the mission. In

particular, female peacekeepers (as opposed to male peacekeepers) may improve trust in the peacekeeping mission, help reduce rape in the host country; and they may help promote gender equality in the host country. The extent to which women are able to accomplish these objectives depends on their self-efficacy, their ability to performs well in the missions (have limited barriers to full participation), in addition to whether or not locals perceive female peacekeepers as executing these added benefits.

Given the vast amount of literature that suggests that peacekeeping missions are help prevent conflict recurrence and violence (Fortna 2008, Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013), contain conflict (Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015; Beardsley 2011), and could reduce human rights violations (Murdie and Davis 2010)—it is striking that very little research evaluates peacekeeping success by asking those on the ground about their experience with the peacekeeping mission. None of these studies asks locals about whether they perceive peacekeeping missions in a positive light; rather, they have focused on outcomes. But, outcomes and perceptions do not necessarily correlate,[9] suggesting that a key constituency is missing from discussions about peacekeeping effectiveness.

There is some literature that asks locals about their experiences with peacekeeping missions. Pouligny (2006: 96) devotes an entire manuscript to understanding peacekeeping "from below," stating that, "as a peacekeeper, taking the people you deal with seriously—whether it be a commander, militiamen, political leader, simple peasant, or shanty dweller—requires understanding how these individuals perceive you." She provides local interpretations of peace operations, generally finding mixed views on peacekeeping efficacy.[10] She suggests that perceptions of peacekeeping missions change over time, and are based on whether interactions help or hurt the local population. An example of helping occurs when local expectations match what peacekeepers are doing on the ground. An example of hurting the local population occurs if peacekeepers are involved in some negative externality such as spreading disease[11] or sexually exploiting and/or abusing the population.[12] Similarly, Henry and Higate (2009) find that individuals perceive missions

[9] For example, although there has been minimal conflict in Haiti since 2004, Haitians do not hold a positive opinion about peacekeepers (Pouligny 2006: 102).
[10] Her purpose of the manuscript is not to "explain," but to "understand," so she is not concerned about peacekeeping efficacy traditionally understood.
[11] For example, the Nepali contingent was blamed for spreading Cholera in Haiti in 2010.
[12] See for example, Beber et al (forthcoming).

as providing both secure and insecure spaces. Moreover, Cockburn and Hubic (2002) report that in Bosnia, women appreciated the security provided by peacekeepers, but were frustrated by their lack of local understanding. Finally, Pugh (2010) argues that locals have high expectation of peacekeepers, and missions are often unable to meet them. He also suggests that locals often believe that there is an asymmetry in wealth between peacekeepers and locals (such as in the wage gap for locals that work for the mission versus actual UN staff), which may cause resentment.

Proponents of increasing women's representation have argued that female peacekeepers may alleviate some of the concerns listed by those interviewed in the works of Pouligny (2006), Henry and Higate (2009), Cockburn and Hubic (2002), Pugh (2010), and others. Mazurana (2003:64) proposes that women add legitimacy to the peacekeeping missions, stating that, "their presence [female peacekeepers] positively affects aspects of local populations interactions and perceptions towards peacekeeping operations." Female peacekeepers may be perceived as less intimidating than male peacekeepers and more attuned to prevention efforts when it comes to sexual violence. Female peacekeepers may be viewed as more likely to help people, which addresses some concerns by individuals interviewed by Pouligny (2006), and may be more likely to provide "gendered" protection, which may alleviate some concerns by those in Henry and Higate (2009), Cockburn and Hubic (2002) and Pugh (2010).[13] In this way, it is possible that the benefits from women's participation in peacekeeping may override some of the negative perceptions generated in male-dominated peacekeeping missions.[14] *If locals view peacekeeping missions positively due to the presence of female peacekeepers, we should expect that contact with female peacekeepers, compared to contact with male peacekeepers, will lead them to perceive female peacekeepers as better than male peacekeepers, and lead them to believe that the security situation has improved, particularly as it pertains to rape. Additionally, as*

[13] Because peacekeeping mission are male dominated, the existing literature by Henry and Higate (2009), Pouligny (2006), Cockburn and Hubic (2002), and Pugh (2010) demonstrate how locals feel about male peacekeepers (the status quo).

[14] One concern is that peacekeepers' perceptions of themselves may be driven by local perceptions. However, self-perception is unlikely to be informed by local opinions as peacekeepers take their orders from policy makers. Thus, we should expect a correlation between policy maker expectations and peacekeepers (as stated above). But, peacekeepers do not have a way to gauge their standing in the public, as they do not conduct opinion polls or surveys. Thus, perceptions by locals are purely based on their actions which are determined by policy makers, and policy makers suggest that female peacekeepers should be improving trust, SGBV, and inspiring local women. I thank an anonymous reviewer for this point.

mentioned above, individuals may believe that it is acceptable for local women to join the military/police force.

