

Dissecting Gender Imbalance

A Horizontal Perspective on When Risk Matters for the Assignment of Women to UN Peacekeeping Missions

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United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was adopted in 2000 after years of discussions and advocacy for a gender perspective on conflict resolution. Its adoption, however, was but the first step in a long and complex process leading to implementation of its principles.¹ Yet, 15 years and several related resolutions down the road, some of its recommendations have yet to become reality: as of today, female military personnel account for a paltry 3.2 percent on average in UN peacekeeping missions.² To spur changes, in the latest resolution on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 2242), the Security Council declares its intention to double the number of women in military and police troop contributions in five years.³ Full implementation of this ambition implies strong commitments from the Security Council, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as well as from member-States to improve the gender balance in such operations.

The present article joins the scholarly discussion on possible obstacles to and restrictions on equal opportunity in the military – in this case, when it comes to the representation of women in international missions. The study focuses on high mission risk as a potential explanation for low proportions of women. It introduces a horizontal dimension to this analysis by examining deployed military observers and contingent troops separately. As the evidence shows, such a disaggregated analysis provides a deeper understanding of possible obstacles to the participation of women in the military.

The study starts by presenting conventional explanations for low participation of women in military organizations, and shows how a horizontally disaggregated analysis can add to the understanding of this phenomenon. By examining panel data on proportions of women in UN peacekeeping missions, it demonstrates how the relationship between mission risk and gender ratios is apt to vary across the functions performed : in this case among contingent troops and observers. The theoretical and methodological value of a horizontal analysis will be elaborated upon along the way.

¹ UN Security Council, 2000.

² This is the figure for the month of October 2015. See Gender Statistics : A monthly breakdown of the number of male and female uniformed personnel working across United Nations peacekeeping missions: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/gender.shtml>.

³ UN Security Council, 2015.

Explaining Gender Imbalance

There are many explanations for the low representation of women in modern military organizations. The historical domination of men, the physical demands of the job and a plain lack of interest among women in joining the military are some of the arguments discussed. However, close scholarly examination of these arguments has largely discredited their explanatory value and instead points to the social structures of military organizations. The social glorification of military masculinities has become influential in theory-building in military sociology and is here used in order to understand why women are under-represented in military organizations. As Goldstein (2001) points out, analyzing *gender* in war brings attention not just to women, but also to men and different ideals of masculinity.

Masculinity is not a singular or monolithic concept. Within one organization, several different masculinity norms exist simultaneously. In her theory, Connell offers a structured vision of organizational cultures that carry with them different ideals of masculinities. She describes masculinities as hierarchically ordered, and their hegemony as the ideal that grants social power (Connell, 1995). The hegemonic character of masculinity within the military is here referred to as *military masculinities*.⁴ Masculinity and its different hegemonic forms are critically important both to the military as an institution as well as to individual soldiers (King, 2015, p.18).

The glorification of military masculinities has been encouraged by the military to spur men to carry the core military function of engaging in battle. The military needs its members to be prepared to risk their lives for the greater good of the nation.⁵ This willingness to risk one's life is the one characteristic that primarily sets the military profession apart from most civilian professions. Since it is a risk that few civilians would be willing to take, the military must justify and promote such risk-taking in the eyes of the public in order to attract new recruits. Thus, military masculinity idealizes risk-taking and lethal violence and makes the willingness to risk one's life a desirable feature. Throughout history, the military has also had an educating role in turning boys into men, primarily through rough military training. Military masculinity has thus, in society, a close connection to what it means to be a "real man"⁶ Another way of approaching military masculinity is to differentiate it from femininity and any feminine traits. In this dichotomization, military masculinity is defined as aggression, violence and strength (Kronsell, 2012). This creates a warrior model of masculinity based on the primary military task of armed combat (Ducanson, 2009).

⁴ We distinguish *military masculinities* from the closely connected concept of *militarized masculinities*. The reason for this distinction is that militarism is defined as strong military influence over civil society (Higate & Hopton, 2005). Enloe exemplifies it with camouflage elements in fashion, military themes in toys, and the valorization of a politician's military service in his or her political campaign (Enloe, 2000). Militarized masculinities are thus the masculine roles in society that have been influenced by military norms through the process of militarization. Military masculinities, on the other hand, are the hegemonic masculine identities found within the military.

