

Gender Empowerment and United Nations Peacebuilding*

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Previous studies have suggested that societies where women have higher social and economic status and greater political representation are less likely to become involved in conflict. In this article, the author argues that the prospects for successful post-conflict peacebuilding under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) are generally better in societies where women have greater levels of empowerment. Women's status in a society reflects the existence of multiple social networks and domestic capacity not captured by purely economic measures of development such as GDP per capita. In societies where women have relatively higher status, women have more opportunities to express a voice in the peacemaking process and to elicit broader domestic participation in externally led peacekeeping operations. This higher level of participation in turn implies that UN Peacekeeping operations can tap into great social capital and have better prospects for success. An empirical analysis of post-conflict cases with a high risk of conflict recurrence shows that UN peacekeeping operations have been significantly more effective in societies in which women have relatively higher status. By contrast, UN peacekeeping operations in countries where women have comparatively lower social status are much less likely to succeed.

Introduction

Research on post-conflict settlement emphasizes how societies must overcome the danger of sliding back into violence (see e.g. Doyle & Sambanis, 2000; Walter, 2002). The ability to maintain a stable peace hinges on a country's abilities to construct well-functioning political institutions and vibrant civil society. In particular, Doyle & Sambanis (2000) have found that peacekeeping operations tend to be more successful in fostering peace in societies that are able to democratize, and where higher levels of economic development enhance the strength of institutions and decrease scarcity as a source of conflict.

In this article, I extend work on the social requisites of peacebuilding by focusing on the relationship between female empowerment and United Nations (UN) driven peacebuilding operations. Research on gender and development has shown that providing basic rights and entitlements to women can have large positive effects on economic development (Barro, 1997; Sen, 1999; Byrne, 1995, 1996). Moreover, researchers have shown that female empowerment reflects a dimension of domestic capacity and development that is distinct from, and partly independent of, economic development as per capita income (see Hughes, 2001; Caprioli, 2003).¹

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¹ Caprioli (2000) argued that societies that afford women greater equality and greater political representation are less likely to become involved in violent conflict with other states, while Melander (2005a) argued that societies with greater equality tend to have greater protection of human rights.

I argue that a society where women do comparatively better will have improved prospects for successful peacebuilding operations under the auspices of the UN, because it is easier for women to express a voice in the peacemaking process and to elicit broader domestic participation. Operations under the UN have many advantages that can help strengthen the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts, but the promise of these efforts will depend on a society's domestic capacity and social capital. I examine empirically how the relative status of women can enhance the effectiveness of UN peacemaking operations in a comparative analysis of post-conflict situations with a high risk of conflict recurrence after 1945.

My findings suggest that the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations is increased by the relative status of women: whereas United Nations peacekeeping has good prospects for success in countries where the status of women is comparatively high relative to men prior to the conflict, operations in states where women have poor social standing relative to men are much more likely to fail.

United Nations and Peacebuilding

Traditional UN peacekeeping operations aimed at securing that neither party in a conflict situation would violate a political agreement and refrain from the use of direct violence (Goulding, 1993). The end of the Cold War, however, brought a fivefold increase in UN peacekeeping operations and the evolution of traditional peacekeeping operations into more comprehensive peacebuilding missions. Diminished strategic competition between the major powers in the 1990s stimulated demands for stronger human rights protection in international law and calls for limits to state sovereignty. Similarly, a new neo-liberal internationalism gained ground, especially among practitioners in international relations, emphasizing

the connection among underdevelopment, lack of democratic institutions, and human rights violations (Duffield, 2001). Whereas states have traditionally intervened in other states' domestic affairs primarily to defend their strategic interests, humanitarian concerns, such as preventing human suffering in severe civil wars, have increasingly become cited as a rationale for involvement in other states, as witnessed by interventions in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia. Thus, protecting human rights and fostering political settlements have increasingly become central objectives in peacekeeping operations. The concept of peacebuilding, which is the main concern in this article, is incorporated into second- and third-generation peacekeeping operations (PKOs) (Goulding, 1993). Second- and third-generation PKOs seek to assist the implementation of agreements and settlements and/or engage in peace enforcement to protect humanitarian concerns, which is a radical departure from the initial neutral and limited scope of first generation PKOs. Examples of second- and third-generation peacebuilding operations include the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, overseeing the withdrawal of South Africa, the UN Operation (ONUMOZ) in Mozambique, focusing on de-mining and policing, and the UN Observer Mission (ONUSAL) in El Salvador, which oversaw implementation of the peace agreement, reform of the legal system, and the construction of a new civilian police force. As a result of this turn to peacebuilding, UN missions have become more comprehensive, while long-established forms of conflict management and security have become inadequate responses at best and obsolete at worst (Martin & Mayer-Rieckh, 2005).

Progress and advances in conflict resolution methodology and theory offer new tools and perspectives on UN missions.

Yet, peacebuilding has experienced a steep learning curve, as reflected in the many challenges and disappointments seen from Bosnia and Kosovo, to East Timor, and more recently, Sierra Leone. Many scholars and observers have raised criticisms about the limited success of UN missions, and many of the academic researchers on UN operations, such as Diehl, Reifschneider & Hensel (1996) and Paris (1997), have expressed concerns over whether UN operations can be realistically expected to meet the many expectations raised and foster durable and stable peace. By contrast, Doyle & Sambanis (2000) examine the sources of variation across observations to understand under what conditions peacebuilding can lead to a durable and stable peace. They reach much more optimistic conclusions regarding the prospects for successful peacebuilding than has previous research.