Empirical Analysis: The Effectiveness of Female Peacekeepers According to Female Peacekeepers

If female peacekeepers' perceptions of themselves and their roles in peacekeeping missions align with policy maker's perceptions of them, then we should expect that female peacekeepers perceive the role of women in peacekeeping missions to at least be partially focused on building trust with the local population, preventing rape, and helping to promote gender equality in the host country. But, if there are gendered barriers in peacekeeping missions, we should expect that female peacekeepers express their inability to perform a wide variety of tasks, particularly those that involve going into the field and interacting with locals.

Research Design

To understand the experiences of women in missions, UNMIL serves as a case study, because the mission is known for its prioritization of increasing the representation of female peacekeepers in the mission. In UNMIL, women made up about 6 percent of military observers, 2 percent of troops, 18 percent of the police, and 34 percent of the civilian staff.[15] With the exception of troops, UNMIL had a higher than average proportion of women in personnel areas. Additionally, the UNMIL mission was the first mission to receive an all-female-formed police unit from India. As such, the UN considers the mission as an exemplary case of integrating women into a mission. The Liberian case, thus, provides useful insight, as future peacekeeping operations are likely to look more like the Liberian case.

The views from female peacekeepers stem mostly from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions with women in UNMIL, and participant observation at UN

[15] These are 2012 numbers.

headquarters during May and June of 2012.[16] Interviews and focus groups were conducted with both military and police personnel. Interviews occurred with military female and male peacekeepers in Monrovia, Buchanan, and Gbainga, between May 2012 and June 2012.[17] Focus groups included as few as four participants or as many as twenty. In all cases, participants understood that their answers were confidential and that their answers would not be identifiable. The following tables (Table 1 and Table 2) represent the focus groups and interviews conducted. The questions ranged from asking participants about why they decided to join the military/police, why they decided to participate in the peacekeeping operations, what role they in the mission, and problems in the mission.[18]

Table 1: Focus group characteristics

Country of Origin	**Number of People/Sex**	**Type of Peacekeeper**
Jordan	4 females	UNMIL Military
Nigeria	30 females (2 focus groups)	UNMIL Military
Philippines	9 females	UNMIL Military
Bangladesh	6 females	UNMIL Military
India	13 females	UNMIL FPU
Ghana	1 female (mix focus group)	UNPOL
Kenya	2 females (mix focus group)	UNPOL
Pakistan	1 female (mixed focus group)	UNPOL
Sweden	12 females	UNPOL
Turkey	1 female (mixed focus group)	UNPOL
Zimbabwe	4 females	UNPOL

Table 2: Interview characteristics

Country of Origin	**Number of People/Sex**	**Type of Peacekeeper**
Denmark	1 female	UNMIL Military
Nigeria	1 female	UNMIL Military
Ghana	6 females and 6 males	UNMIL Military
Bosnia	1 female	UNPOL
Nepal	1 female	UNMIL FPU
Norway	2 females	UNPOL
Switzerland	1 female	UNPOL
Uganda	1 female	UNPOL
India	2 females	UNMIL FPU
U.S.	1 woman, 4 men	UNPOL, UNMIL Military
Gambia	1 man	UNMIL Military
Peru	2 men	UNMIL Military

[16] Some of the interviews with male peacekeepers were conducted more informally due to the specificity of the request letter from UN DPKO. For a more comprehensive analysis of the interviews, focus groups, and survey of female peacekeepers, see AUHTOR

[17] For a more thorough description of the focus groups and interviews, see Karim and Beardsley (2017). Additionally, it should be noted that when possible, interviews with men were also conducted informally and unofficially.

[18] For a full description of questions, see the Appendix.

Women's Roles in the Mission

At a first glance, the evidence from the interviews and focus groups of female peacekeepers in UNMIL suggests that their perceptions of their roles align with the views of policy makers and scholars. In the conversations, almost every female peacekeeper seemed to believe that women play an important and unique role in mission. They thought that female peacekeepers increase the level of trust in communities, help provide protection, especially rape, and that they believe that their presence legitimizes local women's role in security.

With respect to trust, female peacekeepers believed that they make better community liaisons. A Bosnian female UNPOL officer, for example, said that when it came to interacting with the community, female police officers are better suited for the job. She said:

> Community police concept is actually favorable for females more than males. Females are more soft and open, they can get things done smoothly. They understand better, and they are better at getting along with the community members, they are more open.

The Bosnian female's sentiment about community policing echoes nearly all the women's views about their role in the peacekeeping mission. That is, nearly unanimously, female peacekeepers thought that they could communicate well with locals, especially local women, and most women stated that this was the best part of their job.

Many female peacekeepers thought that they play an active role in improving the physical security of women in the local population. One anecdote from a Ugandan female UNPOL officer illustrates how the presence of women may enhance law enforcement responsiveness to rape at the community level. When participating in a joint patrol with UNPOL and the Liberian National Police (LNP), the patrol stopped at one of the police stations, where a Liberian female wanted to make a statement about the fact that she had been raped. The male LNP officer refused to take the complaint, because he said the rape case was outdated. The Ugandan UNPOL officer was able to calm her down and compel

the LNP officer to take her case. Later, when interviewing her about the experience, she explains:

> They [LNP male officer] didn't want to enter the case. [They asked] why didn't she come at the time she was supposed to? So I tried to advise them to enter the case and I advised the lady to go for treatment. I did follow up on the case. They did arrest the man. It was sent to WCPU [Women and Children Protection Unit], I went there the following morning, I went to the WCPU, to ask them. I asked the person in charge of WCPU to go to the person that entered the report so that they could locate the woman and they got enough information about the lady.

