

Who Keeps the Peace? Gendered Effects in UN Peacekeeping

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Abstract

Why are some peacekeepers more effective than others? Since the end of the Cold War, UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) have increased dramatically in size and scope. However, most analyses of peacekeeper effectiveness fail to account for the gendered effects of peacekeepers. Conversely, work exploring the role of gender in peacekeeping has not taken advantage of recent advances in data availability that allow for more fine-grained analyses of the local and subnational effects of peacekeeping deployments. I address this gap by unifying the relevant theoretical literature into a novel framework, emphasizing how women peacekeepers increase local trust and thus reduce political violence. Using instrumental variable analyses and recent advances in optimal matching, I find strong evidence that the inclusion of more women in a peacekeeping force can dramatically increase the unit's effectiveness against rebel violence. These findings suggest that women peacekeepers are more important in maintaining peace than previously thought.

Keywords: UN, peacekeeping, conflict, peace science, gender

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1 Introduction

“Boys will be boys.” These were the words of Yasushi Akashi, head of the United Nations (UN) Mission to Cambodia (UNTAC), in response to allegations of UN Peacekeepers engaging in disorderly conduct, drunken behavior in public, and prostitution, often in UN vehicles.¹ After an HIV epidemic around UNTAC’s Phnom Penh headquarters led to increased demand of younger girls, on the basis that they were more likely to be HIV-free,² the UN responded by suggesting peacekeepers avoid the brothels while in uniform and sent 800,000 condoms to the country.³

UN peacekeeping has come a long way since UNTAC, and now explicitly trains peacekeepers against the kind of abuse recorded there as well as changing the deployment compositions.⁴ In many respects, the UN has moved away from a “boys will be boys” attitude, and towards missions that engage locals more and bring women peacekeepers into the fold. The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), for example, has relatively successfully kept the peace while consistently having one of the highest counts and proportions of women peacekeepers deployed since 2005.⁵ The mission recently received the largest ever deployment of women peacekeepers from India,⁶ and in nearby Abyei, Ghanian women peacekeepers make up a substantial part of the force, ranging from commander of the mission all the way to troops deployed.⁷ These peacekeepers understand the importance of building a connection with locals, and make it a priority to gain their trust.⁸

A substantial amount of qualitative evidence indicates the importance of women peacekeepers in gaining trust from local populations. The inclusion of women peacekeepers, for instance, is likely to decrease UN abuse of civilians;⁹ women also tend to be better at sensi-

1. Essa [2017](#).

2. DeGroot [2011](#).

3. Westendorf and Searle [2017](#), 366.

4. source

5. insert plot and source here

6. Muzaffar [2023](#).

7. Crawford [2023](#).

8. Crawford [2023](#).

9. Karim and Beardsley [2016](#).

tive situations and less threatening overall.¹⁰ Despite the importance of women peacekeepers in building trust and thus improving the operational capacity of an operation, existing quantitative research exploring operational effectiveness at preventing violence fails to account for the gendered effects of peacekeepers. While more recent research has examined the effect of diversity on peacekeeper effectiveness,¹¹ these analyses focus on diversity as a national, ethnolinguistic, or quality aspect of troop deployed. While important, analyses on peacekeeping effectiveness likely miss a substantial amount of variation in peacekeepers by gender. By unifying the relevant literature of women peacekeepers' effects on trust,¹² I argue that gender diversity is a significant component in determining the effectiveness of peacekeepers. By increasing locals' trust of peacekeepers, women increase the intelligence capabilities and thus the ability of the unit to respond to violence, inherently making them more effective.

To test my theory, I use the Robust African Deployments of Peacekeeping Operations (RADPKO) data on peacekeepers' monthly subnational location by gender,¹³ combined with the Georeferenced Events Database (GED) data on political violence.¹⁴ I estimate several models, from two-way fixed effects, instrumental variable analyses, and matched logit regressions. I find that an increase in women peacekeepers is associated with fifteen times fewer deaths than an equal increase in men peacekeepers. These findings speak to the importance of gender diversity in peacekeeping, and show how critical women are to keeping the peace.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I review the previous contributions to the peacekeeping effectiveness literature, and examine the literature on the effects of women peacekeepers. Second, I construct a framework suggesting why peacekeepers in general prevent violence locally; I then attempt to unify the relevant theoretical literature into a single framework, emphasizing how women peacekeepers increase local trust and thus reduce political violence. Next, I outline my research design and data, explaining why and how both

10. UNIFEM [2010](#); Simić [2010](#).

11. Bove and Ruggeri [2016](#), [2019](#); Haass and Ansorg [2018](#).

12. Karim and Beardsley [2013](#), [2016](#); Narang and Liu [2021](#).

13. Hunnicutt and Nomikos [2020](#).

14. Raleigh et al. [2010](#).

are instrumental in determining causal relationships in spite of selection effects and reverse causality. Finally, I analyze the results of my models, explaining their implications and where future scholars should proceed from here.

2 Peacekeeping Effectiveness and Gender

2.1 Violence Prevention

The existing literature examining whether peacekeepers prevent violence established that peacekeeping works. For example, peacekeepers tend to reduce battle violence between incumbents and rebel groups.¹⁵ By getting in the way of belligerents, peacekeepers can slow their movement and prevent them from fighting each other. Other research shows that peacekeeping operations are more likely to increase the success of peacebuilding, leading to less war recurrence and overall increasing the stability of a state.¹⁶

When it comes to reducing violence against civilians, the results show that peacekeepers tend to reduce fatalities with some caveats. Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon argue that UN troops and police reduce the amount of violence against civilians while observers cause an increase in violence.¹⁷ Bara and Hultman compare UN and non-UN peacekeeping and shows that UN peacekeepers are the only actors between the two that prevent violence against civilians by non-state actors.¹⁸

Yet, Walter, Fortna, and Howard point out that while we we know the deployment of peacekeepers at a state level decreases violence, it is unclear why.¹⁹ Political violence is inherently geospatial (taking place in time and space) and personal (occurring against humans). Thus, any understanding of what is occurring at the state level cannot explain what

15. Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2014; Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015; Peitz and Reisch 2019.

16. Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Fortna 2004, 2008.

17. Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013 point out that this is likely because UN observers are unarmed, which indicates a lack of commitment by the international community to peace, showing belligerents that their actions likely will not have dire consequences.

18. Bara and Hultman 2020.

19. Walter, Howard, and Fortna 2021.

is happening locally when peacekeepers deploy to stop violence. More recent research details peacekeeping’s local effects, such as Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis examining how peacekeepers effect the duration of violence locally,²⁰ and Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson finding that “even when accounting for the non-random selection of peacekeepers to a location, their presence has a negative and significant effect on reducing the risk of violence against civilians by rebel actors.”²¹

By increasing the collective understanding of the effects of peacekeepers on reducing political violence, these papers have expanded our knowledge of how peacekeepers impact violence. Importantly, however, the mechanisms underlying these papers are based on the assumption of peacekeepers as unitary actors. In other words, they do not address the heterogenous treatment effects of peacekeepers, providing a novel but limited understanding of the differential effects peacekeepers may have.

I contend that past literature missed one of the most important aspects of peacekeeper effectiveness: gender diversity. Recent evidence suggests that women peacekeepers have a different effect on the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping units.²² I contribute to the literature on peacekeeping effectiveness by developing the theoretical understanding of how gender diversity increases peacekeeper effectiveness.

2.2 Gender and Peacekeepers

Various scholars have discussed the theoretical reasons why increasing women’s participation in peacekeeping missions is beneficial for the mission itself and for locals. For example, Karim and Beardsley argue that an increase in women peacekeepers and peacekeepers from countries with better gender equality are associated with lower allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse levied against the peacekeepers.²³ Further studies into the effectiveness of women peacekeepers show that women can have an important impact on increasing trust

20. Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2017.

21. Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019, 125.

22. Narang and Liu 2021.

23. Karim and Beardsley 2016, 100.

and promoting gender equality through their beliefs in their own ability,²⁴ but that countries tend to send women peacekeeping units into easier cases.²⁵

Narang and Liu’s article is the first systematic analysis of women’s participation in peacekeeping, showing that the inclusion of women into peacekeeper operations does not “come at the cost of ‘effectiveness.’”²⁶ While Narang and Liu provide a valuable starting point, their analysis only discusses how women peacekeepers *do not* harm effectiveness, rather than discussing how they may enhance it. More theory and analysis is needed at the subnational level to determine if the gendered composition of peacekeepers changes violence outcomes. Narang and Liu’s analysis also importantly focuses on peace duration in post-civil war societies. While important for various empirical and theoretical reasons, their research does not necessarily extend to the ability of women peacekeepers to protect civilians per se, especially during civil conflicts. Thus, my theory further addresses these gaps by distinguishing between the gendered effects of peacekeepers. The peacekeepers in Ch. VII missions often target rebels with intentional violence but can only do so when they have reliable intelligence from civilians that is gained through trust.²⁷ Since women are more likely to increase the trust of civilians, I expect peacekeeping units with more women to have a stronger effect on violence.

I contribute to the existing research by unifying the literature on women peacekeepers and their effects into a single framework of how they change locals’ trust in peacekeepers and thus reduce political violence. When peacekeeping units with more women are present in localized spaces, civilians increase their trust in peacekeepers, which consequently leads to less violence against civilians than if peacekeeping troops with more men were present and less than if no peacekeeping units were present.

24. Karim 2017, 842.

25. Karim and Beardsley 2013.

26. Narang and Liu 2021, 4.

27. Giray 2022; Duursma 2021.

3 What's Gender Got to Do With It?

Why do state and rebel groups engage in political violence?²⁸ When used by the state, political violence is often used to suppress threats or insurgencies,²⁹ but can also be used to suppress dissent or raise the costs of supporting rebels.³⁰ When used by rebels, political violence is often used to convey capabilities to the other side,³¹ or to draw international attention to their cause and weaken the incumbent.³² Regardless of the reasons actors may attempt political violence, the assumption underlying the rest of this section, and deriving from Fjelde et al.,³³ is that when present, peacekeepers affect the costs of committing violence as it happens and the costs of committing violence in the future (i.e., a deterrent effect). But, in order to stop or deter violence, peacekeepers must be geospatially and temporally present. In other words, peacekeepers' use of violence and naming and shaming can only occur when they are nearby.

3.1 How Do Peacekeepers Know Where to Stop the Violence?

While peacekeepers alter the costs of political violence by direct actions and the threat of actions, peacekeepers are necessarily limited by the local knowledge required to stop violence in the first place. Peacekeepers cannot respond to violence or potential violence if they are not aware of the local situation. I argue that a key tool of peacekeepers is the level of intelligence they have to respond to past or current violence and to preempt and deter prospective violence. Intelligence of the local landscape is paramount to the violence protection capabilities of peacekeepers.