Doyle & Sambanis examine how external support through peacekeeping operations can substitute for lacking domestic capacity in the wake of conflicts and ensure successful peacebuilding. They argue that UN peacekeeping operations have better prospects for success in cases where the goal is to rebuild the war-torn societies after a first settlement has been achieved (high-order missions), rather than in cases where the principal objective is to bring an end to violence (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000). Overcoming conflict requires not just an end to direct violence: economic regeneration and successful reintegration of combatants into political and civilian life is needed to decrease the risk that violence will recur in the long run. Countries engulfed in intrastate violence often enter an identifiable *conflict trap*. Communal violence further undermines social and economic development, reproducing the vicious cycle of violence, as the underlying conditions for the continuation of conflict remain intact (Collier et al., 2003). Hence, state capacity and the ability to foster development

along with security are key ingredients for successful peacebuilding.

Although much of the work on peacebuilding focuses on a top-down approach, or the ability of governments, local participation in peacebuilding efforts is also essential for the prospects for success (Gizelis & Kosek, 2005). Members of communities in post-conflict societies will make a long-term effort to support peacebuilding only if they perceive some prospects for a better future and actually believe that reconstruction will be beneficial in the long run. Local participation and support are particularly relevant in conflicts where large segments of local communities have been actively involved in the conflict. Without this process of local participation, post-conflict reconstruction and social transformation is unlikely to succeed, and violence is extremely likely to recur (Belloni, 2001; Pouligny, 1999).

In post-conflict situations where societies lack the required domestic capacity to ensure post-conflict recovery, international actors can help provide the required resources and perform vital roles. Most particular, by assuming monitoring and enforcing tasks, the UN can improve the capacity of local communities to establish viable post-conflict institutions. Doyle & Sambanis (2000) argue and empirically show that second- and third-generation PKOs can substantially help to address peacebuilding objectives and ensure stable peace, compared with purely domestic alternatives and international involvement without the UN.

What accounts for the greater effectiveness of the UN operations relative to other international interventions? An integrative approach that targets communal leadership and emphasizes cultural narratives that encourage reconciliation rather than hostility can complement official negotiations and mediation as well as help achieve conflict resolution in intrastate conflicts. UN officials have slowly come to the realization that

UN operations need to use an integrative approach, in order to assist countries in the transition from conflict to lasting peace. Integrated operations can take several years and require clearly defined goals and coordination of both external organizations and a wide range of domestic actors, including governments, civil society, and regional organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. During an integrated mission, the UN will benefit from societies that have the potential for higher social capital, the ability to sustain social networks that reintegrate former combatants into society, and peacebuilding policies to solidify societal cohesion. Integrated UN missions were first used with some degree of success in Kosovo in 1999 (Eide et al., 2005; Chandler, 2001).

Given the need to incorporate local communities for a peacebuilding process to succeed, the UN is likely to be the best organization to achieve this goal. On the one hand, the UN can have high legitimacy as the closest thing that the international community has to a 'representative' global IGO. In a more practical manner, UN missions can be comprehensive by utilizing a plethora of resources across several countries and avoid being seen as biased by enlisting a large number of countries rather than relying on a single state or small set of countries. This multi-lateral component contrasts with unilateral or narrowly bilateral operations where major global or regional country(ies) dominate(s) the process. In these cases, security concerns might often prevail at the expense of policies to incorporate the local population (Regan, 2002). Thus, the UN can maintain a certain degree of legitimacy, which is essential for successful and effective peacebuilding.

Women and Peacebuilding

If one accepts the premise that peacebuilding requires domestic institutions to handle reconstruction and that UN operations may

substitute for low domestic capacity, why should one expect women to be important for the peacebuilding process? Several field studies of intrastate wars identify women as active social and economic agents to be reckoned with (Sørensen, 1998; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). Equally important is their participation in the peacebuilding process. The role that women might play in providing peace and assisting in post-conflict reconstruction has received little attention in systematic research, even though women are known to participate actively in peace movements and reconciliation processes in conflicts and post-conflict scenarios (see Pampell, 2002). The lack of attention to women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction stems to a large extent from the emphasis on security that has dominated much of the existing thinking on humanitarian operations, whereas civil society and social networks are generally not accorded much relevance.

Despite variation in how women experience intrastate violence, they often organize in grassroots activities either to end intrastate violence or facilitate the reconstruction process by establishing nation-wide NGOs. Unfortunately, many of these activities fall beneath the radars of the UN and other IGOs that fail to incorporate women's issues or organizations in the reconstruction process. This lack of understanding of women in the reconstruction process is partly due to the paucity of systematic studies on how women can impact the ending of an intrastate conflict (see Caprioli, 2003), despite large collections of interesting anecdotes and case studies on women and intrastate conflict (Sørensen, 1998; Byrne, Marcus & Stevens, 1995).

Although as of yet, there has been relatively little research on women and civil war, there is a substantial literature suggesting a link between female empowerment and lower rates of participation in interstate conflict (Caprioli, 2005; Melander, 2005b). Two

different theoretical arguments have been developed to account for the link between women and peace. The first presumes that women have a pacifist orientation and an aversion to violence, owing to their reproductive roles and their biological predispositions (see Miller, 1988; Ruddick, 1989; Togeby, 1994; Mueller, 1973, 1994; Harrington, 1992; Tickner, 1992; Caprioli, 2000; Daly, 1984; Elshtain, 1987). Arguments that attribute peaceful characteristics to women imply that countries where women have a critical presence and role in government will also tend to be more peaceful. A second argument holds that attitudinal and behavioral differences between men and women result from social conditioning into stereotypical gender roles (see Goldstein, 2001). Thus, gender roles are socially constructed; men and boys assume dominant roles that predispose toward warlike behavior, while women and girls are more subordinate and therefore more likely to display greater empathy in conflicts (Melander, 2005b: 698). Constructivist arguments suggest that changes from more hierarchical gender roles towards more egalitarian ones are further likely to signify changes in social norms as well. This adaptation in turn implies that societies where gender roles are more equal are associated with lower levels of conflict (Melander, 2005b: 698).