⁵ Kovitz, 2003, pp.3-9 ; Goldstein 2001, pp.251-331.

⁶ Higate & Hopton, 2005, pp.434-444.

Throughout history, women, even female soldiers and officers, have been kept away from combat positions. Although legal bans on women entering combat positions have been lifted in many national militaries recently, few women actually occupy these positions. M.W. Segal documented this phenomenon by comparing the proportions of female combat pilots in the US Armed Forces before and after such a lift. Even after repeal of the law banning them from these positions, women were not immediately trained to become combat pilots.⁷

A central part of the military masculinity ideal is that it is masculine to take lethal risks and engage in combat.⁸ To prepare and train for combat is to build one's adherence to the military masculinities. Combat is a highly gendered activity in so far as it is closely connected to the construction of military masculinities as a gender ideal. Consequently, adding women and feminine elements to the definition of combat and its close association to military masculinities can be and is often perceived as contradictory and disruptive. In other words, since combat is at the core of the military masculinity ideal, it is very sensitive to feminine influence.

The questions of whether or not women are suitable for combat, and why that would be, are widely discussed and researched topics. Arguments against the inclusion of women are often based on the premise that their presence will disturb the construction of military masculinity in different ways. Arguments about physical considerations have become less important following technological advances in military equipment that have made physical strength a less relevant issue.⁹ Instead, social arguments are made, claiming that the inclusion of women will affect such things as troop cohesion and male bonding, and thus decrease the operational effectiveness of units. Research on somewhat similar male-dominated domains such as the police supplies little support to such claims. In these domains, increased gender integration has not hampered unit cohesion; by the same token, it has pointed out that arguments about male bonding exclude the possibility male-female bonding.¹⁰ Another social argument against women in combat units is that the men in the same unit will act irrationally and take unnecessary risks to save their female colleagues' lives.¹¹ Simultaneously, scholars have also researched the arguments against women in combat in terms of traditional gender roles that need to be safeguarded. Women are traditionally identified with social roles such as the provision of *care*, a value not traditionally associated with war.¹²

Thus, the idea of women in military combat goes against the traditional and stereotypical notion that "*women are seen as the bearers, not the takers, of life...*"

⁷ Segal, 1993, p.91.

⁸ Combat is here defined as directly "*engaging an enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy's personnel, and a substantial risk of capture*" (Peach, 1994, p.204).

⁹ Peach, 1994, pp.216-217.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.213-214.

¹¹ Winslow & Dunn, 2002, p.652.

¹² Peach, 1994, pp.234-239.

(Winslow & Dunn, 2002, p.650). Protecting the nation has not been part of the gender role of women and has not been seen as a female responsibility. One risk of including women in combat roles is therefore that women killed in action might be considered ethically wrong and demoralize the troops (*ibid.*, p.652). There are thus a multitude of ideas about femininity and masculinity in relation to risk and combat that may influence how candidates for a position are assessed.

Karim and Beardsley (2013) have studied all female military personnel in UN peacekeeping missions collectively and found a negative relationship between risk in a mission and the proportion of women. They see the glorification of military masculinities – and the difficulty that women have to live up to such a masculine ideal – as the main explanation behind the fact that fewer female soldiers are placed in situations that entail risk and potential combat. Their research indicates that social factors and gendered ideals influence assignments to international missions, so that women are prevented from being deployed to high-risk mission to the same degree as men.