Where do peacekeepers obtain intelligence from? I classify the divide of intelligence that peacekeepers obtain as *technological* and *personal* intelligence. Technological intelligence

28. Political violence is defined in this paper as the intentional targeting of civilians to achieve political goals. I refer to political violence and violence against civilians interchangeably.

29. Davenport 1995; Lyall 2009.

30. Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2007.

31. Schelling 1966; Hinkkainen Elliott, Polo, and Eustacia Reyes 2021.

32. Hinkkainen Elliott, Polo, and Eustacia Reyes 2021; Lake 2002.

33. Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019.

entails the gathering of intelligence via technology, often through sophisticated means. Take, for example, the UN’s use of drones in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO). Via a private security contractor, the UN monitored local populations and used the drone as a form of early warning for violence.³⁴ With technological intelligence, the UN looks for visual signs and clues of the operating environment. Personal intelligence, on the other hand, is comprised of the local knowledge the UN gathers from interpersonal connections peacekeepers make with non-UN persons. The United States’ Surge Strategy during the Iraq War is a key example of this. During the campaign to win the hearts and minds of Iraqi civilians, the occupying US military would leave military bases and interact with the people to gain their trust and subsequently, information of the local situation.³⁵

With *technological* and *personal* intelligence, peacekeepers gain the information needed to respond to active or potential violence. Yet, despite how well-trained peacekeepers are, the advanced equipment they use, or even how good their leadership is, no advance technology can distinguish a rebel actor hiding in plain sight from a civilian. Another good example comes from the US’s experience in Iraq for nearly two decades. After decimating the world’s third-largest military in less than a month, the US firmly established itself as the strongest and most advance military on the planet with an unquestioned ability to fight conventional wars.³⁶ Yet, that same military struggled to take on a much weaker and less advanced rebellion from Al-Qaeda.³⁷ Even with technology that was years or even decades more advanced than the next-most powerful country, the US military was hardly successful against Al-Qaeda.³⁸ The difference in these scenarios was one of intelligence; the most advanced sensors and intelligence-gathering technology could do nothing for counterinsurgency efforts, as the US struggled to detect rebels from civilians.³⁹⁴⁰

34. Tkach and Phillips 2020, 114.

35. Robinson 2009, 110.

36. Shimko 2010.

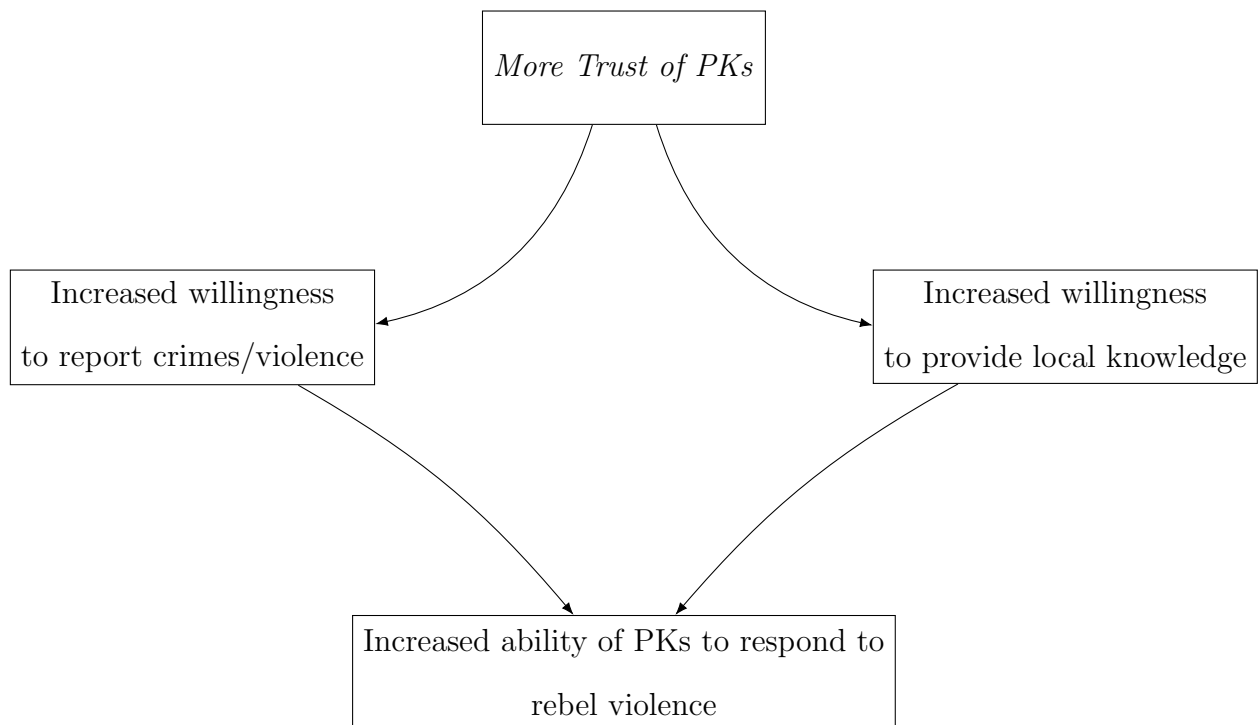
37. McMaster 2008a.

38. Ibid.

39. McMaster 2008b.

40. Peacekeepers act as a neutral third-party and deploy to enforce the peace, often against rebel nonstate actors, thus making them similar yet distinct from traditional state forces attempting counterinsurgency

Recall that peacekeepers in Chapter VII missions are mandated to find and respond to violence against civilians. Warzones are not information-rich environments, however. Not only are peacekeepers often contending with incumbent and rebel violence ranging from the battlefield to the streets, but they must also navigate amongst a population that sees them as outsiders in the conflict. Peacekeepers thus face large obstacles that will hamper how effectively they keep the peace. Importantly, this is linked: If local populations do not trust or support peacekeepers, then peacekeepers will have a decreased ability to gather intelligence.⁴¹ Moreover, the distrust of peacekeepers can lead to more support for rebel groups now with an increased capacity to further harm civilians.⁴² This is especially true regarding rebel groups, who have a greater capacity than the state to use insurgency strategies that blend in with the population.



The critical causal link here is one of trust. Prior research has established that more operations.

41. Giray 2022.

42. Ibid.

trust of UN forces leads to more intelligence,⁴³ meaning personal intelligence is at least in part dependent upon the trust associated in UN forces. When peacekeepers are trusted by locals, those same locals provide them with information about the local context and local dynamics.⁴⁴ Other evidence shows that, more important than the number of troops, peacekeepers rely on early warning systems and intelligence to prevent violence against civilians.⁴⁵ I argue that this increases the importance of looking at how women peacekeepers build trust. With this new information gained through an established relationship with locals, peacekeepers can address threats to peace more effectively by using intelligence as an early warning system.⁴⁶

3.2 Diversity in Peacekeeping

Diversity in peacekeeper deployed is an important aspect of peacekeeping effectiveness, although contemporary peacekeeping research has only recently branched out into exploring the composition of peacekeeping units.⁴⁷ In this section, I discuss in detail why diversity in the gender of peacekeeper deployed matters. I highlight this by exploring the potential pitfalls of men-only deployments, followed by a discussion on how increasing the amount of women deployed will likely lead to increased trust of the peacekeeping deployment.

3.2.1 Why Men-only Peacekeeping Units May Harm Local Trust

As highlighted in the introduction and the story of UNTAC, the UN has a long and troubled history of committing crimes, abuse, and worse against the population they deploy to protect. In fact, male sexual exploitation of local women and children is so widespread that the terms “Peacekeeper babies” and “blue helmet babies” arose to describe children fathered by peacekeepers and subsequently abandoned.⁴⁸ While it’s hard to know how much abuse

43. Gunderson and Huber [2022](#); Narang and Liu [2021](#); Karim and Beardsley [2016](#); UNIFEM [2010](#).

44. Bove and Ruggeri [2019](#), 1632, 1636.

45. Duursma [2021](#).

46. Bove and Ruggeri [2019](#), 1636.

47. Bove and Ruggeri [2016](#), [2019](#); Belgioioso, Salvatore, and Pinckney [2021](#).

48. Askin, Lee and Bartels [2020](#).

has come at the hands of men as opposed to gender diverse units, any peacekeeping mission deployed before 2005 (the first recorded instance of women peacekeepers deploying) would have only men, meaning the abuse in cases like Cambodia would be by men-only units. Abuse committed by peacekeepers harms locals' trust in the PKO. As Bove and Ruggeri 2016 point out, "if the bond of trust between the locals and peacekeepers is damaged by the blue helmets' misconduct, the UN mission can be denied the relevant and substantial information about local dynamics, thus damaging the mission's effectiveness in protecting civilians."⁴⁹

While abuse by peacekeeping units leads to a loss of trust in the mission, other factors also play a key role in explaining why units with no women may also lead to less trust. For example, men peacekeepers often are complicit in reproducing "militarized masculinity."⁵⁰ Militarized masculinity occurs when, in the name of unit cohesion, smaller aggregations of military units emphasize their masculinity and penalize femininity. It rejects everything feminine in order to be a so-called "real man," meaning it "relies on the construction of the 'other' as feminine."⁵¹

Militarized masculinity can thus serve to isolate peacekeepers from civilians, as they divide themselves from locals. This masculine culture can especially isolate women and children, who are more likely to be seen as feminine. Karim and Beardsley also emphasize that this militarized masculinity can make it *more* likely that peacekeepers use violence against civilians, which would further enhance distrust of the mission.⁵²

Finally, men-only units are unlikely to be successful in interviews or searches of civilian women. As the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) points out in a report, men peacekeepers may seem more threatening to women civilians.⁵³ In countries or regions where women may be forbidden from talking with men outside of their familial unit,

49. 686.

50. Karim and Beardsley 2017.

51. Ibid, 38.

52. Ibid, 40.

53. UNIFEM 2010, 28.

women peacekeepers can potentially bridge the gap that male peacekeepers cannot.

3.2.2 How Women Peacekeepers Build Greater Trust

When a more gender-balanced peacekeeping unit arrives in a grid, locals build more trust than when less women are present. Why? I draw on evidence from six mechanisms on how women ultimately increase trust in peacekeepers from local populations. I import this theory to the local level, explicating that each of these mechanisms only works when peacekeepers interact with civilians. Peacekeepers build trust through their local interactions, and more women and gender diversity will lead to more trust.