Expanding on the reasoning in the latter argument, I argue that societies in which gender roles are relatively more equal should also have higher domestic capacity, in ways that may not be captured by purely economic measures of development such as GDP per capita. Societies with relatively higher domestic capacities have greater prospects for successful peacebuilding, both because they have more resources and because it will be easier for international organizations and other external actors to use pre-existing social structures and assist them. Thus, I argue that women are relevant in ensuring

peacebuilding success, since a society where women have relatively higher status will have a higher level of domestic capacity and social capital. In these instances, society has at least the potential to use the abilities and skills of a greater share of population in the peacebuilding effort.

My argument does not assume that more equal societies are more peaceful – indeed, higher social capital and domestic capacity could also make countries or communities more able to organize collective violence. My argument extends the logic of the Doyle & Sambanis approach to the relationship between domestic and external capacity: whereas they look only at economic income and democracy, I look at an additional source of variation in domestic and social capital that can have a strong impact on the chances that peacebuilding operations will succeed.

The concept of development not only includes economic wealth and improved economic performance, but often encompasses many other dimensions such as health, education, and inequality or distribution. Undoubtedly, many indicators of development and governance are correlated and tend to go together in clear functional relationships. As such, one might ask whether women's social status does not simply reflect a common form of economic development. Hughes (2001: 441, 451) shows that although many dimensions of social and economic development are very tightly coupled, some aspects of social transformation, such as democratization, income distribution, and women's status, do not follow a linear path in the wake of standard measures of economic development such as GDP per capita. Indeed, improvements along these dimensions can often substantially lag behind economic growth and also appear to be driven by forces that are partly separate from income or wealth in and of itself. In particular, women's empowerment seems to be a separate dimension of social development that cannot

fully be accounted for by economic or even political factors alone (see Byrne, 1995).

Whereas greater GDP per capita and institutional strength in terms of greater political democracy might increase the overall domestic capacity, economists have shown that female empowerment can also be a very important influence on likely development and growth trajectories (Sen, 1999). For example, improving female schooling rates and employment opportunities for women has been shown to have direct and immediate effects on decreasing both fertility rates and infant mortality rates (see Arbetman & Kugler, 1997). If female status is a dimension of domestic capacity partly separate from other economic and political factors, then one should expect that states in which women do comparatively better relative to the status of men should be able to capitalize on greater social capital and the involvement of a much larger share of their population in the reconstruction process, since the status of women in a society reflects distinct social networks and forms of domestic capacity not captured by purely economic measures. Although international involvement can help provide resources that post-conflict societies may lack, international involvement is by itself no general panacea. The UN can provide a greater element of legitimacy than purely unilateral or narrowly multilateral operations. Putting these elements together, I expect that peacekeeping operations led by UN forces in countries or regions where women enjoy higher social status will have better prospects for fostering stable peace in the long run.

In what ways can women contribute to the success of peacebuilding efforts? Women's initiatives to address health and social concerns in communities can be instrumental in building support in the local communities for the peacebuilding process. In Sierra Leone, for example, women mobilized resources to rebuild schools that had been destroyed during the war. In Rwanda,

women who had survived the genocide later formed networks bringing together individuals from the two communities (Hutus and Tutsis) to help reconstruct local services and facilities in the wake of the conflict (United Nations, 2002: 120). Women's local participation can have an important effect on the prospects of successful post-conflict reconstruction, because without the consent and willingness of the local population and communities to invest time and effort in rebuilding the country, peacebuilding efforts are more likely to fail in the early and often most difficult phases of the process. Greater involvement of local communities enables peacebuilding to use untapped resources and social networks to rebuild shattered communal and civil relationships. Women's position in a more equal society allows them to be key actors and participants in social networks that can be beneficial for post-conflict reconstructions. Hence, their collaboration and integration is an integral component for any peacekeeping operation that has goals beyond narrowly specified security issues (Byrne, 1995). By assisting women, external actors such as the UN can target local communities and children to address long-term problems and concerns that may undermine peacebuilding efforts, in ways that are likely to be far more effective than those which solely rely on more traditional military methods of peacekeeping (Matheson, 2001).

The role of women in rebuilding war-torn societies has become increasingly recognized by the UN and international actors. Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 signaled a change towards more comprehensive policies seeking to take into account the needs of civilians, who after all are the majority of the victims in the wake of intrastate wars (see United Nations, 2002: 2). Resolution 1325 recognizes women as active agents who can be essential in the implementation of the peacebuilding process. To summarize the argument, I derive the following hypothesis:

H1: The prospects for UN post-conflict peacebuilding success will be better the higher the pre-conflict status of women.

Before turning to a cross-national evaluation of the relationship between women and the success of peacebuilding operations, I turn to the example of Sierra Leone to illustrate how female empowerment and more active participation by women can make a substantial difference for the long-term prospects for stable peace.

Women and Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone

The case of Sierra Leone is in retrospect considered a valuable lesson for UN peacekeeping. The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was set up by the Security Council in 1999 to help implement the Lomé Peace Accord, which was intended to end the disastrous civil war that Sierra Leone experienced in the 1990s. Sierra Leone is a country that generally ranks low on most standard indicators of development. The pre-war real GDP per capita of the country was merely US\$905, well below the average even for post-conflict countries. Similarly, the country's fertility rate and levels of education were below average for a conflict country. Taken together, most standard development indicators would seem to paint a picture of a country with very low development indicators and severe challenges for building a stable and lasting peace. Hence, based on Sierra Leone's economic indicators of development alone, one would expect low prospects for a stable long-term peace in the wake of the civil war. However, if one looks at measures of the relative status of women, one can see that women do comparatively better in Sierra Leone, compared with other developing societies of similar or even higher levels of development.