The Ugandan female peacekeeper followed up on the case the next day and a week later. While it is the job of any police officer to follow up on cases, the female UNPOL officer responded that she checked up on the case because, "women are suffering this way, the sexual harassment, maybe I could help." This means that she considered one of her roles, as a female, to directly help females in the community suffering from gender-based violence.

The example is corroborated by other instances where female peacekeepers have taken steps to protect civilians. For example, at the institutional level, female peacekeepers were instrumental in the creation of the Women and Children's Protection Unit and the Gender Unit in the LNP. They have also helped write a sexual harassment policy for the LNP and provided input for the National Rape Law, among other activities.

Additionally, most women respondents felt that their presence helps inspire and encourage local women. This was especially true for the all-female Indian formed police unit (FPU). The female FPU unit commander proclaimed that her contingent has had the most effect in influencing Liberian women:

> In case of any problems, we are the ones they [Liberians] approach first, instead of police, the local population approach us first, the girls come first here, even they [Liberian girls] want to join the police force. Five years ago, out of twenty policewomen, one was female, the application has tripled because of the female FPU presence. So, the next generation of Liberians, they have a feeling that

> females can do the jobs that men can do, so you will see more females standing on the street with uniforms; they are controlling the traffic, they are getting training in the academy, and the percentage has increased in five years.

These views were not limited to the all-female FPU. Views about the important influence that women peacekeepers have on the local population also came from females within military contingents. One Nigerian woman said:

> We encourage Liberian women; that they see one of us with a rifle, then they also feel the courage, and we encourage them to join the army too. [The mission] gives other countries the knowledge that Nigerian women can do what they can do. [We] show other countries that Nigerian women can do what men can do.

Women in UNPOL also thought that they positively influence local women due to their presence. One Ghanaian officer said, "I don't know the culture here yet much, but I think women in uniform generally serves as role models to other women. I don't think it is different in Liberia." A Turkish female concurred, "when they see us, they [Liberian women] feel that they can be the same."

Male peacekeepers also thought that women play an important and unique role in improving the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. A man from the Ghanaian military contingent said:

> When we are visiting the orphanages, we have many kids. If you look at their age range, it's 6 months to 18 years. So, those who fall under 8 years, there are many. You see, naturally, mothers are caring. So, when you are going to orphanage, it's better to have some kind of refreshment with them so we go with many of our female officers. When they go, they give them that kind of motherly touch because, you know, they are orphans. When we are also going to prisons, you know, we have also female prisoners. And when we go, we do counseling. We give them items but also counsel them. We respect the sensitivities of women by having women go. If you go as man, there are certain things the women hide. We even learned that when you are searching a woman, a woman should do that. It's

good that a woman does that when it comes to a woman. It's very gender sensitive. It's part of our training, as far as security is concerned.

Similar to policymaker statements, in general, the above comments suggest that female peacekeepers do see their role as unique in the mission. They see themselves as better liaisons with the community. Female peacekeepers may also advocate for awareness about rape and provide practical assistance, as described by the male peacekeeper. They also believe that they lead by example, because if local see them, it may help legitimize roles for women locally, thereby promoting gender equality in the host country.

In order for these women to fully realize their potential contribution, they need to have considerable leeway to engage with local civilians. However, women may face significant barriers that limit their ability to fully carry out basic peacekeeping duties and these additional roles that they perceive as unique to women.

Barriers to Women's Participation

Although female peacekeepers believe that they bring an added benefit to missions, gender dichotomies exist in peacekeeping missions. Thus, we should expect that female peacekeepers express that they are unable to performs a wider variety of tasks, particularly those that involve going into the field. Based on the evidence, women expressed that many barriers prevent them from fully reaching their potential as peacekeepers. One of the main ways that individuals suggested that they are not treated as equals to men was through their actual roles in the mission and the limitations placed on their roles. In the military, most women are either nurses, doctors, or work in administration. The police are more diversified, but many women work in "gendered" divisions such as advising special units for sexual and gender-based crime or crimes against children.

Gendered roles are even salient in the all-female formed police unit. While the mandate of this unit is to serve as back up in case of riot situations and to provide protection, they have also engaged in a number of community-related activities such as teaching classes at a local school on topics such as dancing and cooking. They also opened their medical clinic to Liberians. Despite their mandate, the media and UN have played up

the all-female FPU's community work and not its role in security provision.[19] The implication is that women are naturally inclined to lead community-oriented projects. And as such, women are celebrated for doing "women's work" in the mission. However, as a result, the FPU, which is mandated to provide protection, is not actually evaluated or commended for the job of providing protection. The female commander of the Indian FPU recognized this problem. She notes that the mandate of the FPU is to provide security, but that the unit is not evaluated based on this mandate. She notes that women provide security and work operations just like men:

> The focus of success for the Indian FPU has been on their community initiatives, not the actual work, but the main point is that we play the role in reverse, we are the ones that provide security and the logistics are done by men, it's an example that this can work—that women can partake in operations.