First, women peacekeepers are self-confident in their efficacy, unique contributions, and importance to peacekeeping units.⁵⁴ This self-confidence by women peacekeepers means that locals actually see women peacekeepers as more effective than their counterparts.⁵⁵ Therefore, because women peacekeepers are seen as more effective, locals are more likely to trust them. Second, while men may not be effective at searching civilian women and assisting them in sensitive situations, women peacekeepers are better at handling the sensitive situations that occur during peacekeeping missions in insecure states.⁵⁶ This includes activities such as personal searches, interviewing victims of violence, and listening to victims that experience sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Women within these communities are often more comfortable with women peacekeepers and sometimes are restricted from speaking to men peacekeepers.⁵⁷ As those within the community, and especially women, become more comfortable with peacekeepers, they are more likely to trust them. While this is likely to assist in trust, I do note Karim's discussion of the access gap, which means that female peacekeepers (or any peacekeepers in general) may not have access to contact women;⁵⁸ in these cases, the benefits of women's addition to the mission will likely be decreased.

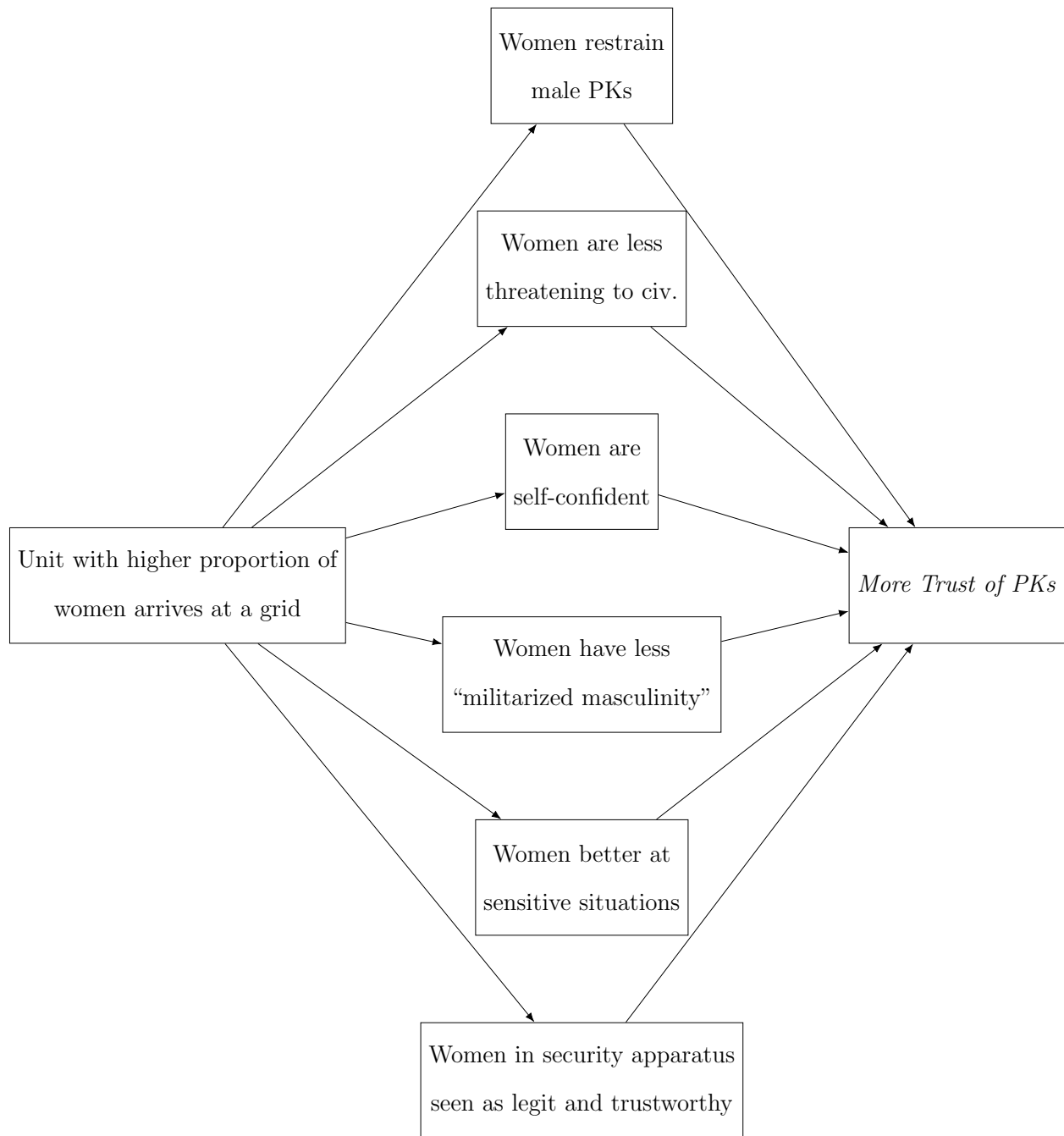
54. Karim 2017, 842.

55. Ibid, 838.

56. UNIFEM 2010, 43.

57. UNIFEM 2010.

58. Karim 2017.



Third, women peacekeepers, on average, have less “militarized masculinity” than men peacekeepers.⁵⁹ This masculinity hampers trust between civilians and peacekeepers and further contributes to them being seen as an occupier there to enforce peace through force.⁶⁰ As outsiders, peacekeepers with more masculinity are more likely to be seen as an occupy-

59. Karim and Beardsley 2013.

60. Ibid.

ing army than as friendly defenders of human rights by the locals. Women peacekeepers operating with less militarized masculinity would thus be seen as more friendly, leading to increased local trust of them.⁶¹

The fourth reason women peacekeepers build trust is that they are more likely to restrain their men counterparts from committing SGBV and other illicit activities; since their presence tends to lead to more reporting of these crimes,⁶² women peacekeepers can act as a deterrent. UN Peacekeepers have committed many crimes against the civilians they are there to protect, such as inciting a cholera outbreak in Haiti or the use of “women and children as sex slaves” in Bosnia.⁶³ While this inherently puts women as the group primarily responsible for restraining men peacekeepers instead of UN leadership and training, it’s still important to acknowledge how women tend to reduce the negative externalities of men peacekeepers and decrease the chances of civilians losing trust in the peacekeepers.

Fifth, women peacekeepers tend to be less threatening to civilians, which further builds trust within the local community.⁶⁴ Civilians are already likely to see peacekeepers as an occupying army; and peacekeeper joint operations with state forces may make them seem more partisan overall. Any further distancing of the UN by the local population by appearing threatening may then lead to less trust. Sixth, and finally, more women within the forces of the security apparatus leads to positive impacts on how locals see their “legitimacy and trustworthiness,” and that it “may increase both men’s and women’s willingness to report other gendered and nongendered crimes.”⁶⁵ This occurs because women are more likely to identify with women peacekeepers, leading them to trust and identify with them more.⁶⁶ Thus, with a more gender diverse unit present, peacekeepers have a closer gender split to the real population, meaning more civilians overall are likely to look like and identify with the peacekeeping unit, which tends to increase trust.

61. Ibid, 471.

62. Narang and Liu 2021.

63. Pillinger, Hurd, and Barnett 2016; James and Tribune 2002.

64. UNIFEM 2010; Simić 2010.

65. Gunderson and Huber 2022: 3

66. Ibid, 3.

Each of the aforementioned mechanisms increases locals' trust of UN peacekeepers when the proportion of peacekeeping women is higher. Two important things happen as locals increase their trust in peacekeepers. First, increased local trust in peacekeepers leads civilians to be more willing to report crimes and violence to peacekeepers,⁶⁷ and especially a higher willingness to report SGBV.⁶⁸ Second, more trust from locals leads to "increased operational intelligence/situational awareness, including knowledge about movements in the community of arms, contraband or weapons caches."⁶⁹ Each is important in reducing political violence; as peacekeepers learn about more crimes, violence, and other important events (and hence name and shame) than they otherwise would, their ability to deter political violence increases. With more trust within the community, and thus more reporting and intelligence from civilians to peacekeepers, the rebels now have higher costs to violence, as it is more likely peacekeepers will learn about it and respond. Moreover, as peacekeepers now have more information about arms and other illicit activities throughout the area they deploy to, they increase their ability to restrict the flow and thus decrease the threat of nonstate actors to the civilian population.⁷⁰

Finally, my theoretical framework assumes that women peacekeepers have the same baseline of abilities that men peacekeepers have in terms of the traditional mechanisms used to stop the violence. In other words, I assume that women peacekeepers should have the same ability to stop violence through direct action (e.g., violence) and reporting (e.g., naming and shaming). While this is unlikely to be the case, it lies outside the scope of this paper to compare the direct abilities of men and women peacekeepers. This assumption, combined with the six mechanisms listed previously that directly lead to more trust and thus more operational intelligence, lead to my hypotheses that women peacekeepers will have a negative

67. Gunderson and Huber [2022](#).

68. Narang and Liu [2021](#); Karim and Beardsley [2016](#).

69. UNIFEM [2010](#): 28

70. This does not necessarily mean that peacekeepers will be able to prevent all violence, nor does it give peacekeepers the political will, equipment, or desire to stop or prevent violence. More women deployed will likely lead to an increased ability, but there is no reason to believe it will modify, either positively or negatively, the other pieces of the peacekeeping puzzle.

effect on rebel violence. I operationalize women peacekeepers in the following three ways:

H1: Rebel violence against civilians should decrease as the absolute number of women peacekeepers increases.

H2a: Rebel violence against civilians should decrease as the proportion of women peacekeepers increases.

H2b: When a gender-balanced peacekeeping unit is present, there will be less rebel violence than if an unbalanced peacekeeping unit were present.

Alternatively, women peacekeepers' inclusion in a peace operation has the potential to harm trust of the unit, specifically in patriarchal societies. In patriarchal societies where men dominate, there is a possibility that men and women will resent and resist women's status as potential "protectors," especially because patriarchal violence is enacted in men's domination over women.⁷¹ Under this logic, women peacekeepers deployed to more patriarchal societies may lead to less trust in a peacekeeping unit, as civilians react negatively to women in control of the means of violence. Although theoretically plausible, I argue that this effect is likely much more limited to women's representation in domestic security institutions than international organizations like the UN. As a third-party to the conflict, women peacekeepers pose a much smaller threat to the domestic patriarchal order that could lead to backlash.