As will be explained in greater detail below, the ratio of female to male life expectancy

is a relative measure of female status that is not overly dependent on variation in the overall life expectancy. Everything else equal, one would expect the female-to-male life expectancy ratio to be above 1, since women will tend to live longer. However, all else is not always equal, and since women often face much poorer access to basic medical care and services than men, male life expectancy is often higher than expected and may in some cases exceed that of women. The fact that female life expectancy ratio in Sierra Leone was relatively higher suggests that the prospects for successful peacebuilding under UNAMSIL conceivably could be better than economic indicators of domestic capacity alone would suggest, if the UN could tap into the potential role that women could play.

As the general poor economic condition of Sierra Leone would lead us to expect, in the early stages of UNAMSIL the operation was widely ridiculed and considered a failure. Moreover, Sierra Leone provided a good example of the role of lootable resources in providing incentives for continuing conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; de Soysa, 2002), and violence re-erupted after the signing of the Lomé accord as the parties fought for control over the diamond-rich eastern provinces of the country. Initially, the UN forces appeared largely incapable of addressing the situation. However, following a shift in policies and an increasing participation of women in the peace process, UNAMSIL is today considered a success story, and the operation was declared to be successfully completed in 2005.

The role of women in the conflict in Sierra Leone was quite diverse. On the one hand, women were victims of rape, slavery, and displacement. On the other hand, women were also actively involved in war activities and planning, and around 7% of the former combatants were women. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) played a

leading role in the negotiations that led to the Lomé peace accord in 1999. The Lomé peace accord included provisions for power-sharing arrangements and a general amnesty for members of the insurgent Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Although women were not directly involved in the drafting of the accord, with the exception of two women, some basic provisions for the protection of women were included in the final document (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004: 4).

The Lomé peace accord initially broke down over control of the diamond-rich areas of Sierra Leone. Women were among the first groups to get organized against the renewed outbreak of violence. Older women from both rural and urban areas organized to protest against atrocities and highlight the need to continue the implementation of the Lomé accord. Women's organizations took the initiative to plan mass demonstrations encouraging the population of Sierra Leone to stand up against the elements of the RUF and its supporters who were in favor of continuing the use of violence. In 2000, women's protests reached a high point as their campaign became focused on directly confronting the RUF and its leader Fodoh Sankoh.

An interfaith assembly of older female protesters arrived at Sankoh's compound in Freetown, where they were mistreated and insulted by the RUF soldiers. The female protesters responded to the insults by lifting up their skirts and baring themselves. These actions by older women brought shame and invoked local superstitions. Once older women cast a curse, their families have the responsibility to follow their example and support them. The mobilization of local communities in support of the older women led to massive demonstrations in May 2000 (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004: 17). The desire of the local population to end the atrocities and ensure the implementation of the peace treaty expressed by women's organizations coincided with the arrival of UN

peacekeepers led by British military forces. This deployment of troops provided a far more accommodating political environment for the UN mission to arrest Sankoh and increase efforts to secure an end to the conflict (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004: 4).

The role of women in the demobilization process was also very important. The demobilization process was organized in three stages from 1998 to 2000, even though quite a few former combatants (including women) have not yet been reintegrated or reached by the demobilization process. Most of the former combatants later identified female organizations as having helped them reintegrate into society. The practical assistance that female organizations provided included boosting programs under the sponsorship of UNICEF and USAID to train former combatants and provide them with basic literacy and vocational skills.

The role of women has expanded in many other areas in post-conflict Sierra Leone, including security and policing. Indeed, the role of women in post-conflict security in Sierra Leone has been considered so successful that the lessons from UNAMSIL have given rise to similar efforts to train and facilitate women's employment as police officers underway in East Timor and Kosovo.²

Female Empowerment and Success in Peacekeeping Operations

I have argued that the prospects for successful post-conflict peacebuilding under the auspices of the UN are generally better in societies where women have greater degrees of empowerment. I will examine the impact of women on peacebuilding and how this can contribute to enhancing the effect of UN operations within a baseline model of

² Many successful cases of UN peacebuilding pursuing integrative policies, such as Mozambique and Namibia, also prominently involved women as valuable partners (see Howard, 2002; Griswold, 2002).

peacebuilding success that closely follows the initial work of Doyle & Sambanis (2000). Doyle & Sambanis (2000) have compiled a dataset on peacebuilding success, or failure, in the wake of 124 civil wars since World War II.³ War termination is identified based on either explicit agreements or periods without overt violence, which is considered a *de facto* settlement. Doyle & Sambanis examine how peacebuilding success varies as a function of various domestic and external characteristics and the possibility that international efforts may serve to substitute for what post-conflict efforts lack at the domestic level. Their results suggest a clear effect of UN involvement on the success rate of stable peace. My goal here is to examine whether women's status mediates the effectiveness of UN operations on the likelihood of successful settlement, after controlling for the domestic social and economic features in the Doyle & Sambanis model.

My operational dependent variable is adopted from Doyle & Sambanis. Doyle & Sambanis define peacebuilding as successful if violence does not recur after an agreement has been reached or the combatting parties have arrived at a *de facto* settlement. They use two different thresholds to classify whether peacebuilding is successful, one based on a lenient threshold that classifies cases as successes or failures based on whether conflict recurs within two years of conflict termination (*lenient*), and a strict threshold (*strict*) that limits success to cases where there is no residual violence for at least five years after the conflict. In addition to the lack of direct physical violence, a society must also have a minimum level of democratization and political openness to be considered

a case of successful peacebuilding under the strict criteria. Doyle & Sambanis further distinguish between two different thresholds for democracy under the strict criteria for peacebuilding success. Countries meet the most stringent definition of democracy if they have a Polity score of 6 and above on the 10-point Polity democracy scale. Under the less stringent criteria, countries qualify as democracies if they have a score of 3 or above. Together the violence and democracy criteria yield four possible combinations of lenient and strict criteria for successful peacebuilding variants of their dependent variable. In this article, I will focus on both the lenient and strict definitions of peacebuilding success.⁴