Introducing a Horizontal Dimension

The theoretical discussion presented in this article has so far only dwelt on military organizations or, specifically, international missions and the women therein collectively, regardless of function or branch. However, the literature on gender roles and masculinities suggests that several masculinities and identities coexist within a social entity, with internal complexities and even contradictions resulting in the domination of one masculine identity over the others as the hegemonic ideal norm (Connell, 1995). Barrett suggests that this creates an internal hierarchy among military identities that might also differ across functions. For example, within the US Navy, characteristics such as risk-taking are considered more valuable than rationality. On the other hand, for a logistics officer, rationality and responsibility are attributes considered superior to risk-taking (Barrett, 2001). Duncanson discusses these multiple military identities in relation to peacekeeping missions by asking if and how positions that require non-combat skills are apt to challenge the hegemonic warrior model and lead to greater inclusion of those identities which are considered feminine. She presents an alternative military social identity associated with typical non-combat peacekeeping activities, such as monitoring cease-fires and supporting the delivery of humanitarian aid. This alternative identity even involves valorization of skills and capacities that are traditionally feminine, thus deviating from the traditional warrior model, and also opening up the possibility that low-risk activities take on and valorize identities not directly connected to masculinity (Duncanson, 2009).

Scholars using a horizontal analysis (i.e. comparing different functions) have examined the gender balance within core functions and support functions and found more female personnel in administrative and medical specialties than in traditional military functions such as combat.¹³ Cotton (1979, pp.85-88) links similar discoveries to the fact

¹³ Segal & Segal, 1983; p.255 ; Moskos, 1973 ; Segal, 1993, pp.86-90.

that assignment to combat positions is critical, since any defectiveness in the assignment process can have lethal consequences. The likelihood that a military masculinity ideal will strongly influence assignments is thus greater in assignments to combat roles than in assignments to positions of a more civilian character.

This discussion about multiple military identities opens the way for a horizontal approach to examining the inclusion of female military personnel or lack thereof. If, as this article suggests, there are multiple military identities that are emphasized differently in different military functions, studies that do not distinguish between different functions will not capture the varying impact that military masculinities have on assignments. To understand and get an accurate picture of how military masculinities might influence the recruitment of women, each category or function between which the emphasis on military masculinities are likely to differ must be studied separately. Especially regarding peacekeeping missions, as Duncanson argues, since they to a large degree present softer military activities that deviate more from the warrior model.

This article is premised on the statement that because of the influence of military masculinities on recruitment processes, female military personnel are less likely to be deployed to missions and positions with a higher risk. A high mission risk will thus be associated with a smaller proportion of women. An additional hypothesis is that this relationship will differ between different military functions. Thus, this article sets out to examine the variation between functions with regard to the mission risk/proportion of women relationship.

When studying assignments, we need to consider the mechanisms by which an emphasis on military masculinities may lead to a skewed representation. Homogenous organizations, such as male-dominated military institutions, often have recruitment procedures in which homosociality plays a part. Homosociality explains why men are more prone to select other men with similar characteristics to themselves in assignment and recruitment processes.¹⁴ When recruiting for an assignment with a high risk of combat, the preferred candidate is as close as possible to an idealized military masculinity. In such a recruitment process, being male becomes an invisible but preferred characteristic because it is a first shortcut to a favourable assessment. When male gatekeepers to these assignments have, themselves, striven to adhere to these ideals in their careers, perceived similarity becomes yet another shortcut to assess competence in a candidate. As long as the hegemonic military masculinity is constructed in opposition to the feminine, it becomes difficult for women to live up to informal criteria for assignments. In this way, men enjoy relative security in their positions and promotion prospects simply by adhering to the organization's preferred male identity. The recruitment of people displaying characteristics that conform to the masculine norm becomes desirable and common practice for managers and recruiters (Holgerson, 2004, pp.48-51). By producing and re-producing traditional norms based on male traits, men benefit from the system by reaching high-ranking positions (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p.16). Holgerson (2012, p.10) explains this phenomenon

¹⁴ See for instance : Lipman-Blumen, 1976 ; Holgerson, 2012 ; Bjarnegård, 2013.

in the following words: “*The exclusion of women can, thus, be seen as a result of an active preference for men rather than conscious discrimination of women*”.

This study suggests that homosociality based on a perceived adherence to a hegemonic military masculinity is in play when military personnel are assigned to high-risk peacekeeping missions. Since military masculinity is closely connected both to maleness and to combat, its influence through homosociality will have a negative effect on the assignment of women to such positions. Perhaps without even being aware of it, managers may choose to assign women to positions associated with lesser risk, where they are less likely to engage in combat.