While I argue that, *ceteris paribus*, increasing the number of women peacekeepers deployed will lead to fewer civilian casualties, I also make the incorrect but necessary assumption that women peacekeepers are unitary actors distinct from men in the same, qualitative way. Women peacekeepers from more or less patriarchal societies will likely have increased or decreased capacity to connect with locals, and several other factors such as country of

71. Lindsey 2022, 191.

origin or role within the mission also likely impact this ability. I recognize this as a limitation in my theoretical and empirical models, and emphasize that my research provides a novel exploration of gender and peacekeeping on violence without the ability to explore every possible difference.

4 Research Design

In this section, I explicate how I test the proposed hypotheses outlined above. Important to distinguish is the necessity of testing these hypotheses at a subnational level. Each of the mechanisms outlined above should independently affect violence against civilians, but testing it must be done subnationally. Women peacekeepers' interactions with populations should lead to more intelligence and thus more effectiveness, which means that the mechanisms operate at a local level.

4.1 The Data

To further understand when and where peacekeepers save civilian lives, scholars need accurate and disaggregated sources of data on both violence against civilians and UN peacekeeper movement. I follow the lead of other research in this area, such as Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson,⁷² Beardsley and Gelditsch,⁷³ and Ruggeri et al.;⁷⁴ each use the UCDP's Georeferenced Dataset (GED) from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program.⁷⁵ The UCDP covers "all cases where one-sided violence by an armed actor reaches an annual twenty-five-fatality threshold."⁷⁶ To geolocate peacekeeper movement, I use the RADPKO⁷⁷ as opposed to GEO-PKO.⁷⁸ While GEO-PKO contains more temporal variation than RADPKO, it does not

72. Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019.

73. Beardsley and Gelditsch 2015.

74. Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2017.

75. Raleigh et al. 2010.

76. Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019.

77. Hunnicutt and Nomikos 2020.

78. Cil et al. 2020.

contain information on the gendered breakdown of peacekeepers like RADPKO does.

PRIO In this paper, the unit of analysis is a PRIO-GRID month, which is how the UCDP and RADPKO organize the data. PRIO-GRID is a system introduced by Tollefsen et al. that divides the world into approximately 50 km x 50 km grids, or around 0.5°, regardless of national or geographic boundaries.⁷⁹ Disregarding the land boundary has several practical applications, but none more so than the fact that the boundaries are randomly selected and thus fully exogenous of the data that exists within each grid. PRIO grids being created without any direct influence of land or geography means at the unit of analysis, measurement errors in the coding of the violence data can be assumed to be as-if randomly distributed among units. We can also assume that any missing data is distributed randomly, meaning there are no endogeneity concerns between potential missing data and its correlation with the treatment assignment. In the GED data, it is hard to be certain that all instances of violence against civilians are identified correctly and accurately. Nevertheless, because the grid borders of PRIO are exogenously determined independent of the violence within, and there is thus no causal connection between whether violence occurred and the grid assignment, we can assume that any characteristics determining why this data is missing is spread evenly between the grids and will thus bias the data evenly. PRIO also aggregates the data on the control and matching variables I use in this study, which are described in depth in Section 4.5.

UCDP GED The Uppsalla Conflict Data Program’s Georeferenced Events Database⁸⁰ provides data on violence and conflict throughout the world. Specifically, the UCDP assembles the data with various sources and reliability checks.⁸¹ For example, the coding guidelines are thorough and provide layers of reliability and inter-coder checks to ensure accuracy. The

79. Tollefsen, Strand, and Buhaug 2012.

80. Sundberg and Melander 2013; Davies, Pettersson, and Öberg 2022.

81. See UCDP’s “Data Collection” section of their website: <https://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/methodology/>

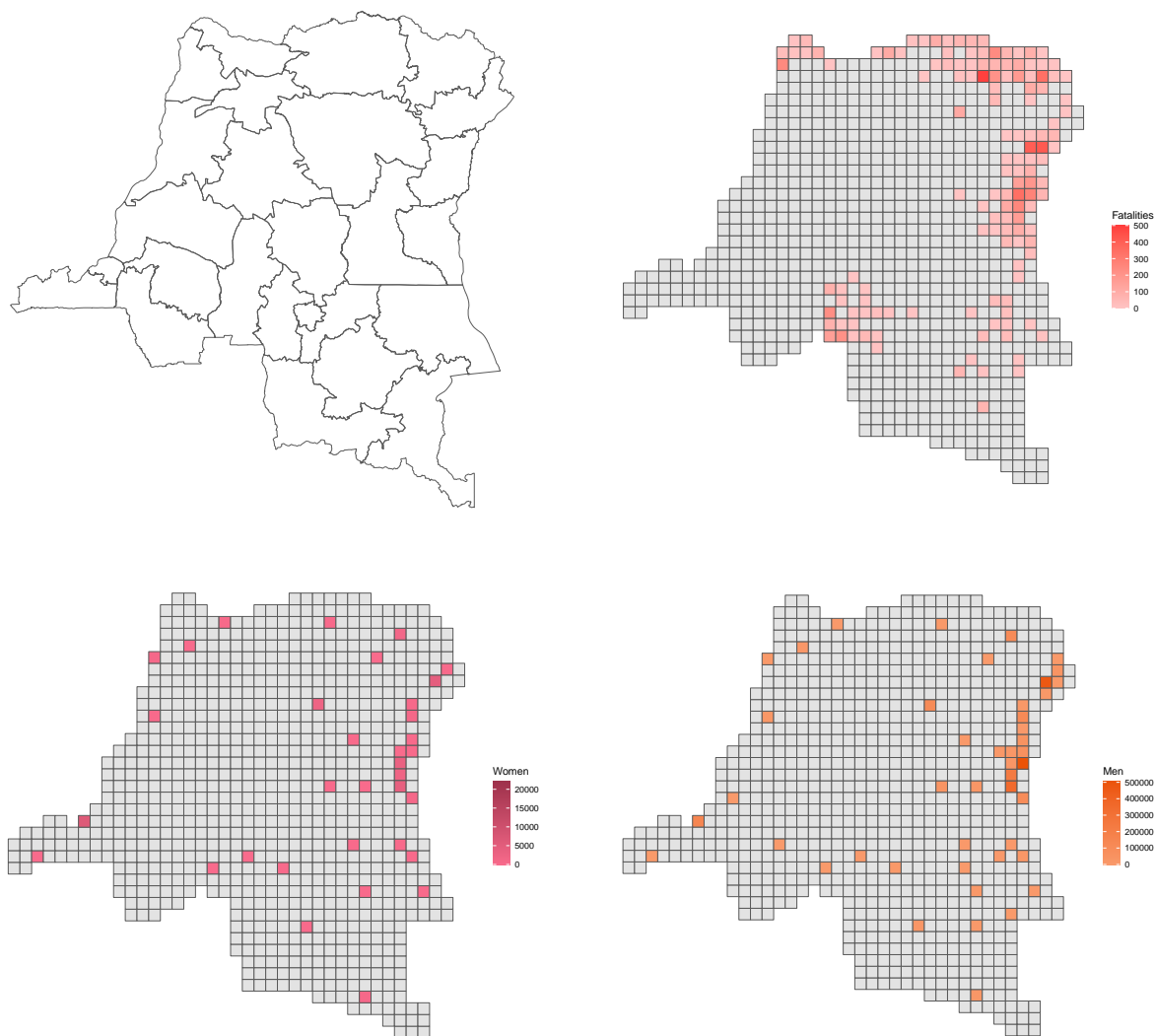


Figure 1: The Democratic Republic of the Congo at the 1st administrative level vs. prio grids, aggregated with violence and men/women peacekeepers.

GED measures violence against civilians as violent events taken against civilians that are not the result of collateral damage. In other words, the GED records events as intentional acts of violence. In this paper, I match the GED data to the RADPKO data to geolocate both the violence and peacekeeper locations and to answer my research question.

RADPKO The majority of the quantitative literature that analyzes peacekeeper effectiveness almost exclusively analyzes data at the country level. In using data aggregated at this level, researchers necessarily assume that the spatial distribution of peacekeepers and violence is evenly spread around the nations they deploy to, primarily because of a lack of subnational data. However, the Robust Africa Deployments for Peacekeeping Operations (RADPKO) provides information on UN peacekeeping operations throughout Central and Western Africa. Hunnicutt and Nomikos 2020 put together the RADPKO dataset because of an “empirical levels-of-analysis-problem and divergent sampling strategies”⁸² present in the existing quantitative literature. I use RADPKO because it focuses on the disaggregation of peacekeeping forces in various practical ways, especially relating to GEO-PKO.

RADPKO contains geospatially and temporally disaggregated data down to a more granular level than ever before available to researchers.⁸³ The data was constructed by going through archival maps available from the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO). RADPKO disaggregates deployed peacekeepers by gender and peacekeeper type,⁸⁴ thus allowing for a more thorough, subnational analysis.

Another significant benefit of using the RADPKO data is that it encompasses nearly the entire range of data for PKOs with a Chapter VII mandate. In this sense, each PKO in the RADPKO dataset has the authority and mandate to patrol locally and protect civilians. While not inherently the only type of peacekeeping mission that matters, the assumption that peacekeepers stop violence where it happens and the assumption that they respond to violence temporally require the PKO to have the ability to respond to local-level monthly

82. 646

83. Ibid.

84. E.g., military, police, observer.

violence without UNSC approval. Without a Chapter VII mandate, peacekeepers have their hands tied and thus have little incentive or ability to respond to violence.



Figure 2: Descriptive plots of the independent variables. Note the scale differences in the axes.

Even more importantly, the causal mechanism of the gendered effects of peacekeepers can only work at a local level. For women peacekeepers to build trust with civilians and thus allow peacekeepers to respond to violence more effectively, local interactions are required. Studying this mechanism at a national level would bias the results, so this study uses RADPKO for the subnational data available.

RADPKO covers PKO movement when deployed in the following countries/regions: Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, Abyei,⁸⁵ Chad, Mali, and the Central African Republic.

Finally, since this data covers all Chapter VII missions, the entire universe of cases is available to analyze. In other words, this sample is only lightly truncated⁸⁶ and gives a

85. While not an independent country, RADPKO classifies it as such due to the region having a unique peacekeeping mission deployed.

86. Because some missions are ongoing, and the fact that RADPKO only covers PKOs until 2018, the sample does not contain the total universe of cases but is close to it.

substantial number of observations to answer the research question and test the hypotheses proposed.