My measure of the relative standing of women in this study is based on the ratio of the life expectancy of women to the life expectancy of men. As briefly mentioned above, everything else equal, women should live longer than men, on average between five to eight years more. As such, the life expectancy ratio measures will reflect gender inequality in terms of differences in basic public services such as access to sanitation and health, with higher values indicating relatively better female social status. However, in societies with a bias towards men, female life expectancy will be closer to that of men, sometimes even considerably shorter. Using a rate ensures that absolute differences in life expectancy between states will be less influential.⁵ My data on male and female life expectancy are taken from the World Bank's Development Indicators (2003). I use female status prior to the onset of the intrastate war as an indicator of the social capital that the

³ Doyle & Sambanis (2000: 10) state six criteria for identifying civil war. In brief, these consider the level of deaths for a given year, the level of organization of the combatting parties, and whether the conflict is over the control of the state/central government or autonomy or reassignment of territorial borders. I refer to Doyle & Sambanis (2000) for further details.

⁴ In the Doyle & Sambanis (2000: 783) data, 81 cases or 65% of the conflicts are considered failures, while 43 or 35% are classified as successes under the strict definition of peacebuilding success.

⁵ Plümpert & Neumayer (2006) use a similar gender gap measure of the relative status of women based on the absolute difference in years between female and male life expectancy. Re-estimating the model with their measure does not significantly change the results reported here.

UN potentially can tap into by using women in the post-conflict reconstruction process. Post-conflict figures could be endogenous in the sense that the figures may reflect the effects of conflict and the severity of conflict, and the figures reported in the aftermath of conflict may not be consistently collected for different countries, which would create further problems for the comparative analysis. More specifically, I use life expectancy figures from the start of the conflict, lagged by one year.

Existing studies have considered a variety of alternative measures of female status, including economic factors, such as female employment rates or income differentials, social factors, such as levels of female education or fertility rates, or measures of political representation, such as the percentage of female members of the legislature or cabinet members. Here, I briefly justify my choice of indicator over these alternatives. One advantage of life expectancy data is the greater availability of such data. Whereas it is possible to find life expectancy data for nearly all the observations in the Doyle & Sambanis data from standard sources, the reported data for many observations in the alternative indicators tend to be missing in many countries that have experienced conflict during years prior to the 1990s. Moreover, many of the suggested indicators for female empowerment may be useful for comparisons between industrialized societies, but encounter some problem of face validity with regard to the status of women in development countries. For example, since women often are over-represented in the informal sector or the non-monetary economy, it will often be the case that female employment statistics may severely understate the economic role that women play in many developing countries, and variation in female empowerment could be high across countries with low employment in the formal sector. Many have used representation of women in legislatures as

a measure of women's political power or influence (e.g. Melander, 2005a). However, apart from the problem that those data are missing for many of the observations in this study,⁶ this measure is somewhat problematic for comparisons between countries without democratic political systems, which dominate in the sample of post-conflict countries. Data for the ratio of female to male secondary school enrollment are also problematic here, since female secondary education tends (at least in the reported official figures) to be relatively high in many former communist countries that fare poorly on other measures of female empowerment. Moreover, former communist states are known to have low rates of peacebuilding success, for reasons that I do not attempt to address in this article. Finally, the female-to-male life expectancy ratio is attractive on theoretical grounds as a more specific measure of the component of female status that is not directly related to general economic development, since the female-to-male life expectancy ratio is much less strongly correlated with a country's GDP per capita than many of the above-mentioned indicators of female empowerment such as fertility rates (Caprioli, 2000, 2003).⁷

As previously discussed, Doyle & Sambanis have demonstrated the greater effectiveness of UN involvement on the prospects for peacebuilding success, over and beyond a country's own domestic social and economic capacity for post-conflict reconstruction. I have argued that UN involvement can be more effective in promoting peace when UN operations can draw upon a greater set of local resources to rebuild the war-torn society. In other words,

⁶ Substituting life expectancy ratio with parliamentary female representation yields results comparable to those reported for life expectancy ratio, but the available dataset is reduced to merely 43 observations.

⁷ More specifically, the female-to-male life expectancy ratio does not highly correlate ($r = 0.22$) with level of development, measured as pre-war energy consumption per capita, whereas the correlation of secondary education ratio to level of development is $r = 0.77$.

UN assistance should be more effective in societies that have higher levels of social capital as reflected in female empowerment. In the analysis, I distinguish between UN operations that are considered completely non-intrusive and those that are coded as intrusive to various degrees, including the second and third generations of PKOs.⁸ To test my argument about an interactive effect for female empowerment, I include an interactive term between whether a conflict has a UN operation and the female-to-male life expectancy ratio.

To ensure that my findings on female status and the effectiveness of UN peacebuilding operations do not merely stem from a relationship between other aspects of domestic capacity associated with higher female social status, I use a baseline model based on the work of Doyle & Sambanis (2000) to control for other factors that might influence either the likelihood of successful peacebuilding plausibly associated with differences in female political status or the likelihood of UN involvement. Here, I will just briefly outline the rationale for including each measure, and I refer to Doyle & Sambanis (2000) for further details on their theoretical expectations. The first set of control variables take into account characteristics of conflict as one possible source of variation in the prospects for peacebuilding success. Following Doyle & Sambanis, I consider the severity of conflicts in terms of the loss of human lives and displacement of individuals, as one would expect more severe conflicts to make reconciliation more difficult. More specifically, I consider the logged number of deaths and displaced individuals in the empirical

analysis.⁹ I also take into account whether an intrastate conflict has ended with a formal treaty or not, as treaties presumably should make for more stable peace because the combating parties have committed to refrain from violence. I consider the duration of a conflict, as long wars may induce a 'weariness of war' that makes people more eager to find resolution and prevent new conflict. Finally, following Doyle & Sambanis, I consider the number of participants (both external and internal) and its square, as more actors can adversely affect the prospects for stable settlements, owing to coordination and collective action problems in multilateral bargaining and coordination.