Methodology

The military functions compared in this article are UN military observers (sometimes referred to as UN “military experts in mission”) and contingent troops. UN military observers are deployed individually with the primary task of monitoring the military arrangements of any peace agreement. Depending on the political situation, this can involve for example supervising cease-fires, withdrawal of forces or demilitarized or neutral buffer zones. Military observers are unarmed and thus have no coercive power. Without any coercive power they are dependent on the consent of the parties for the implementation of their task, especially when deployed independently of contingent troops (UN DPKO, 2003, pp.58-59). UN troop contingents can undertake different tasks as a function of their mandate. With a peace agreement already signed, the role of the troops will be to deter any hostilities or breaches of the peace agreement, and support its full implementation. In such a case, the troops are likely to be lightly armed and not intended to ward off a resumption of violence. Depending on the likelihood of such an event, the troops will be armed more or less heavily. Contingent troops with the primary task of supporting the process of reaching a peace agreement and of maintaining a secure environment will be armed and equipped more similarly to traditional military formations (*ibid.*, pp.59-60). Following the Brahimi Report (2000) and the creation of an intervention brigade in MONUSCO (2013), a recent trend in UN peacekeeping points in the direction of more robust peacekeeping mandates, hence of a higher likelihood of combat and a greater risk to contingent troops. The bottom line is that a member of a troop contingent is more likely to engage in combat and face higher risks than a military observer, even within the same mission. Based on the hypothesis that the relationship between mission risk and proportions of women is likely to differ between the two functions, the expectation thus is that mission risk will entail fewer women among contingent troops.

Differences in both risks and activities across peacekeeping missions make them a distinct form of military activity. Compared with traditional national military interventions, UN peacekeeping missions differ, among other things, in being multinational, multidimensional and multifunctional; they also differ in their guiding principles, including minimum lethal force. With regard to military masculinities, UN peacekeeping units deviate from traditional military formations in two significant senses. Firstly, they are

denationalized. They do not consist of a single country's armed forces, but of a number of different national contingents, as well as groups of observers often running into several dozens, and are governed by multinational entities. Also, instead of addressing direct and geographically close threats to the nations deploying to the missions, they are often deployed hundreds or thousands of miles away from home, and address wider threats to global peace and security. Enloe (1993) highlights the relationship between nationality and military masculinities when she points to the deliberate choice to risk one's life to protect the nation as a typically male endeavour. When the nationality element of the deployment is decreased, military masculinities might not be defined or structured in the same hegemonic way as in traditional military formations. This would entail that because of the denationalized character of UN peacekeeping missions, the influence of military masculinities, for example on assignment of personnel might be less prominent. Secondly, UN peacekeeping missions often undertake more civilian-type activities, such as policing, that differ from traditional military activities. Also, UN peacekeeping missions are deployed on the understanding that use of force only is allowed under specific circumstances and is not the main means of action. Kronsell (2012, pp.81-82) points out that these activities cannot compare with the "warrior model" when it comes to "turning boys into men". She presents several studies showing how the activities performed on peacekeeping missions are sometimes considered "feminine" by the military personnel concerned. These "soft" military activities also suggest that assignment to a peacekeeping mission would entail less influence of military masculinities than assignment to a traditional mission.

In sum, UN peacekeeping missions can be perceived as generating least-likely cases for showing an influence of military masculinities as the latter tend to be downplayed by the very nature of UN peacekeeping. In other words, the suggested negative relationship between mission risk and participation of women is not likely to be strong. Additionally, this logic could be applied equally to the two functions researched – those respectively assigned to UN contingent troops and military observers – since both deviate from traditional military tasks. However, it is again worth noting that peacekeeping tasks and activities are apt to vary. Yet, any such relationship in either of the functions could be generalizable to more traditional military missions. Any difference between the two functions with regard to the relationship between mission risk and proportions of women can also be considered generalizable to equivalent horizontal divisions in other missions with a more traditional nature.