4.2 Various Models & Methods

To understand the gendered effects of peacekeepers on violence, I employ several models and robustness checks. I first note, however, the strong likelihood of the selection effects for peacekeepers. Several papers,⁸⁷ and most notably Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis show that peacekeepers explicitly deploy to so-called “hard-cases”⁸⁸ at both a national and sub-national level. Hence, research designs that do not take this into account are likely to bias peacekeepers as being less effective than they are in reality, as they select into areas with a higher likelihood of civilian violence than locations without peacekeepers.

In response to the nonrandom deployment of peacekeepers, Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis developed an instrumental variable that accounts for the selection of where peacekeepers deploy.⁸⁹ Ruggeri et al. propose an instrumental variable with potentially endogenous variables that, when interacted, are exogenous to the outcome while also explaining peacekeeper deployments. Advanced further by Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson, each paper proposes and uses an instrumental variable of *Total Peacekeepers in Africa* \times *Distance to Capital*. The interaction between the variables is fully exogenous of violence subnationally, while also explaining peacekeeper deployment; as the total supply of peacekeepers throughout Africa increases, it is easier to deploy subnationally. And, as the number of peacekeepers increases, it is also easier to deploy closer to a country’s capital. Thus, with this interaction, my models can predict the deployment of peacekeepers to estimate local violence outcomes through a 2-stage least squares (2SLS) regression.⁹⁰

87. Costalli 2014; Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013.

88. Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2018, 1008.

89. Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2017.

90. While Ruggeri et al. and Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson do not distinguish between the gender of peacekeepers, I use the same instrument but broken down by the gender of the peacekeepers, thus estimating *Total women Peacekeepers in Africa* \times *Distance to Capital*, and the reverse to estimate the deployment of men peacekeepers. Replicating Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson, I log the distance to capital in kilometers, and

To know whether an instrument is strong and thus whether it will provide reliable estimates, Stock, Wright, and Yogo devised an easily interpretable test of the proposed instrument.⁹¹ During the first stage of a 2-stage, least squares (2SLS) model, the F Statistic provides a strong indicator of the relative power of the instrument. Instruments with an F Statistic greater than 10 mean that the estimates of the instrument are reliable, while those below 10 generally are not. I show the first stage for each instrument used in my analysis in Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix B. The F Statistics for the instruments determining women and men peacekeeper deployments are well above the commonly accepted threshold of 10, meaning the instrument will provide reliable estimates in the second stage of the models.

To understand peacekeepers’ effect on violence against civilians, I employ several innovative methods in the causal inference literature. These methods represent significant advances over the prior peacekeeping effectiveness literature, with a specific focus on improving the accuracy of causal claims made on peacekeeping reduction of violence against civilians. For example, researchers often use matching between observations with bigger datasets to improve the leverage of causal claims. Matching entails examining individual observations that received the “treatment” (i.e., peacekeeper presence) and those that did not. Other papers in the literature use greedy matching with one-to-one replacement; however, propensity score matching has been shown to potentially increase bias and model dependence.⁹² These stakes are elevated because peacekeeping missions occur in environments that are not rich in data collection and availability, which further increases the chance of unobserved sorting occurring in the background that could bias the results. My analysis mitigates these issues by instead employing cardinality matching, which, among other benefits, improves the sensitivity test used to determine how biased the results are.⁹³ Matching sensitivity tests look “for the existence of unmeasured covariates that might bias the comparison between groups.”⁹⁴ Thus,

measure total peacekeepers in Africa in the tens of thousands.

91. Stock, Wright, and Yogo 2002.

92. King and Nielsen 2019.

93. Visconti and Zubizarreta 2018.

94. Carreras, Vera, and Visconti 2022: 12.

having an improved sensitivity test for potential missing data while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of propensity score matching means we can create a more balanced sample to run the analysis.

In this paper, I run two main sets of analyses. First, I use the RADPKO dataset, subsetting from the first time women peacekeepers deployed into any Chapter VII mission. The naive logit and 2SLS analyses have $\approx 300,000$ observations, and includes all grid-month observations of where no peacekeepers deployed, men peacekeepers deployed, women peacekeepers deployed, or men and women peacekeepers deployed. Next, I use a matched dataset of $\approx 13,000$ observations with a logit model. While the N for the second analysis is much smaller, it makes up for this size differential with increased model efficiency, and also more effectively tests whether peacekeeping units with more or less women deploy to similar areas and which units keep the peace.

For a more thorough description of which models are present in the paper, refer to the online appendix.

4.3 Dependent Variables

Broadly, this paper seeks to answer the question: which peacekeepers reduce violence against civilians? To understand what that means, let us first take a step back and examine how violence against civilians is measured. I quantify violence against civilians in two distinct ways, both as a binary and as a continuous outcome. I measure violence against civilians, coded in the UCDP's data as One-sided violence (OSV).

My dependent variable (DV) of *violence* is measured in two ways to capture as much variation in the data as possible. My analysis innovates on past research by measuring the total violence against civilians by rebels. Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson argue that expecting peacekeepers to reduce every instance of violence against civilians is too hard of a test; yet, I note that peacekeepers in these missions are given an explicit mandate to protect civilians and respond to local violence escalation. The Security Council tasks them to respond to

violence, so it is crucial to test whether they do that successfully by preventing outbreaks of violent events and deaths. Further, analyses of peacekeeper effectiveness at reducing violence should be hard tests. They must test what peacekeepers are mandated to do to understand how effective they are.

Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson measured violence against civilians through a dichotomous outcome “where five or more civilians were killed in a given grid cell in a given month.”⁹⁵ Measuring violence this way biases the data and conclusions in two distinct ways. First, I argue that the 5-death threshold used is too restrictive and not precise enough to measure violence against civilians accurately, at least in isolation. Ignoring smaller counts of violence bias the estimates if the variable of interest is the total number of deaths; this could result in undercounting the violence, which will bias the estimates higher and show a more substantive effect of peacekeeping without an identical undercounting of peacekeepers. Second, I reconceptualize how Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson operationalize “violence” against civilians. While civilian death is a relatively standard measure of one-sided violence (OSV) in the existing literature, it is not accurate to use death as the sole measure of political violence.

To be clear, Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson’s conceptions of how to measure political violence are useful; I use their dependent variable as a measure of the probability of violence when peacekeepers deploy. My argument instead focuses on the idea of testing different types of violent outcomes rather than a binary measure. Thus, I use their conception of political violence (a binary measure of whether >4 civilians died) and my own conception (a count outcome measure of the total number of civilian deaths).

As stated in the theory section, I expect the gendered effects of peacekeepers to have different effects on state actors versus rebel groups. Thus, my models disaggregate the violence by the actor committing it.

95. 112

4.4 Independent Variables

The treatments measured in this paper of gendered peacekeepers are measured based on the analysis used. I run several models, with each analysis broken down into four separate measures of the different dependent variables. When using a continuous measure of peacekeepers, I use the variables *Women PKs Deployed* and *Men PKs Deployed*. Each of these is coded from RADPKO’s data on the gender of peacekeepers deployed. Modeling after Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson, I measure peacekeepers deployed in the 100s, meaning 5 women peacekeepers in the dataset would be equal to 500 women peacekeepers in reality.

My second set of independent variables measure the gender balance of a peacekeeping unit. *Prop. Women PKs* measures the gendered proportion of women peacekeepers in the deployment. Since the proportion of women and the proportion of men is perfectly collinear throughout the data (e.g., they always vary identically) and *H2a* specifies the proportion of women, the models exclusively test the proportion of women as the treatment.

Finally, because the third set of models in this paper uses a matching approach based on the “treatment” of peacekeeper presence to match treated and untreated grids, I cannot use a continuous variable as the independent variable after matching. Thus, with the matched dataset of approximately 13,000 observations,⁹⁶ my analysis is run with the measure of treatment as *PK Presence* coded as a binary indicator of whether gender balanced or unbalanced units were present.

For that analysis, my main treatment variables are *Balanced PK Unit* and *Unbalanced PK Unit*. These treatments are dummy measures of the binary treatment variable of peacekeeper presence. *Balanced PK Units* are any measures of the treatment where there were more women present than the median number throughout the sample of deployed peacekeepers. In other words, any peacekeeper unit that had a greater percentage of women than the median 1.5% is coded as a one in *Balanced PK Units*, with the reverse being true for *Unbalanced PK Units*.

96. Divided equally between the treatment and control groups

4.5 Matching

While the usual definition of “treated” for a matched dataset is those exposed to the treatment, my models instead seek to understand the differences between areas with balanced and un-balanced peacekeeping units deployed. While the instrument described above addresses issues of selection effects between women and men peacekeepers, it cannot account for the inherent differences in the cells that peacekeepers deploy to. In other words, men and women peacekeepers could be deployed to locations that are distinct enough to make it harder or easier to keep the peace.

In line with that possibility, I match areas treated by peacekeeping units with more women to those treated by peacekeeping units with fewer women. In my model, I match on covariates that either play a selection in the treatment or that could be associated with the outcome (violence against civilians). Accordingly, I match for common covariates in the civil war and peacekeeping literature⁹⁷ and those that may plausibly affect the ability of peacekeepers to protect civilians from violence. Each of the following variables comes from PRIO, which regularly updates their data and is collected at the same level as the PRIO-grid data used for peacekeeper movement. Similarly, I account for population density under *Population Density*, as a greater number of civilians will result in more people for peacekeepers to protect. My regressions further control for the amount of mountainous terrain as a proxy of navigation difficulty (*Avg. Mountain*), the number of people per grid as a measure of the number of people peacekeepers protect (*Sum Population*), and finally the travel time to the nearest city as a proxy for road and infrastructure conditions that could slow mechanized peacekeeping units (*Travel Time to City*). All control variables are aggregated at the grid-month level, with missing values imputed with the average from all other instances of the variable, a common practice in the methods literature. My models control for the amount of urban area in a grid with *Urban* as a proxy for urban environments since peacekeepers will have more physical objects to navigate around and patrol in more

97. Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019.

dense urban areas. I also measure nighttime lights as a proxy of economic activity (*Avg. Night Lights*), an approach increasingly common in the civil war and comparative politics literature. Finally, I control for a lag of peacekeepers to help account for selection effects (*PK Lag*) and a lag of the dependent variable to account for autocorrelation (*Violence 6 Months Before*).

My analysis mitigates issues of propensity score matching by instead employing cardinality matching, which, among other benefits, improves the sensitivity test used to determine how biased the results are.⁹⁸ Matching sensitivity tests look “for the existence of unmeasured covariates that might bias the comparison between groups.”⁹⁹ Thus, having an improved sensitivity test for potential missing data while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of propensity score matching means we can create a more balanced sample to run the analysis.