The second set of control variables pertain to the social and domestic capacity of a country for post-conflict reconstruction. I consider a country's level of development by its pre-war energy consumption per capita in a country with estimates for missing observation based on GDP per capita figures. I also consider the share of exports of natural resources as a measure of primary commodity dependence, which is believed to have a negative effect on institutional and social development. Collier & Hoeffler (2004) have argued that primary commodity dependence makes conflict more attractive as it facilitates private incentives for conflict, owing to the existence of valuable lootable resources, such as diamonds or gold, and the pernicious effects of primary commodity dependence on institutional and social development. Since forms of external involvement other than the UN may increase the likelihood of success through increasing domestic capacity, I consider a variable indicating the net current unilateral transfers (including aid, food, etc.) to the country in the post-conflict period.

⁸ Doyle & Sambanis distinguish the type of UN intervention on a scale from least intrusive (0) to most intrusive (4). My measure of intrusiveness here collapses the upper three forms of intrusiveness. In separate analysis, I excluded all cases where Doyle & Sambanis identified traditional PKOs without any significant changes in either the direction or significance of the results.

⁹ Separating the number of dead and the number of displaced individuals does not affect the reported results for the relative female status measures and does not lead to notable changes to the results reported here.

The third set of control variables takes into account possible differences across regions or over time. Doyle & Sambanis's (2000) model considers a possible increase in UN effectiveness over time by including a variable indicating post-war decades. Finally, I consider regional dummy variables for conflicts in former Soviet Union and African countries. Although post-conflict countries in the former Soviet Union are generally ranked much higher on development indicators than African states, states in the former Soviet Union have produced many frozen conflicts with unstable truces and the emergence of several de facto autonomous states outside the control of formally sovereign governments, but without formal recognition, such as Nagorno-Karabakh (Lynch, 2004), whereas Africa has produced many unexpected successes. I do not offer an explanation for these differences here, but simply use regional dummies to capture any residual regional differences in peacebuilding success not captured by other right-hand-side variables.

Empirical Estimates

I first consider some simple bivariate figures on differences in female empowerment among successful and failed peacebuilding cases. In the previously discussed case of Sierra Leone, the female-to-male life expectancy ratio in 1991 was 1.083, which is considerably above the mean of the variable among the post-conflict cases reported in Table I. The summary statistics in Table I show that the recorded pre-conflict life expectancy ratio is indeed higher in the cases where peacebuilding was ultimately successful.¹⁰ Table I is not a proper test of the prop-

osition advanced here, since it only compares trends in female empowerment between successful and unsuccessful cases of peacebuilding, without considering whether the case saw a UN operation. Moreover, we must also consider other features that may potentially be associated with both peacebuilding success and differences in female empowerment or UN involvement. I therefore turn to a multivariate analysis on the prospects for peacebuilding success as a function of UN involvement and female status and use the full set of covariates suggested by Doyle & Sambanis.

Since the dependent variable is binary (success vs. failure), I use a logistic regression model to estimate the probability that peacebuilding operations will succeed. A logit model considers how the log odds of some event (i.e. $Y=1$) – that is, the log of the ratio of the probability of an event happening over the probability of the event not happening, or $\ln[\Pr(Y=1)/\Pr(Y=0)]$ – changes with certain right hand side variables. The sign of coefficients of a logit model can be interpreted in terms of whether an independent variable increases or reduces the likelihood of the event – in this case, the probability of successful peacebuilding. Models 1 and 2 in Table II report the estimates for the model, using the strict and lenient time thresholds on residual violence, respectively.

What do these results indicate about the hypothesis concerning the impact of female status and UN involvement on peacebuilding success? Models 1 and 2 in Table II, the strict and lenient time threshold for residual violence respectively, both show that the interactive coefficients are consistently positive and significant. This result indicates that the effect of UN operations on peacebuilding success increases the higher the level of gender

¹⁰ A 95% confidence interval around the average female-to-male life expectancy ratio for the cases of failed peacebuilding does not include the estimate for the average female-to-male life expectancy ratio for the cases of successful peacebuilding. However, given the low N (35) of cases of successful peacebuilding, the confidence interval

for the unconditional estimate of the mean life-expectancy ratio is quite wide and spans the estimated average for the unsuccessful cases.

Table I. Summary Statistics

Summary Statistics for Successful Peacebuilding after 5 years

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Obs</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Life expectancy ratio	35	1.070	0.041	0.971	1.218
Secondary education ratio	19	0.318	0.288	0.022	0.982
Fertility rate	27	5.456	1.612	1.580	7.743
Secondary enrol female	20	26.823	28.653	1.245	90.972
Life expectancy female	31	55.421	11.312	38.140	76.520

Summary Statistics for Failed Peacebuilding after 5 years

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Obs</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Life expectancy ratio	72	1.060	0.028	0.970	1.121
Secondary education ratio	48	0.305	0.255	0.029	1.038
Fertility rate	66	5.604	1.592	1.530	7.380
Secondary enrol female	50	29.233	25.965	0.926	91.894
Life expectancy female	68	54.409	11.026	36.120	76.800

Table II. Logit Estimates of Successful Peacebuilding (Strict Definition of Democracy)