In the interviews and focus groups, one major problem experienced by women across the board, but especially in the military contingents, was the fact that they did not have an opportunity to leave their base and interact with locals. Accessing local communities is particularly important to the roles mentioned by female peacekeepers, because inspiring local women, and providing physical protection requires that local Liberians (especially local Liberian women) see and interact with female peacekeepers. If female peacekeepers are not allowed outside of their compound, they are unable to have an effect on the local population in the ways suggested above.

The restrictions for military women included not being able to leave the base, not having a vehicle, and being required to travel with men. Some women reported that they left the base once or twice during their six-month or one-year deployment, and this was when the contingent participated in group community-outreach programs. Many women wanted to interact more with the local population, but did not have the chance to do so because of the restrictions. One Filipino woman said, "We meet very few women peacekeepers and we never get to leave." Another woman from the Jordanian contingent expressed her frustration:

[19] For a discussion, see Henry (2012) and Pruitt (2013).

> The biggest problem is the restriction on women. We don't see anything here because we cannot leave [the base]. [We want] just an exchange in culture, and thought. We came here to know people from other countries, not just about us.

One Bangladeshi female said:

> If authority permits, then we can do things for women. [Permission must come] from the UN, then governments must agree, then it will come to us. Who decides the CIMIC [Civil Military Coordination] activities is from force headquarters. There are so many things to do for women, but we cannot do anything.

A female from the Nigerian contingent even said she felt like she was in a cage when asked about extending her stay in the mission: "We want to go home now, [we have] no freedom, we are in the cage. We don't make friends."

Restrictions on leaving the base do apply to both men and women. However, none of the male peacekeepers interviewed voiced concern about the restrictions as a key impediment to their ability to serve as peacekeepers.

In order to understand the impact female peacekeepers have on the mission, it is important to understand how they perceive their own roles in the mission. Doing so allows for a better standard to gauge how their integration has affected the mission, because their voices highlight both their expectations about their roles, but also the limitations that they encounter in trying to fulfill them. Here, similar to the suggestions made by policy makers, we find that female peacekeepers think that they make a unique contribution to the mission. However, they also mention significant barriers in achieving these roles due to gendered roles and restrictions on their mobility. This means that while policymakers and female peacekeepers believe that they make a unique contribution to missions, there are significant barriers for female peacekeepers that prevent them from realizing these contributions. If female peacekeepers are unable to reach their full potential due to a gap in access (to locals), then it is highly unlikely that peacekeeping missions are reaching their full potential in terms of being effective in conflict resolution and security provision.

The Effectiveness of Female Peacekeepers According to Liberians

Turning to the perceptions of locals, if locals view peacekeeping missions positively due to the presence of female peacekeepers, we should expect that contact with female peacekeepers, compared to contact with male peacekeepers, will lead to positive perceptions of female peacekeepers, perceptions of improved security especially with regards to rape, and the belief that women should join military and police forces.

Research Design

In order to assess whether locals hold positive views of female peacekeepers, a survey was conducted in 2015 in Monrovia's two, main ex-combatant communities: Peace Island and West Point.[20] Both communities have been and are continually threatened by the possibility of large-scale eviction by the government, and they both rely heavily on informal means of dispute resolution. The surveys were conducted in these communities because they represent communities in which the baseline of trust for the peacekeeping mission is likely to be low. It is precisely in these types of communities where perceptions of peacekeeping missions may be negative due to mismatched expectations and perceived asymmetry between locals and peacekeepers (Poligney 2006, Pugh 2010, Higate and Henry 2009; Cockburn and Hubic 2002). In this way, the study is an example of a "hard case."[21]

The survey design uses a representative cross-sectional random cluster survey of 1280 respondents.[22] Enumerators used a random walk technique to randomly select households in the communities, and then randomly selected individuals above the age of eighteen in each household to interview. The independent variable is contact with female peacekeepers.[23] Contact with female peacekeepers means that locals had a conversation with a female peacekeeper. Individuals were first asked whether they had conversation

[20] For extensive details on the survey, see Karim 2016.
[21] In such cases, we should expect results to be null.
[22] For more survey details see, Karim (2016).
[23] The Appendix shows the balance between those that had contact with female peacekeepers versus contact with male peacekeepers on a number of observable characteristics.

with a peacekeeper and subsequently asked whether the peacekeeper was female.[24] In total, 19 per cent of the sample had a conversation with a peacekeeper, 11 per cent had a conversation with a male peacekeeper and 8 per cent had a conversation with a female peacekeeper. This may be compared to a representative sample of the entire city of Monrovia where 21 percent had contact with a peacekeeper (and 15 per cent of those that has contact had so with a female peacekeeper).[25] One observation from these contact rates is that peacekeeping engagement with ex-combatant communities is low, suggesting that even though peacekeepers may go to the most difficult missions (Fortna 2008, Gilligan and Sergenti 2008), when it comes to the state building aspect, they may not be spending much time in the most difficult communities.