This case study covers active UN peacekeeping missions between August 2006 and December 2011, with the exception of two outlier cases.¹⁵ The cases studied are broken down into observations about each mission, year and function. Only the military

¹⁵ Two highly deviant cases – the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) – were excluded because they exhibited inordinately high values on significant variables: UNMEE had an extremely high number of battle deaths, and MINURSO had an extremely high proportion of women in its contingent troops. While both cases deviated in line with the hypothesis, they were excluded because of their disproportionate influence on the results.

components of the peacekeeping forces concerned have been included in the sample.¹⁶ It should be noted that while certain peacekeeping operations only included observers and others only included troops, a majority of the missions studied included both.

The study's dependent variable is the proportion of female military peacekeepers per mission and function. Its independent variables measure different aspects of risk.¹⁷ The average number of peacekeeper deaths per peacekeeping mission between 2006 and 2011 will serve as one measure of mission risk.¹⁸ We also include risk indicators of the total estimated number of *battle* deaths in the conflict. For this variable, the measure used was the highest yearly number of KIA cases in the previous ten years for each mission.¹⁹ This shows the intensity of the conflict with regard to the level of physical violence used by the belligerent parties, and is thus an indirect measure of the risk inherent in the mission. Finally, the prevalence of sexual violence has been used as a risk factor. This variable captures a different type of violence, and thus broadens the concept of risk to include intensity of conflict measured in different ways. This is completely in line with UNSCR 1820 which specifies that sexual violence is to be considered a security issue in any conflict. It highlights the necessity for military forces on UN peacekeeping missions to address such incidents, thus adding to the responsibilities of mission leaders as actors in the conflict. Such possible involvement could also entail higher risk for the peacekeepers.²⁰ To measure the prevalence of sexual violence, a 1 to 8 scale assessing numbers of reported rape cases as well as social taboos and rape laws was used, where 1 signifies *low* and 8 *high* prevalence.²¹

As part of its strategy to increase the proportion of women in military components UN DPKO has explicitly advocated the inclusion of female soldiers and officers because they may reduce sexual misconduct within the troops. An effect of this move, which might influence the results of this study, is that female military personnel are strategically deployed to missions suffering from such problems. A measurement of allegations of sexual misconduct towards peacekeepers has been introduced to the study in order to control for such an effect.

It should be noted that we operate with very small differences in the selected sample : the range of female peacekeepers is 2-13%. Our aim is to understand if this small, but existing, variation can be explained by risk factors associated with the mission, and whether the explanatory power of risk factors is different for the different functions.

¹⁶ Source : UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) official statistics on gender balance.

¹⁷ The data set used in this study is based on the data set provided by Karim and Beardsley (2013) in their article "Female Peacekeepers and Gender Balancing : Token Gestures or Informed Policymaking ?".

¹⁸ Source : Official statistics of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO).

¹⁹ Source : Uppsala Conflict Data Program. In coding the variable, the battle deaths have been scaled by 1000.

²⁰ UN Security Council, 2008.

²¹ Source : WomenStats Database. For information on coding, see their website : [www.http://womanstats.org](http://womanstats.org)
→ Variable list /Codebook → Part II, A ii, Rape and Sexual Assault.

Results

The first comparison between observers and troops can be seen in Table 1:

	Model 1 Observers	Model 2 Troops
Peacekeeper deaths	-0.53 (0.47)	-0.70* (0.04)
Rape	-0.47 (0.74)	-1.07*** (0.23)
Battle Deaths	0.28 (0.19)	0.04 (0.23)
Allegations of misconduct	0.05 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)
Constant	4.29 (2.68)	7.73 (0.95)
R ²	0.01	0.35
N (clusters)	81 (19)	59 (15)

Standard errors in parentheses

* = p < 0,1 ** = p < 0,01

Table 1 : The Effect of Risk on Proportion of Women Observers and Troops

The first thing to note is that no relationship can be detected between either of the measures of mission risk and the number of female peacekeepers in the function of military observers, as presented in Model 1. The variables “peacekeeper deaths”, “rape incidence” or “battle deaths” in the country concerned do not seem to have much of an impact on the number of women deployed as observers. As for contingent troops, two out of three risk factors are significant explanations of the variation of female peacekeepers. Model 2 thus demonstrates a significant negative relationship between peacekeeper deaths and the proportion of women within the function in contingent troops. According to the model, for every peacekeeper that dies in a mission, the proportion of women will decrease by 0.7 percentage points. The relationship is rather weak but significant at the 90% confidence level. Likewise, and more clearly, the incidence of rape in a mission decreases the proportion of female peacekeepers recruited to a mission. For each one-notch increment in the 1-8 scale measuring the prevalence of rape, the proportion of women decreases by 1.07 percentage point. This result is significant at the 99% confidence level.