	<i>Model 1 Probability of success 5 years</i>		<i>Model 2 Probability of success 2 years</i>	
	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>
Type of war	-2.563	0.815	-1.989	0.713
Log (Cost of war)	-0.471	0.168	-0.471	0.16
Duration of war	0.015	0.005	0.012	0.004
Number of actors	-1.604	1.117	-1.448	0.942
Number of actors ²	0.101	0.123	0.096	0.097
Net current transfers	0.006	0.003	0.005	0.003
UN operation	-42.674	25.688	-37.518	24.01
Treaty	0.373	1.023	1.031	0.936
Level of development	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Primary exports	-5.753	4.605	-4.273	3.949
Decade	-0.033	0.282	-0.119	0.259
Life expectancy ratio	-19.272	15.607	-16.31	14.352
Life expectancy ratio*UN	42.056	24.143	36.615	22.489
Constant	28.156	17.221	24.654	15.681
N	106		111	
LR-Chi2	56.32		55.54	

All statistically significant coefficients are in italics.

empowerment, consistent with the argument developed here. A Wald test of joint significance of the terms for UN operation, life expectancy ratio, and the interactive term is also significant, and the null hypothesis that all three coefficients are indistinguishable

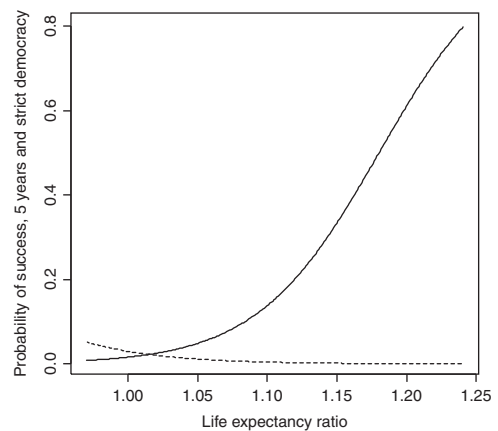
from zero is soundly rejected. Moreover, the model with the interactive specification performs significantly better than one without the interactive term.

However, logit coefficients are generally difficult to interpret substantively: the

coefficients in a logit model indicate the effect of a one-unit change in an independent variable on the log odds of the event rather than effects on probabilities, and the net magnitude of effects on probabilities will depend on the baseline probability of the event, which in turn is given by the values of all the independent variables. Moreover, in a regression model with a multiplicative interaction term between two variables, the individual terms for the two variables specified as interaction cannot be interpreted independently, as the net effect of each variable will depend on the level of the other variable and the coefficient for the interactive term, and the coefficient estimate for each of the individual terms will depend on the scaling of the variables. In other words, one cannot differentiate the net effect of one independent variable on the overall model, and the two variables must be interpreted together (Braumoeller, 2004).

To see the actual net impact of UN involvement and gender empowerment and how the effect of one depends on the value of the other, I therefore consider the implied probabilities of peacebuilding success following variation along the two variables, holding all the other remaining right-hand-side variables constant at their median value. Figure 1 displays the predicted probability of peacebuilding success based on Model 1 in Table II (i.e. with a five-year post-conflict interval and the strict definition of democracy). The solid line in Figure 1 indicates how the predicted probability of success for a case with a UN operation changes with higher values of the female-to-male life expectancy ratio, while the dashed line indicates how the predicted probability of success varies for a case without a UN operation. As can be seen from Figure 1, the predicted probability of successful peacebuilding increases when women have higher status and there is UN involvement. For example, a case with both a UN operation and a high life expectancy ratio above 1 would have a much higher

Figure 1. Probability of Success 5 Years After and Strict Democracy by Life Expectancy Ratio for Cases With a UN Operation (solid line) and Cases Without a UN Operation (dotted line)



probability of successful peacebuilding than a country with the same level of gender empowerment but no UN involvement. This result underscores how high female status by itself is not a condition for successful peace maintenance in the wake of intrastate war, but it can provide additional sources of social capital that UN missions can utilize to stimulate the peacebuilding process. Likewise, the result suggests that UN involvement is not a general panacea and that its effectiveness will depend upon the domestic characteristics of the country, including forms of social capacity different from general economic development. Indeed, for countries with very low gender empowerment, the predicted probability of successful peacekeeping is actually lower with UN involvement.

The results for the other control variables in the model are largely consistent with the previous results reported by Doyle & Sambanis (2000). Identity wars are less likely to be followed by stable peace, while higher costs in terms of population and resources make peacebuilding less likely to succeed. The effect of the number of actors is not entirely stable. On the economic side, greater net transfers and resources can assist reconstruction,

but primary commodity dependence makes peacebuilding success less likely.

How sensitive are these results to differences in the specific threshold criteria for successful peacebuilding? Table III shows that the effect of UN involvement and female empowerment is generally robust, when using lenient criteria for residual violence after conflict and a low democracy threshold. Adding dummy variables for former communist countries or African countries confirms the tendency for more persistent conflict among the former countries and better prospects in the latter region, but does not alter the effects for the indicator of relative female empowerment and UN involvement on success. Table IV shows that the results hold when more lenient thresholds for time and democracy are used.¹¹

¹¹ Dummies for other regions, such as Asia, were used in robustness checks without any significant change either in the direction or the significance of the coefficients. The results are not reported, as the dummy coefficient was not significant.

Doyle & Sambanis (2000) also consider a number of other factors that did not turn out to have significant effects on peacebuilding success in their work. Alternative estimates of the model in this study, including their additional variables, did not change the results for any of the key variables of concern. As an additional robustness check, I also considered whether a major power was involved in the peacebuilding process, but this did not alter any of the results with regard to UN operations, female empowerment, or their interaction.