There are three survey questions that serve as the dependent variable.[26] First, the survey asks whether female peacekeepers are perceived as more effective than male peacekeepers. Specifically, it asks, "Do you think that female peacekeepers are better than male peacekeepers?"[27] Second, contact with female peacekeepers may make locals feel safer, especially with regards to rape. The survey asks: "Do you think that rape is a problem in Liberia?" Finally, contact with female peacekeepers may make locals perceive local women in a more empowered way, particularly when it comes to joining the domestic security forces. To get at this, the survey asks, "Do you think that women should join the AFL/LNP?".[28]

Several control variables are included in the logit models, including a dichotomous control for those that did not have any contact with peacekeepers, victims of violence currently and during the war, age, sex, participation in an armed group, native of the capital district (Montserrado), contact with a female police officer, contact with the Liberian Armed Forces, and individuals' general perception of the peacekeeping mission.[29] The models presented below do not include community fixed effects as West Point and Peace

[24] At this time, the study cannot account for multiple interactions. Additionally, there may be instances when individuals had contact with both male and female peacekeepers. This is left to future areas of study.
[25] Representative survey of Monrovia was conducted in 2012 See: Beber et al forthcoming.
[26] The "I don't know responses" are dropped from the analysis. However, a number of people answered "I do not know" to the questions. This analysis is accounted for in the Appendix.
[27] In the sample 22 per cent thought that female peacekeepers are better than male ones.
[28] In the sample, 77 per cent thought that women should join the AFL and 93 per cent thought that women should join the police.
[29] Tests were done using variables that balanced and did not balance and the results are consistent. Balance tests are included in the Appendix.

Island balance. The Appendix includes models with community fixed effects as well as split samples for each community.

Results

The first set of results demonstrate that on average, locals perceive female peacekeepers to be more effective than male peacekeepers. Holding all else equal, contact with a female peacekeeper may increase the probability of an individual answering that they believe female peacekeepers to be better than male peacekeepers by as much as 13 per cent, from a 14 per cent likelihood (8-24 percent) to a 27 per cent (15-43 per cent) likelihood to agree.[30] Table 1 provides the statistical results.[31]

The results should be treated with some caution as none of the female respondents who had contact with female peacekeepers thought that female peacekeepers are better than male peacekeepers. Table 2 provides the breakdown of the distribution of the results for female respondents. From the table, we note that only fifteen women in the sample of 1280 had contact with female peacekeepers (compared to 85 men who had contact with female peacekeepers). Furthermore, in Table 3 (male respondents only), we see that most of the results from Table 1 are being driven by men in the sample, as they are more likely to have contact with female peacekeepers.[32] Thus, the evidence here corroborates the quotes from female peacekeepers suggesting that there are real access barriers when it comes to interacting with locals, particularly women. If female peacekeepers are unable to interact with local women, then they are unable to help them in the ways suggested by policy makers. This "access gap" may impede progress on peacekeeping effectiveness.

[30] The numbers in the parenthesis include the 95% confidence intervals for the predicted probabilities.
[31] It should be noted that most of this effect is driven by respondents from Peace Island (See Appendix). Nevertheless, when splitting the sample based on community, the direction of the variable is still positive among West Point respondents.
[32] This is also reflected in the men only sample coefficient table in the Appendix.

Table 1: Coefficient Table for Local Perceptions

	Dependent Variable:			
	Do you think that female peacekeepers are better than male peacekeepers?	Do you think that rape is a problem in Liberia?	Do you think that women should join the AFL?	Do you think that women should join the LNP?
Constant	-2.96*** (0.48)	2.28*** (0.75)	1.90*** (0.38)	3.13*** (0.65)
Contact with Female Peacekeeper	0.78** (0.38)	0.93 (0.71)	0.53* (0.30)	-0.40 (0.54)
No contact with peacekeeper	0.49* (0.29)	0.50 (0.42)	1.38*** (0.22)	0.02 (0.39)
Female	0.46** (0.18)	0.60* (0.33)	-0.19 (0.16)	0.06 (0.26)
Age	0.0004 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Victim of Crime	0.58*** (0.17)	-0.28 (0.31)	-0.46*** (0.15)	-0.71*** (0.25)
Experienced Violence in War	-0.15 (0.17)	-0.03** (0.01)	0.0002 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Better off with UNMIL	0.71*** (0.22)	0.13 (0.39)	-0.83*** (0.21)	-0.68* (0.37)
Armed Group Member	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)
Contact with Female Police	0.21 (0.16)	-1.91*** (0.38)	-0.48*** (0.15)	-0.77*** (0.24)
Born in Monrovia	0.07 (0.17)	0.80** (0.36)	0.14 (0.16)	0.38 (0.27)
Contact with AFL	0.16 (0.17)	0.70** (0.35)	0.57*** (0.17)	1.07*** (0.29)
Observations	967	1,228	1,187	1,235
Log Likelihood	-489.08	-180.97	-569.15	-275.88
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,002.17	385.95	1,162.30	575.75
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

Table 2: Distribution of Female Respondents (Do you think female peacekeepers are better than male peacekeepers?)