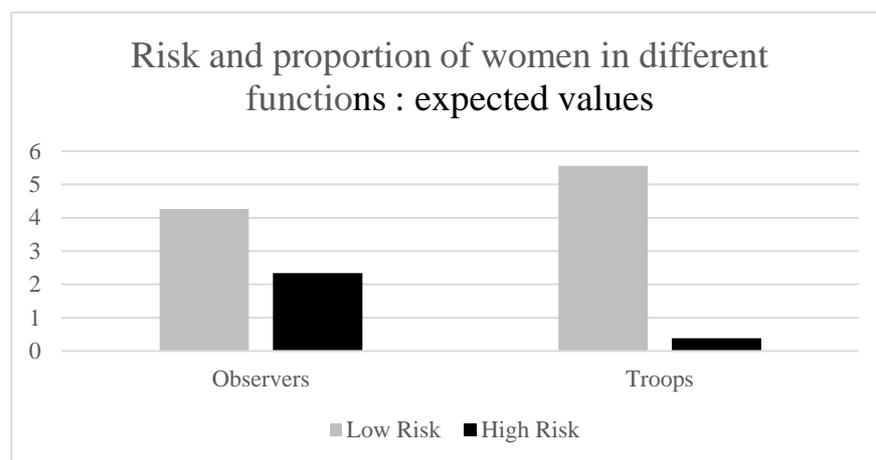
Comparing the explained variation (R²) of the two models is also instructive. While the same model specification only explains about one percent of the variation in the proportion of female peacekeepers among observers, it accounts for fully 35 percent of the

variation of female peacekeepers among troops. In other words, mission risk seems to be more important for explaining the variation of women among contingent troops than among military observers. Other factors than risk, currently not included in the model, thus account for the variation in proportion of female peacekeepers in observer functions.

In order to illustrate these points, expected values have been calculated based on the two models above in Figure 1. We predict the proportion of women observers respectively for high- and low-risk missions, and we do the same for the troop function. Based on the data, a high-risk mission is one where there are 30 peacekeeper deaths, high rape incidence and more than five battle deaths. A low-risk mission is one with no peacekeeper or battle deaths, and a low rape numbers. These measurements of high- and low-risk missions have been deduced from the respective highest lowest variable values found in the sample.

The figure below illustrates that while risk has an insignificant impact on the proportion of women observers, it does have a *strong* impact on the assignment of women to troops.

Figure 1 : Risk and proportion of women in different functions



First, although the model applies restrictively to contingent troops, mission remains relevant as an explanatory factor for the number of female peacekeepers. Second, among military observers, mission risk cannot explain the variation in female participation. This means that other explanatory factors account for this variation. While these results should be interpreted with caution, due to the lack of available long-term data, they nevertheless point to a potential trend that needs to be further scrutinized. The difference noted between observers and troops bears out the theory.

This horizontal analysis of the relationship between mission risk and proportions of women should be compared to the collective analysis conducted on the same sample. The study conducted by Karim and Beardsley (2013) found an initial relationship in the sample when analyzing the two functions collectively. However, a horizontally disaggregated analysis shows that this relationship only exists to a significant degree within contingent troops. The horizontal analysis has thus given us two crucial pieces of additional

information about the relationships in the sample. First, the relationship between mission risk and proportion of women is almost non-existing among military observers and can thus not be claimed as an explanatory factor to low proportions of women. Second and consequently, there must be other factors explaining the variation of proportions of women between missions regarding military observers.

Discussion

Within contingent troops, a higher mission risk has a negative effect on the proportion of women. The explanatory factor suggested for this relationship is the influence that ideals of military masculinities exert in the assignment process. With risk-taking being closely linked to the ideal of a military masculinity, these gendered ideals will to some degree prevent women from being deployed on equal terms with men. Sending women to missions with a high risk and thus a high probability of combat is not compatible with the masculine identity as reproduced in military organizations. Considering that UN peacekeeping missions were considered least-likely cases for such an effect, the results imply that the effect should be applicable to contingent troops in international missions of a more traditional military character.