Policy Implications for UN Operations

What are the implications of this analysis for the design and implementation of internationally assisted peacebuilding efforts? Leaving aside the issue of whether the role and status of women may help prevent outbreaks of violence in the first place (which I have not examined), the analysis here indicates

Table III. Logit Estimates of Successful Peacebuilding 5 Years After (Lenient Democracy)

<i>Probability of Success</i>	<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>		<i>Model 3</i>	
	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>
Type of war	-2.254	0.717	-2.154	0.720	-2.853	0.872
Log (Cost of War)	-0.425	0.152	-0.395	0.155	-0.365	0.159
Duration of War	0.010	0.005	0.008	0.005	0.010	0.005
Number of actors	-1.944	0.890	-2.129	0.936	-2.314	0.981
Number of actors ²	0.132	0.087	0.150	0.092	0.158	0.096
Net current transfers	0.005	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.006	0.003
UN operation	-34.131	23.035	-61.436	33.684	-49.529	25.612
Treaty	1.173	0.926	0.900	1.003	0.717	0.967
Level of development	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Primary exports	-4.817	3.827	-5.421	3.940	-4.967	3.867
Decade	-0.092	0.252	0.001	0.264	-0.174	0.268
Life expectancy ratio	-15.808	14.933	-15.813	15.056	-27.548	17.017
Life expectancy ratio*UN	33.641	21.633	59.535	31.707	48.225	24.086
Former Communist			-3.567	2.163		
Africa					1.416	0.903
Constant	25.557	16.376	25.298	16.502	38.039	18.717
N	106		106		106	
LR-Chi2	55.29		58.50		57.92	

All statistically significant coefficients are in italics.

Table IV. Logit Estimates of Successful Peacebuilding 2 Years After (Lenient Democracy)

Probability of Success	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se(b)</i>
Type of war	-2.117	0.725	-1.963	0.717	-2.839	0.903
Log (Cost of War)	-0.528	0.161	-0.497	0.163	-0.480	0.168
Duration of War	0.010	0.004	0.008	0.004	0.010	0.005
Number of actors	-1.865	0.902	-1.983	0.936	-2.317	1.015
Number of actors^2	0.128	0.087	0.139	0.091	0.159	0.098
Net current transfers	0.005	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.006	0.003
UN operation	-41.571	24.031	-63.747	35.507	-63.214	28.890
Treaty	1.801	0.955	1.644	1.012	1.365	0.987
Level of development	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.002	0.001
Primary exports	-4.281	3.639	-4.712	3.723	-4.877	3.672
Decade	-0.121	0.255	-0.050	0.261	-0.227	0.276
Life expectancy ratio	-23.689	15.390	-23.043	15.974	-38.099	18.365
Life expectancy ratio*UN	40.401	22.537	61.325	33.332	60.838	27.122
Former Communist			-3.180	2.214		
Africa					1.701	0.916
Constant	34.538	17.002	33.457	17.586	50.184	20.424
N	111		111		111	
LR-Chi2	62.09		64.55		65.85	

All statistically significant coefficients are in italics.

that greater female empowerment and female participation can help UN-led peacebuilding operations overcome some of the many hurdles that may frustrate the establishment of a stable peace. By allowing women opportunities to express a voice in the peacemaking process and eliciting broader domestic participation, UN-led PKOs or interventions can capitalize on additional forms of social capital and social networks that often are quite distinct from other social elites. In this sense, policies that address the concerns and needs of women can provide a good foundation for successful peacebuilding operations. However, despite this empirical analysis and recognition of casual evidence from the experiences of particular operations that including women in the peacebuilding process can enhance the prospects for success, it is also clear that UN missions often have not been particularly successful in realizing their gender-mainstreaming goals. UN organizations, such as the Women’s Fund at

the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), have highlighted policies that render support to women and local communities and enhance the ability of war-torn countries to rebuild domestic capacity. The challenge is, however, to move beyond awareness-raising rhetoric to the implementation of the recommended policies.

Ultimately, the largest challenge to women’s integration in post-conflict reconstruction is the complexity of peacebuilding operations, since they involve too many actors at multiple levels of authority and decisionmaking power. It is often hard to identify women who could contribute to the peacebuilding process, as women are primarily organized at the grassroots level. It is characteristic that so far only one woman has been Special Envoy in UN missions (in Georgia) and only four women have been appointed as deputy heads in various UN missions (Guatemala, DRC, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Georgia) (UNIFEM, 2004).

Conclusion

This article has expanded previous research on the possible advantages of UN peacekeeping by looking at the potential role that women may play in ensuring successful peacebuilding. I posit that improved status of women within a society is an indicator of social capital and domestic capacity, largely separate from general economic development or political institutions, which can be used by peacekeeping operations to increase the likelihood of a successful mission. My empirical analysis of peacekeeping operations suggests that greater female empowerment can enhance the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, even when controlling for external and domestic factors that might reduce the likelihood of success in post-conflict peacebuilding in the Doyle & Sambanis (2000) model.

This article is at a generally aggregate level. Further conceptual research on female empowerment and peacekeeping is clearly needed. In particular, in order to understand the relationship between national-level indicators of female empowerment and actual female participation in peacebuilding, we will require more micro-level information on female participation in the work of NGOs and IGOs in building sustainable democratic institutions in the wake of a civil war, as well as how women's organizations cooperate with the UN and other external actors. Part of the challenge is to understand how women perceive their position in a society based on their gender and other forms of identification such as ethnicity or religion. In some cases, ethnic or religious group identities might supersede gender, in which case gender-mainstreaming efforts might be much more likely to fail in the implementation of a peacekeeping operation without efforts to foster interethnic cooperation. These are all considerations that UN missions need to take into account in the design and policies of peacekeeping operations.

Understanding the role of women as independent agents in a conflict will ultimately shed light on the types of operations, programs, and processes that will enhance peace. The evidence that female empowerment and participation appears to contribute to improved prospects for peacekeeping success presented here strongly helps support the emphasis in recent UN reports on integrated missions rather than operations that target solely security concerns (Jones, 2003; United Nations Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, 2005; Harland, 2005; Eide et al., 2005).

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