Do you think that female peacekeepers are better than male peacekeepers?	Contact with Female Peacekeeper	Contact with Male Peacekeeper	TOTAL
Yes	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
No	5 (10%)	47 (90%)	52
I don't know	10 (45%)	12 (55%)	22
TOTAL	15	63	78

Table 3: Distribution of Male Respondents (Do you think female peacekeepers are better than male peacekeepers?)

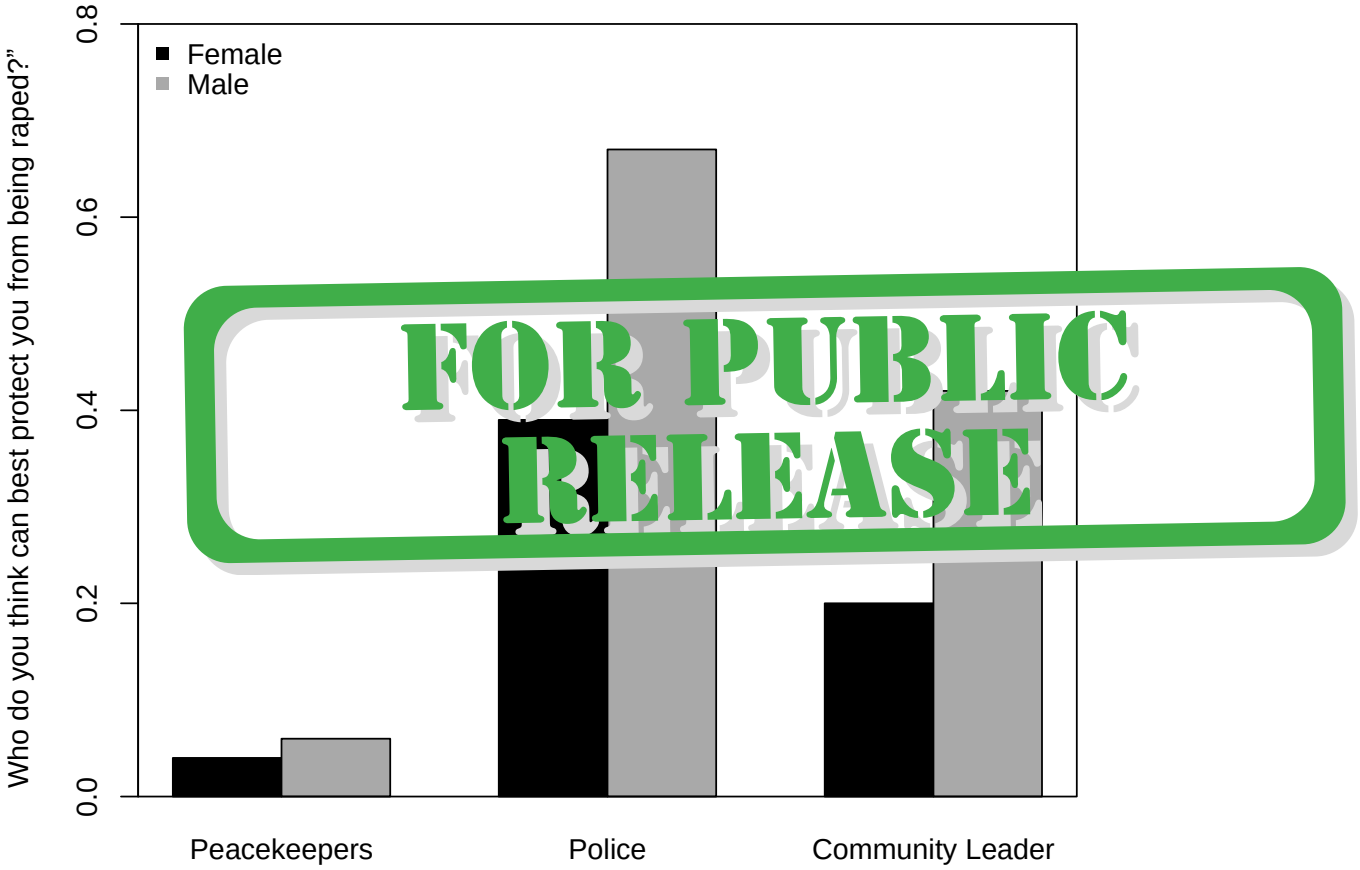
Do you think that female peacekeepers are better than male peacekeepers?	Contact with Female Peacekeeper	Contact with Male Peacekeeper	TOTAL
Yes	23 (27%)	14 (17%)	27
No	51 (60%)	57 (70%)	108
I don't know	11 (13%)	10 (12%)	21
TOTAL	85	81	156

Moving to the next expectation, contact with female peacekeepers does not lead to perceptions that the security situation with regards to rape has much improved. The coefficient in Table 1 is in the wrong direction, as we should expect a negative correlation. We can unpack this question further by examining preferences for rape response. Another survey question asks, "who do you think can best protect you from being raped?" It offered responses such as police, community leaders, and peacekeepers disaggregated by sex. Only 4 per cent of the sample thought that female peacekeepers could protect them from rape and only 6 per cent of the sample thought that male peacekeepers could protect them from rape. One reason for the low confidence in peacekeepers in general could be that they, themselves, are perpetrators of rape and violence (Nordås and Rustad 2013, Karim and Beardsley 2016, Beber et al forthcoming).