In the models, control for the same variables used for matching, along with other variables that may potentially bias the outcome if not controlled for. For example, I also control for peacekeeper deployment lags, following Hultman et al. (2014) and Hinkkainen et al. (2021), since the deployment of peacekeepers one month can plausibly affect violence the next month.¹⁰⁰

5 Analysis/Discussion

Who keeps the peace more effectively, men or women peacekeepers? This paper suggests the answer is not a simple yes or no, but rather is one of nuance. In the following models, I find support for *H1* and *H2b*, but not *H2a*. *H1* posits that increasing the overall number of women peacekeepers will lead to fewer civilian deaths. Models one through four are illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. These figures illustrate the effects of increasing the total count of peacekeepers deployed by gender in peacekeeping missions.

Figure 3 and 4 compare the results of women and men peacekeepers on the outcomes

98. Visconti and Zubizarreta 2018.

99. Carreras, Vera, and Visconti 2022.

100. Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2014; Hinkkainen Elliott, Polo, and Eustacia Reyes 2021.

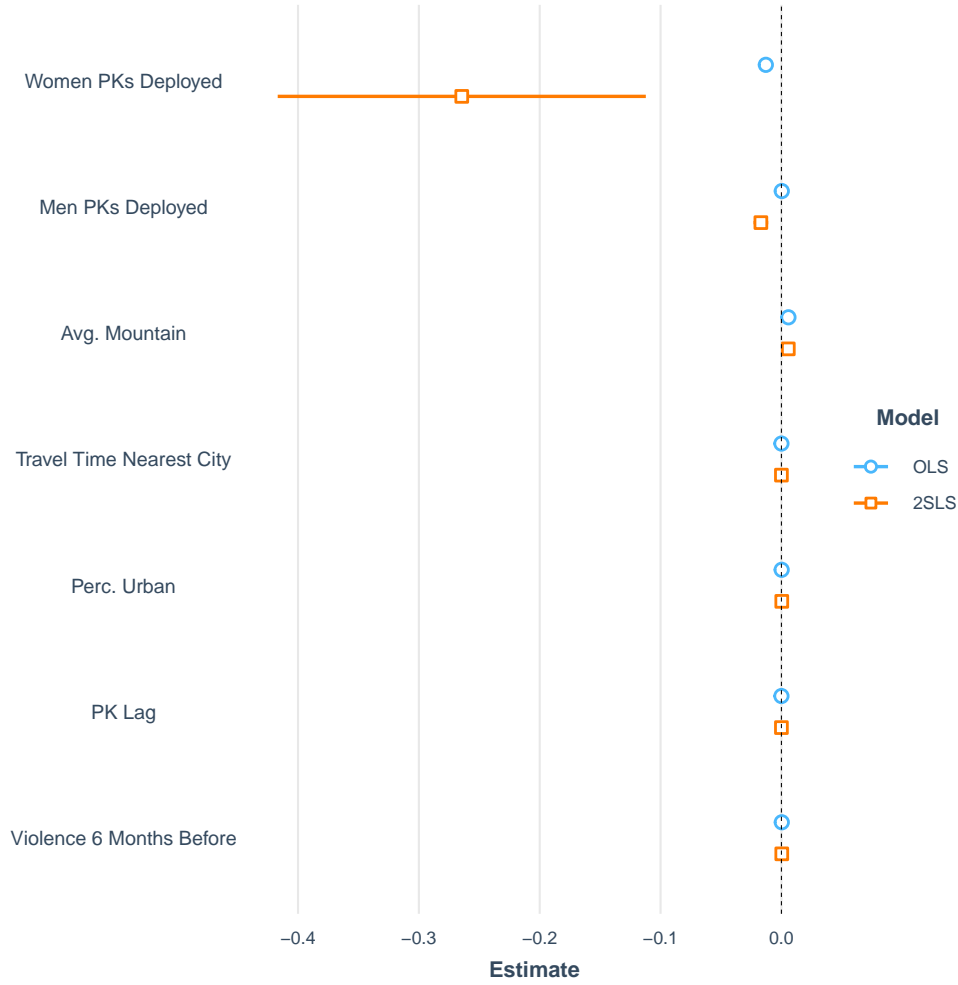


Figure 3: Binary outcome of civilian death from rebels regressed on a continuous measure of peacekeepers deployed by gender.

of the probability and count of civilian deaths, respectively. In all four models, the effect of peacekeepers on reducing violence against civilians grows *larger* when accounting for selection effects. With prior knowledge that peacekeepers select into “hard-cases,”¹⁰¹ this change in estimates provides suggests that the instrument is accurately accounting for where peacekeepers select into.

Moreover, considering women peacekeepers are sent to easier cases,¹⁰² the converse is thus true: men peacekeepers are sent into tougher cases. The OLS models that do not account for selection effects suggest that men peacekeepers’ arrival is associated with an increase

101. Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2018, 1008.

102. Karim and Beardsley 2013.



Figure 4: Count outcome of civilian death from rebels regressed on a continuous measure of peacekeepers deployed by gender.

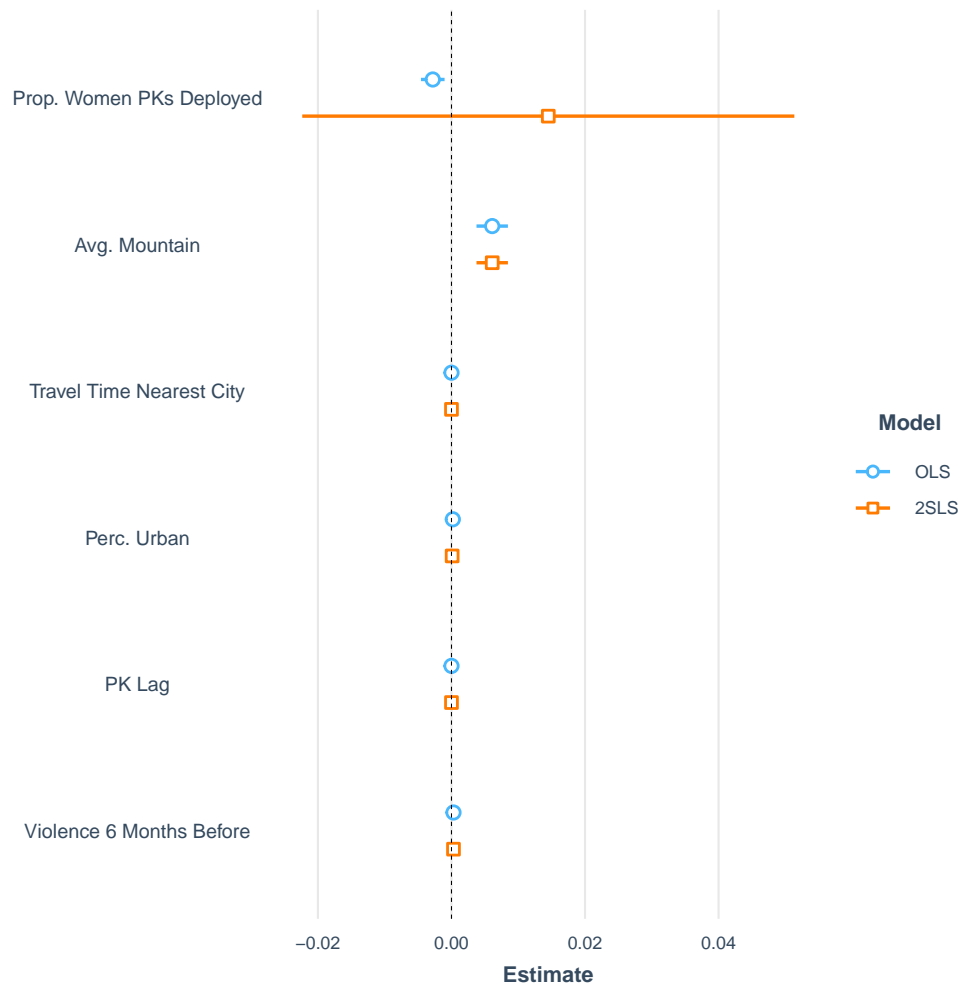


Figure 5: Binary outcome of civilian death from rebels regressed on the proportional measure of women peacekeepers deployed.

in the amount and likelihood of violence against civilians by rebel groups. With little a priori reason for why men peacekeepers would increase rebel violence against civilians, the estimate of interest here is instead that of the 2SLS model. With the instrument predicting the deployment location and number of peacekeepers subnationally, men peacekeepers are associated with an overall decrease in the amount of violence, although that decrease is substantially smaller than the estimate for women peacekeepers. In fact, the instrumented estimates suggest that women peacekeepers are more than fifteen times more effective than their counterparts. An increase in one hundred men peacekeepers is associated with a 1.7% decrease in the probability of rebel violence against civilians, while the same increase in women peacekeepers is associated with a 26.5% decrease in the same probability. While I find strong evidence for *H1*, the next section addresses the conflicting results of *H2a* and *H2b*.

Below, I first address the models on the proportional gender representation effects, and then the models on the presence of gender-balanced and unbalanced units.

H2a proposes that increasing the proportion of women peacekeepers will lead to more trust of the local population given to peacekeepers, thus giving the units an improved chance of stopping rebel violence. However, the models below are split in their results and suggest that the effects of the proportion by gender are instead sensitive to selection effects. In other words, the OLS models that may suffer from bias of the nonrandom deployment of peacekeepers show that women peacekeepers decrease violence. While previous models mostly indicated that the only difference in deployment was the size of the effect by gender, these models provide evidence that increasing the proportion of women peacekeepers deployed is not distinguishable from zero. These results hold constant across the various models using proportional representation as the treatment and signify that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

H2b, on the other hand, asserts that gender-balanced peacekeeping units will, on average, reduce violence more than units with fewer women than the median. *H2a* and *H2b* both



Figure 6: Binary outcome of civilian death from rebels regressed on the proportional measure of men peacekeepers deployed.