A collective study of both military observers and contingent troops suggests that variation in proportion of women can be explained by mission risk in both groups. Without an additional horizontal analysis, such a conclusion runs the risk of accrediting mission risk as an explanatory factor for military observers, despite the fact that the present evidence shows otherwise. Such an assumption would fail to indicate that other explanatory factors, to a much larger degree than for contingent troops, would explain the variation in female military observers. In this case, the horizontal analysis helped us discover that risk is only responsible for the variation in the proportion of women among troops. Since UN peacekeeping missions were deemed least-likely cases for a relationship between risk and the inclusion of women, the fact that risk nevertheless matters for the inclusion of women in contingent troops tells us that it is likely that risk is an important gendered factor in equivalent combat-prone groups in other international missions. The finding that mission risk does not carry as many gendered consequences in less combat-prone groups is a finding that future research should explore further. This study suggests that a horizontally disaggregated analysis across functions is a fruitful method for distinguishing between diverse gendered effects.

A factor that varies across functions but could be relevant to assignment and gender balance outcomes as regards military observers is their seniority in service. Within a military structure, military observers are often senior/higher-ranking officers. The seniority aspect could have implications since, because of the late inclusion of women into most military organizations, fewer women have reached such seniority and ranks. Other obstacles along their career path may also have kept women from reaching this status. A possible alternative is that the average seniority among those holding these functions has a mitigating effect on the influence of military masculinities on assignment to these

functions. Further research could shed light on the conditionality of evoked military masculinities and demonstrate how different ideals apply to different groups of men and women.

Ultimately, UN peacekeeping missions are made up of troop contributions from member-nations. The gender balance of an individual mission will thus always be dependent on, though they may not necessarily reflect, the gender balance in the national forces of a country deploying to that mission, in the specific unit deployed, or among potential military observers. In addition, many factors determine which individual or which unit will deploy to a peacekeeping mission, and these factors also will vary across troop contributing nations. However, studies (such as this) cross-analyzing troop contributions and mission personnel show general trends that cross-cut any factors specific to the deployment of a unit or an individual. Findings from research bearing on all UN peacekeeping missions indicate that the main trends are related to the very nature of military institutions rather than to individual troop-contributing countries.

This study does raise the methodological point that military components which include a variety of military functions should as far as possible give rise to separate and comparative analyses of those functions. The data mobilized for this particular study only distinguished between military observers and contingent troops. For future studies, a separate analysis of units and functions within contingent troops could provide interesting conclusions. Such studies could, for instance, usefully test the relationship between less combat-prone positions and the proportion of women within the contingent troops.

Conclusion

In line with our hypothesis, the explanatory factors for the variation in proportions of women did differ between the functions of military observers and contingent troops. For contingent troops, mission risk explains some of the variation between missions. As for military observers, no such relationship could be observed. The present findings raise the methodological point that a separate analysis of military functions is useful and indeed even necessary. This gendered difference between functions was only made visible because of the application of a horizontally disaggregated analysis.

This article has set out to study one of the main objectives of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions and to examine the gender balance in UN peacekeeping missions. In order for the UN and member-States to achieve the ambitious goal of doubling the number of women in military components, these underlying root factors of gender imbalance must be tackled. As this study indicates, the low proportion of women among contingent troops and military observers cannot be explained by the same factor. Thus, the issue of how to remedy gender imbalance should be addressed differently when designing solutions for those two functions. Without a full understanding of the different challenges facing women in the armed forces, implementation of policies will not be successful and actions to increase gender balance will be off target. The present findings thus point to the need for further information, deeper analysis and more indicators with a horizontal dimension with

regard to increasing gender balance in UN peacekeeping missions. Though this article does not offer a complete picture of the obstacles facing women in a masculine military culture, it does identify certain points calling for further inquiry into the influence on functional assignments of the specific tasks intended for structures, groups and individuals alike.

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