Figure 1 shows the percentages of the male and female actors that locals perceive could protect them from rape. Although female peacekeepers and policy makers believe that female peacekeepers play a unique protection role when it comes to rape, most locals still prefer men, and prefer domestic actors to deal with such crimes over international

ones. This may be due to the fact that rape is a sensitive issue in society and societal norms dictate that locals handle the issue.

Figure 1: Perceptions of Protection from Rape Provided by Different Actors



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Finally, Table 1 shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between those have contact with female peacekeepers and beliefs about women joining the military. At the same time, however, there is a negative relationship between contact with female peacekeepers and the belief that women should join the police. Among female respondents only, contact with female peacekeeper and women's participation in the military and police

is negative (significant for police but not for military), suggesting that contact with female peacekeepers reduced the likelihood of holding the opinion that women should join the military and police force.[33] To supplement this contradictory finding, the survey also asked individuals about if they would like to join the military and police and if they said yes, they were also asked why they would like to join. Only eight respondents (3 per cent) directly said they were inspired by female peacekeepers.[34] Thus, the overall evidence suggests that female peacekeepers may have a limited influence in directly inspiring local women to join the police and military.

The above results should be interpreted with some caution as they only apply to the "hard case" or those living in ex-combatant communities that are likely to have negative perceptions of the peacekeeping mission. Using a more representative sample by Beber et al (forthcoming), there may be cause for some optimism.[35] The Beber et al (forthcoming) survey asks whether individuals had social interactions with peacekeepers (and the sex of the peacekeeper with whom they had the interaction), and it asks one question related to security: "has the presence of UNMIL increased your own personal security?" This question is similar to the question in the West Point and Peace Island survey about whether the security situation with regards to rape has improved. Results from the Table 4 indicate that contact with a female peacekeeper leads to enhanced perceptions of personal security.[36] This means that on average female peacekeepers may contribute to the security situation, but that this overall contribution could be improved if female peacekeepers are able to spend more time in difficult settings such as ex-combatant communities.

[33] See Appendix.
[34] Approximately 22 per cent of respondents.
[35] For details of this survey, see Beber et al (forthcoming).
[36] The variable is significant in a pooled sample as well.

Table 4: Representative Survey of Monrovia

	Dependent variable: Has the presence of UNMIL increased OWN personal security?		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	1.85*** (0.52)	3.17*** (0.79)	1.10 (0.51)
Contact with Female Peacekeeper	1.32** (0.62)		2.08*** (0.61)
Contact with Male Peacekeeper		-1.33** (0.63)	0.75*** (0.18)
No contact with peacekeeper	-0.75*** (0.18)	-2.08*** (0.61)	
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Savings	-0.74*** (0.15)	-0.74*** (0.15)	-0.74*** (0.15)
Female	-0.21 (0.16)	-0.21 (0.16)	-0.21 (0.16)
War Trauma	-0.52*** (0.17)	-0.52*** (0.17)	-0.52*** (0.17)
Muslim	0.40 (0.30)	0.40 (0.30)	0.40 (0.30)
High Cognitive Ability	-0.08 (0.17)	-0.08 (0.14)	-0.08 (0.14)
Observations	1,333	1,333	1,333
Log Likelihood	-679.28	-679.28	-679.28
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,452.56	1,452.56	1,452.56

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Model includes community level fixed effects with 38 communities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study has sought to answer two questions: 1) Do female peacekeepers perceive themselves as making peacekeeping missions more effective? 2) Do locals perceive female peacekeepers as bringing an added benefit to peacekeeping missions? These questions are particularly important given that the justification by policy makers and some scholars for integrating women into peacekeeping missions has often rested on arguments about operational effectiveness. The evidence here shows that female peacekeepers also believe that they bring an added benefit to missions. This is particularly important given that self-efficacy is essential for achieving goals. If female peacekeepers believe that they play a unique role in the peacekeeping operations, as the results from the interviews and focus groups indicate, then they may be carrying out programs that increase trust, mitigate rape, and that promote gender equality in the host country. These added benefits may help alleviate some of the negative perceptions locals hold of peacekeeping mission in general. Consequently, as more women are integrated into peacekeeping missions, it may make peacekeeping missions more effective with respect security.

The positive results, however, are tempered by evidence of an "access gap." While female peacekeepers believe they make the mission more successful, they are inhibited from reaching their full potential. Conversations with female peacekeepers indicate that gendered barriers exist that impede their full participation in the mission, implying that peacekeeping missions are not as much of a success story for women as suggested by policymakers. Rigid gender norms about the roles women play inhibit the degree to which women participate in the wide range of roles in the missions, especially when it comes to being able to leave the base and interact with locals. These restrictions erode leeway to engage local civilians, particularly women.