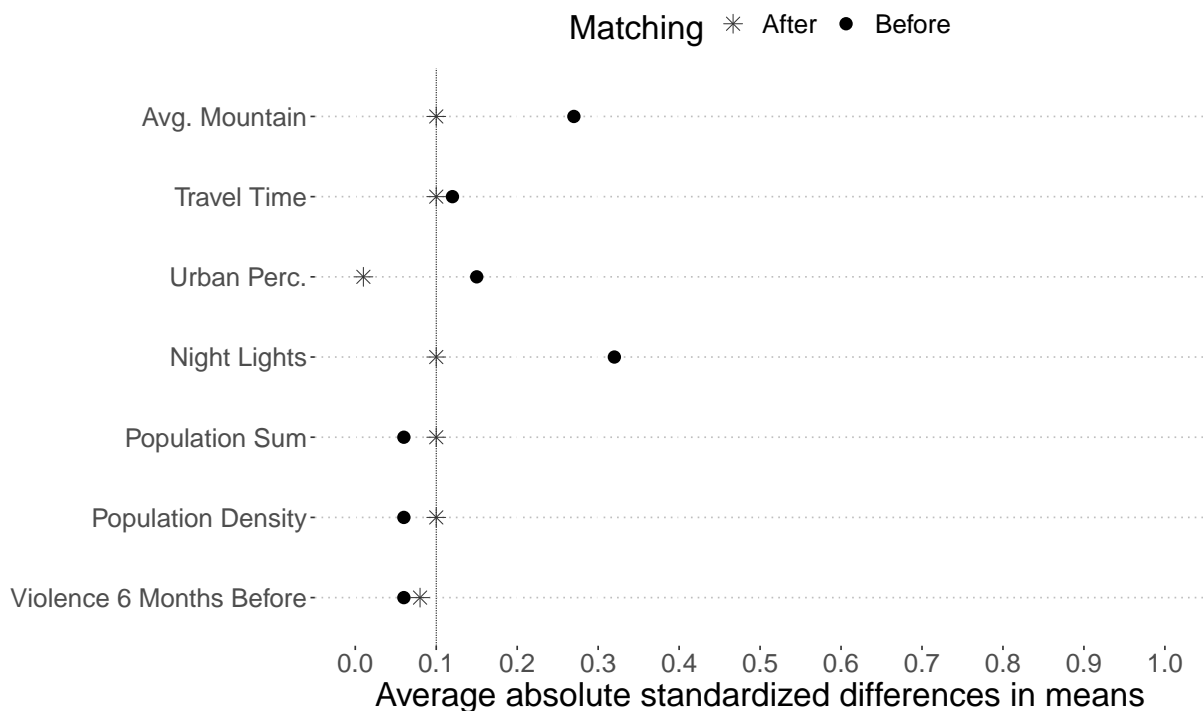


Figure 7: Loveplot of the standardized differences before and after matching.

test similar ideas, i.e., that increasing the proportion of women in a peacekeeping unit will make it more effective, but in different ways. While accounting for selection effects with the instrument in prior models can lead to more reliable estimates, this accounting cannot address the fundamentally different locations that these units deploy to. It is still possible that women peacekeepers and men peacekeepers deploy to different areas that may otherwise bias the estimates of peacekeeping effectiveness. Thus, to account for the different locales that women and men peacekeepers are deployed to, I employ cardinality matching.¹⁰³

For this reason, the final models in the paper use cardinality matching to address these potential pitfalls. Instead of comparing three possible outcomes (untreated, treated by unbalanced unit, treated by balanced unit), I compare all locations “treated” by balanced units to those locations “treated” by unbalanced units. The results of these models can be found in Figures 8 and 9.

In Figure 7, I show the results of my cardinality matching via Loveplots. Matching is

103. Visconti and Zubizarreta 2018.

useful when units were unlikely to receive the same treatment based on observed covariates, such as peacekeeping deployments. Moreover, matching reduces model dependence and helps estimates increase in reliability. My models match gender “balanced” peacekeeping treatments with so-called “unbalanced” units. To define gender-balanced units, I give each observation a proportion of how many women are in the unit relative to the total unit size. A unit with 10 peacekeepers of which 4 were women would be scored as 0.4. All peacekeeping units in which the proportion of women was higher than the median is marked as gender-balanced, whereas those at or below the median threshold are marked as unbalanced.¹⁰⁴

While prior models utilize a 2SLS approach, 2SLS can potentially bias the estimates, as it relies on the same assumptions as OLS models, which is potentially problematic with count data that is overdispersed. Beyond using matching to test *H2b*, I also employ a negative binomial logit model as another robustness check against the 2SLS models.

Figure 9 presents the main analysis for the matched dataset. Broadly speaking, when gender-balanced peacekeeping units were deployed (the “control” unit is gender-unbalanced peacekeeping deployments), that unit was substantially more likely to prevent rebel violence than their unbalanced counterparts. Transformed into odds ratios, these models show that peacekeeping deployments of units with more women decrease the likelihood of violence against civilians by rebel groups.

When the total count of women peacekeepers is compared against the total count of men peacekeepers or no peacekeepers, women peacekeepers provide the “biggest bang for the buck,” as they lead to less violence than the other two alternatives. Men peacekeepers, on the other hand, do prevent more violence than if no peacekeepers deployed, and so are preferable to the alternative of no deployment. When gender-balanced and gender-unbalanced peacekeeping units are compared and matched alongside observed covariates in a logit model, these results hold and show that peacekeepers have a substantial effect on

104. The median sits at around 0.6%, with this number close to zero due to peacekeeping’s incredibly low rate of women participation historically. While this number is incredibly small, this measure of peacekeeping is necessary, especially because matching and subsequent analyses must be done with a binary measure of the treatment. Thus, I dichotomize women and men peacekeeping deployments into this classification.

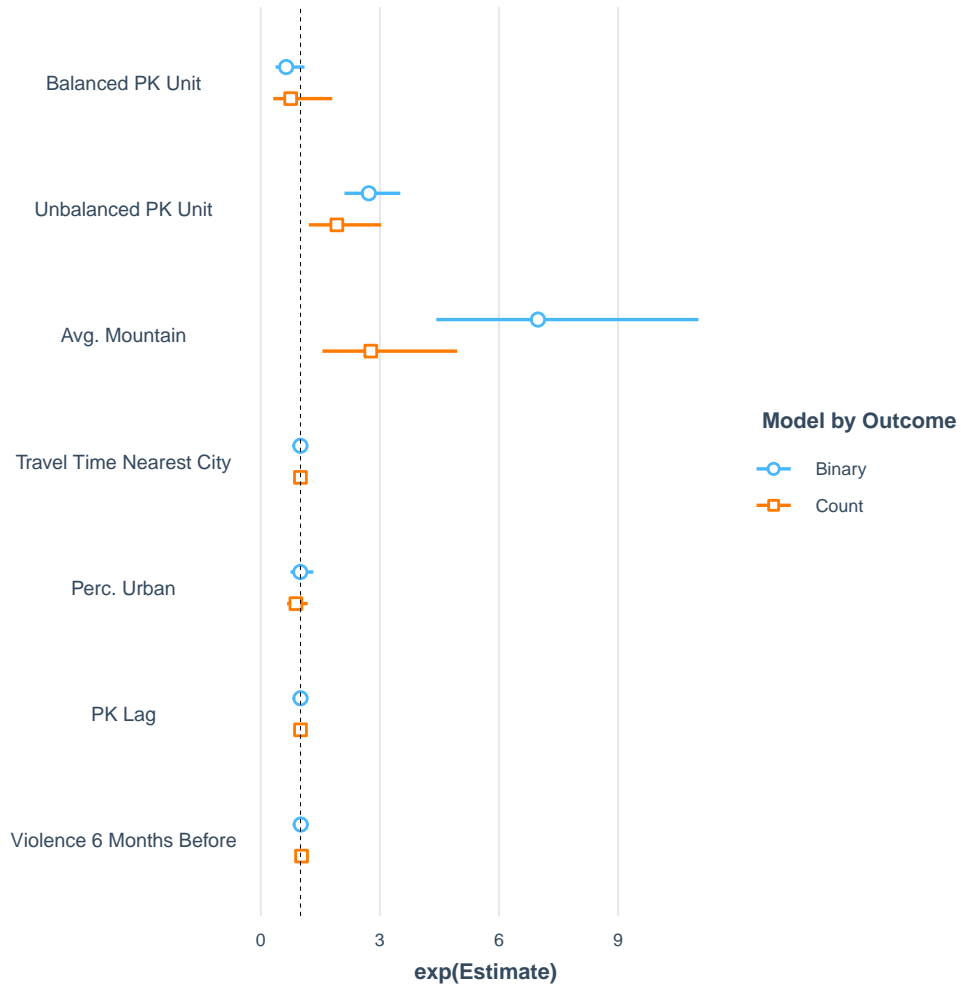


Figure 8: Odds ratios on the risk of civilian deaths; logit models, unmatched data.

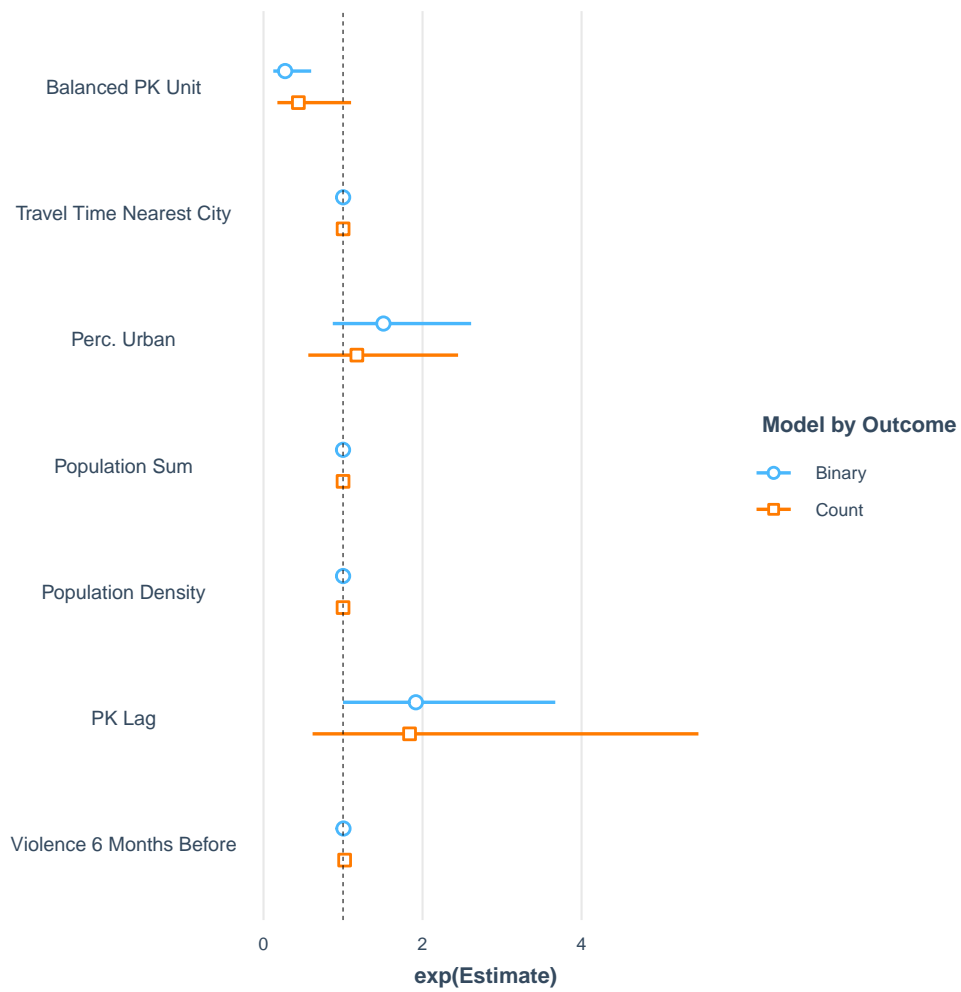


Figure 9: Odds ratios on the risk of civilian deaths; logit models, matched data.

reducing violence against civilians by rebel actors.