The barriers are particularly disconcerting and paradoxical given that in order for peacekeepers to increase trust, reduce rape, and promote gender equality, they have to spend time in the field—particularly in difficult settings. Most female peacekeepers are not participating in community activities and the peacekeeping environment may sometimes be hostile to women. Given the barriers, it may be too much to expect that locals perceive female peacekeepers as bringing an added contribution to peacekeeping missions, because female peacekeepers are unable to fully engage in the type of community outreach that is needed to enhance perceptions of the peacekeeping mission—leading to an "access gap" that prevents peacekeeping operations from fully realizing their potential.

The "access gap" voiced by female peacekeepers is corroborated by the survey data in Peace Island and West Point. Peacekeepers, including female peacekeepers, are hardly active in these two communities. It is possible that peacekeepers are more active in other communities, but given that these two communities house ex-combatants and individuals least likely to have trust in the peacekeeping missions, it is precisely these communities that may need more (female) peacekeeping presence.

The low participation rate by female peacekeepers in the communities may be the reason why there are few significant results in the survey data. On average, contact with female peacekeepers led to individuals perceiving female peacekeepers as better than male peacekeepers. But, this effect was primarily driven by men because they have more contact with female peacekeepers. It is possible that part of the "access gap" when it comes to women interacting with other women may be due to traditional gender roles in society where men are more likely to be leaders and thus interact with foreigners in the community. If this is the case, more work should be done on how reforms that integrate women into the security forces affect the perceptions and behavior of men, not just women. Nevertheless, part of the problem stems from the barriers that female peacekeepers face with respect to being unable to interact with local women.

At the ex-combatant community level, there was no effect between contact with female peacekeepers and perceiving that rape is less of a problem. This may again be due to the "access gap," but it may also be due to locals' views about rape as a domestic issue. Locals may prefer the domestic actors to handle rape as demonstrated by Figure 1. Domestic actors who understand the local context and speak the local language may be

much better suited to respond to security concerns such as rape, compared to international missions (or women in them), as foreigners rarely share the same experiences as locals, making solidarity between women of different cultures, races, ethnicities, classes, religions, and countries illusive (Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991; Autesserre 2014). This is not bad news for peacekeeping missions. In fact, it suggests that domestic security sector reforms may help pave the way for peacekeeping transition (Karim 2016).

There is some indication that female peacekeepers may enhance perceptions of security among the broader population, beyond ex-combatant communities. Contact with peacekeepers is higher at the city level than in ex-combatant communities, and when respondents in Monrovia had contact with female peacekeepers, as opposed to male peacekeepers, they were more likely to perceive their own security as having improved. Thus, it is possible that if female peacekeepers experienced fewer barriers to interacting with locals and spent more time in the communities that need them the most, perceptions of security in ex-combatant communities may improve as well.

Finally, there were mixed results about whether female peacekeepers inspire local women to join the security forces. The survey results indicate that contact with female peacekeepers may correlate with views that women should join the military but not the police force. It is unclear why there is an institutional difference, as female peacekeepers serve in both the military and police force.[37] When asking just female respondents, the relationship was negative for both organizations. And, when asked why women would join the military or police force, only a handful responded that they were inspired by female peacekeepers. This suggests that the role of female peacekeepers, when it comes to inspiring women in ex-combatant communities, is minimal, contrary to the perceptions of policy makers and female peacekeepers.

Despite the barriers female peacekeepers face and despite the mixed feelings toward female peacekeepers among survey respondents, the enthusiasm voiced by the female peacekeepers should not be overlooked. Female peacekeepers have engaged in numerous activities in Liberia that have helped build trust, mitigate rape, and promote gender equality. In UNMIL, female peacekeepers helped establish the Women and Children's Protection Unit and Gender Unit in the Liberian National Police. They also

[37] Perceptions of the police versus military are an interesting new and future area of study.

helped establish a national rape law, the National Action Plan on UNSC 1325, among other activities. Thus, while female peacekeepers have not much changed locals' perceptions in communities with minimal trust, they have contributed to institutional changes that improve the overall mission effectiveness.

The study is a first attempt to understand peacekeeping effectiveness from the perspective of female peacekeepers and locals. To better assess the extent to which females contribute to bettering missions, triangulating different sources gives a voice to those that should be included in the process for determining the performance of missions. In doing so, we gain a more accurate picture of peacekeeping effectiveness. Future research on peacekeeping missions could employ this triangulation.

While there are certainly positive elements to peacekeeping as it currently stands —as a highly male dominated institution, the evidence here suggests that the "access gap" inhibits peacekeeping missions from reaching their full potential, because female peacekeepers who could bring added benefits to missions, are largely prevented from doing so. Thus, to ensure future mission effectiveness, it is important to not only focus on women's participation in peacekeeping missions, as suggested by UNSCR 1325, but also on the quality of their participation. When the "access gap" is eliminated, peacekeeping operations may better respond to the needs of the local population and be more effective in security.

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