For the tables associated with the figures in this section, please refer to the online Appendix.

6 Conclusion

What effect do women peacekeepers have on political violence by rebel groups? Existing peacekeeping effectiveness research is agnostic as to whether there are gendered effects of peacekeepers; moreover, the existing qualitative research on gender and peacekeepers does not engage with the various literature on peacekeeping effectiveness. In this paper, I have attempted to unify the relevant theoretical literature in both fields into a framework of how women peacekeepers drive local trust in PKOs that then leads to more intelligence and thus greater operational effectiveness. I conclude that while men peacekeepers prevent violence at a local level, women peacekeepers have a substantially larger effect on reducing rebel violence against civilians.

Using the UCDP GED's violence data matched to RADPKO's peacekeeping data, I run three sets of analyses to understand the gendered effects of peacekeepers. My first analysis uses an instrumental variable to address selection effects and potential bias among the deployment of women and men peacekeepers. The second sets of models use a similar analysis to determine the effect of the proportion of women peacekeepers. Finally, the third analysis uses optimal matching to reduce model dependency and bias among locations women and men peacekeepers deployed to. Increasing the absolute number of women peacekeepers deployed has a disproportionately large effect on reducing violence compared to a similar increase in men peacekeepers. While the models do not support the hypothesis that increasing the proportion of women is important, the proportional effect of gender may have more to do with a minimum threshold, as the third set of models provide evidence that gender balanced units are more effective than gender unbalanced units.

The conclusions in this paper have implications for the future of UN peacekeeping operations. While affirming existing theories on why peacekeepers keep the peace, this paper also concludes that women peacekeepers are instrumental in reducing violence at even greater levels. This provides a clear path forward for troop-contributing countries and for UN decision-makers who decide where to send troops. The knowledge that women peacekeepers provide such a substantial effect on reducing rebel political violence should affect policy-makers and the UN as well. Institutions and states seeking to increase women’s contributions to peacekeeping missions to further these goals should consider supporting existing programs such as Canada’s Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations¹⁰⁵ and the Gender and Security Sector Lab at Cornell University.¹⁰⁶

This research does have limitations. For example, the sample size of women’s deployment in peacekeeping operations is noticeably smaller than men’s deployment due to the overall number of troops of each gender. With the smaller sample of women in the analyses, the confidence intervals and standard errors are much less precise than estimates of men peacekeepers. Moreover, I note that, in my sample, women peacekeepers *never* appear without men peacekeeper counterparts deployed alongside them in the same grid-month observation, while men peacekeepers often deploy without women peacekeepers. This suggests that the strong effects of women peacekeepers may be contingent upon their co-deployment with men peacekeepers. While outside the scope of this paper, future research should examine the interactive effects between women and men peacekeepers both theoretically and empirically.

Importantly, I do not argue that the key to making peacekeepers more effective is the approach of “add women and stir.” Normatively speaking, the burden of illicit activities by men peacekeepers should not fall on women. If the UN and troop-contributing countries want to increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations by adding women, they must also address men peacekeepers and their actions when women are not present. Moreover,

105. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/elsie_initiative-initiative_elsie.aspx?lang=eng

106. <https://www.sabrinamkarim.com/gsslab>

within their home security institutions all the way to the UN, women face several barriers to their participation in peacekeeping operations. From issues of discrimination stemming from patriarchal attitudes to the unwillingness of commanders to send women peacekeepers to difficult situations where they may nonetheless affect change, women are both pushed away and actively removed from participating and thus making those connections with locals. Despite these bevy of barriers, among others, I find that women peacekeepers are a substantial part of effectively keeping the peace, as their presence increases the number of civilians saved.

Peacekeeping works. With this research, I provide a novel causal identification of the gendered effects of peacekeepers. By interacting with civilians, women peacekeepers can increase trust and improve their operational effectiveness, saving lives and protecting civilians.

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Appendix

A Models

In this paper, I run and analyze twelve different models to test the three hypotheses. Below, I list each of the models ran and group them by the hypothesis they test. As stated in the manuscript, each model is calculated with robust standard errors clustered at the grid-cell level.

- *H1: Rebel violence against civilians should decrease as the number of women peacekeepers increases.*
 - **M1:** Method - OLS; DV - Binary (<4 deaths); IV - Continuous measure of women and men peacekeepers.
 - **M2:** Method - OLS; DV - Count; IV - Continuous measure of women and men peacekeepers.
 - **M3:** Method - 2SLS; DV - Binary (<4 deaths); IV - Continuous measure of women and men peacekeepers.
 - **M4:** Method - 2SLS; DV - Count; IV - Continuous measure of women and men peacekeepers.
- *H2a: Rebel violence against civilians should decrease as the proportion of women peacekeepers increases.*
 - **M5:** Method - OLS; DV - Binary (<4 deaths); IV - Proportional measure of women peacekeepers.
 - **M6:** Method - OLS; DV - Count; IV - Proportional measure of women peacekeepers.
 - **M7:** Method - 2SLS; DV - Binary (<4 deaths); IV - Proportional measure of women peacekeepers.

- **M8:** Method - 2SLS; DV - Count; IV - Proportional measure of women peacekeepers.
- *H2b: When a gender-balanced peacekeeping unit is present, there will be less rebel violence than if an unbalanced peacekeeping unit were present.*
 - **M9:** Method - Logit; DV - Binary (<4 deaths); IV - Gender Balanced and Unbalanced units; Data - unmatched.
 - **M10:** Method - Logit; DV - Count; IV - Gender Balanced and Unbalanced units; Data - unmatched.
 - **M11:** Method - Logit; DV - Binary (<4 deaths); IV - Gender Balanced and Unbalanced units; Data - matched.
 - **M12:** Method - Logit; DV - Count; IV - Gender Balanced and Unbalanced units; Data - matched.

B Instrumental Variable

In this section, I show the first stage results to focus on the F-Statistic (with other coefficients and statistics omitted), which indicates each of the instruments are a strong predictor of their corresponding treatment.

Table 1: 1st Stage of Count Instrument

	Women Deployed	Men Deployed
	Model 1	Model 2
Women in Africa x Distance to Capital	0.005*** (0.0002)	
Men in Africa x Distance to Capital		-0.010*** (0.0005)
F Statistic (df = 1; 317681)	491.296***	435.832***

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 2: 1st Stage of Prop. Instrument

	Women Deployed	Men Deployed
	Model 1	Model 2
Prop. Women in Africa x Distance to Capital	0.059*** (0.002)	
Prop. Men in Africa x Distance to Capital		-0.375*** (0.005)
F Statistic (df = 1; 317681)	860.379***	5825.942***

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

C Results Tables

See below for the models testing each of the hypotheses explicated in the main paper and in Section A of this appendix. Each of the models in the subsequent tables correspond with the 1 and their numbers in Section A, e.g., Model 1 of Table 4 refers to Model 5 of Section A.

Table 3: Models Testing Hypothesis 1

	OLS		2SLS	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Women PKs Deployed	−0.013*** (0.002)	−0.270*** (0.048)	−0.264*** (0.078)	−7.262** (3.049)
Men PKs Deployed	0.0003** (0.0001)	0.008** (0.004)	−0.017*** (0.003)	−0.474*** (0.125)
Avg. Mountain	0.006*** (0.001)	0.091*** (0.029)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.088*** (0.030)
Travel Time Nearest City	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Perc. Urban	0.0002 (0.0005)	0.010 (0.026)	0.0003 (0.0005)	0.016 (0.026)
PK Lag	0.000* (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Violence 6 Months Before	0.0003*** (0.000)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.0003*** (0.000)	0.008*** (0.001)
Constant	0.001*** (0.0002)	0.040*** (0.006)	0.009*** (0.002)	0.251*** (0.068)

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 4: Models Testing Hypothesis 2

	OLS		2SLS	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Prop. Women PKs Deployed	−0.003*** (0.001)	−0.063*** (0.020)	0.015 (0.019)	0.542 (0.681)
Avg. Mountain	0.006*** (0.001)	0.096*** (0.029)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.099*** (0.029)
Travel Time Nearest City	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Perc. Urban	0.0002 (0.0005)	0.011 (0.026)	0.0001 (0.0005)	0.009 (0.026)
PK Lag	0.000** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)
Violence 6 Months Before	0.0003*** (0.000)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.0003*** (0.000)	0.008*** (0.001)
Constant	0.001*** (0.0002)	0.041*** (0.006)	0.001*** (0.0004)	0.032** (0.013)

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 5: Models Testing Hypothesis 3

	Logit			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Balanced PK Unit	−0.449 (0.278)	−0.285 (0.445)	−1.305*** (0.404)	−0.825* (0.470)
Unbalanced PK Unit	1.001*** (0.130)	0.650*** (0.234)		
Avg. Mountain	1.943*** (0.233)	1.019*** (0.296)	2.288*** (0.389)	0.830 (0.524)
Travel Time Nearest City	−0.002*** (0.0003)	−0.002*** (0.0004)	0.001** (0.0005)	0.001 (0.001)
Perc. Urban	−0.006 (0.146)	−0.123 (0.148)	0.411 (0.280)	0.160 (0.375)
Night Lights			−26.498** (12.169)	−7.966 (11.726)
Population Sum			0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Population Density			0.001 (0.004)	0.0001 (0.003)
PK Lag	0.0001 (0.0001)	0.0002** (0.0001)	0.650** (0.332)	0.608 (0.557)
Violence 6 Months Before	0.006*** (0.0002)	0.025*** (0.0003)	0.005*** (0.0005)	0.020*** (0.001)
Constant	−5.866*** (0.142)	−2.638*** (0.232)	−5.289*** (0.778)	−2.770*** (1.036)

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1