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Blue Helmets, Red Flags: Institutional, Societal, and Military Determinants of Peacekeeping Abuses

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Abstract

United Nations peacekeeping soldiers commit atrocities while deployed despite their mandate to protect civilians from harm. Yet, there is tremendous variation across missions in reported human rights abuses. Why are some missions more susceptible to misconduct than others? To answer this puzzle, we identify three broad sources of influence on peacekeeper behavior: institutions, society, and military culture. Using newly collected data, we find that host-country and contributing-country institutions, particularly press freedoms and rule of law, dramatically decrease violations. Compliance with international humanitarian law also decreases violations, though to a lesser degree than institutions. Societal influences, such as gender norms and income inequality, have virtually no impact on abuses. We illustrate the utility of these findings by generating out-of-sample predictions for hypothetical peacekeeping missions in countries with recent political turmoil.

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The United Nations (UN) establishes peacekeeping missions in order to quell conflicts, promote institutional capacity, and protect civilians. Soldier misconduct tarnishes the reputation of these missions. A recently released Associated Press report found nearly 2,000 instances of abuse by peacekeepers between 2004 and 2016.¹ Sexual exploitation and human rights violations have occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, the Central African Republic, and elsewhere (Zeid al Hussein 2005). Yet, peacekeeper behavior also varies across missions. In 2006, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services confirmed 176 allegations of abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo but found no evidence of abuse in six other ongoing missions (United Nations General Assembly 2007). Why are some peacekeeping missions more susceptible to misconduct than others?

Article 101 of the UN Charter binds all personnel to the “highest standards of... integrity.” In 1999 the UN Secretariat introduced new standards of peacekeeper conduct and explicitly tied UN forces to international humanitarian law (IHL) (Annan 1999).² By 2003, the Secretariat had established a zero tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse (United Nations Secretariat 2003). These increasingly rigorous standards should decrease opportunities for abuse and, in principle, should eliminate variation in human rights abuses across missions. Yet, many missions continue to report cases of gross misconduct.

Drawing upon diverse literatures, we identify three broad sources of influence on peacekeeper behavior. *Institutional* influences originate from the social, political, economic, and legal-judicial institutions of peacekeepers’ home countries, as well as from the institutions of the countries to which they are deployed. Legal institutions like rule of law allow governments to detain, prosecute, and punish human rights violators, while press freedoms increase the probability that violations will be publicized and scrutinized. *Societal* influences originate from the larger characteristics of peacekeepers’ home societies. Countries with deep social inequalities, such as established gender hierarchies and patriarchal norms, socialize individuals into accepting the marginalization of large segments of society, which in turn predisposes those individuals toward dehumanization of vulnerable populations. Finally, *military* influences originate from the unique military cultures that constitute soldiers’ own professional backgrounds. For example, militaries that promote compliance with IHL and/or rely on volunteer recruitment should generally produce soldiers less tolerant of civilian abuses.

At the micro-level, these categories of influence likely involve both external and internal constraints on behavior. As individuals, peacekeeping soldiers respond both to externally imposed rewards/punishments and to internalized norms of appropriate behavior (Plante and Devine 1998). Disentangling consequentialist from normative behavior is notoriously difficult (March and Olsen 1998). Further, data on peacekeeper abuses are not sufficiently detailed to attribute abuses to spe-

¹“AP Exclusive: UN child sex ring left victims but no arrests,” *AP News*, April 12, 2017.

²These include general standards of conduct (“We are United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel”) and a personal code of conduct for soldiers (“Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets”). These standards detail specific violations, such as acts that “use unnecessary violence or threaten anyone in custody” or are “abusive or uncivil to any member of the public” (United Nations General Assembly 2009, Annex H).

cific individuals. We thus focus on the mission level, paying careful attention to how institutional, societal, and military influences in troop-contributing countries (TCCs) aggregate to the mission as a whole. For example, in some missions peacekeepers will hail primarily from countries with strong rule of law, while in others they will come from countries plagued by weak legal-judicial systems. A mission-year approach allows us to assess how human rights abuses vary according to the composition of the mission and the institutional features of host countries themselves (cf. Karim and Beardsley 2016). We nonetheless discuss the presumed micro-level mechanisms, whether normative or instrumental, that connect these broad influences to individual actions. In practice, because peacekeeping missions are weakly institutionalized and have few mechanisms of collective identity formation, they often function as the sum of their parts.

We do not *ex ante* favor either societal, institutional, or military explanations. Rather, we proceed inductively, extracting a series of testable hypotheses from this trichotomous framework and conducting rigorous exploratory analysis. We test our hypotheses using newly collected data on peacekeeping abuses from 2000 to 2010. The results show that societal influences—that is, the characteristics of peacekeepers’ home countries—have virtually no impact on human rights abuses. In contrast, institutions like rule of law and, especially, press freedoms dramatically reduce violations. Military culture, especially compliance with IHL, also affects violations. We illustrate the utility of these findings by generating out-of-sample predictions for hypothetical peacekeeping missions, showing that as institutions deteriorate over time, the risk of human rights abuses in a prospective mission spikes dramatically.

We proceed in five sections. First, we discuss the literatures on institutional, societal, and military constraints. Second, we theorize how these existing mechanisms affect peacekeeping soldiers. Third, we describe the data collection process and research design. Fourth, we present the findings. The fifth section concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for future missions. To improve peacekeeper accountability, we recommend that host countries play a greater role in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators.

Existing Research on Peacekeeper Violations

Figure 1 illustrates trends in human rights abuses for the period 2000–2010, disaggregated to both the mission and country-host level. We define abuses as general cases of assault, including physical abuse, acts of torture, unconventional violence, sexual violence, and homicide. The data show substantial variation in outcomes. Some missions experience zero violations, while others experience hundreds. This variation is not well explained by traditional proxies like geography. For example, while the two most violation-prone missions—MONUC in the Democratic Republic of Congo and UNMIS in Sudan—are both in Africa, other missions hosted by African countries, such as in Chad or Angola, experienced relatively few violations. The puzzle, then, is clear. Why do some peacekeeping missions experience so many more human rights violations than others? We review the literature with particular emphasis on institutional, societal, and military influences.

Figure 1: Human Rights Abuses by UN Peacekeepers, 2000–2010

Note: Left panel shows abuses aggregated by country. Right panel shows abuses aggregated by peacekeeping mission. Vertical axis is number of unique abuse events. Data source described below. See supplementary information for acronyms.

Institutions. Scholars have long argued that strong domestic institutions limit human rights violations (Beer and Mitchell 2004; Davenport 1999; Hamm 2001). In the case of UN peacekeeping missions, a model Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) automatically takes effect until mission-specific agreements are drafted. However, the model SOFA gives TCCs, not host states, primary criminal jurisdiction over peacekeepers (Burke 2011). And, as Notar (2006) observes, the SOFA does not contain assurances that TCCs will in fact investigate and prosecute allegations of abuse. Domestic rule of law may be able to compensate for this shortcoming. Defined most simply, rule of law is a system of transparent rights that allows individuals, including peacekeeping soldiers, to predict the legal consequences of their actions (Maravall and Przeworski 2003). Well-developed legal-judicial institutions ensure myriad rights for all citizens, regardless of political, social, or economic standing (O'Donnell 2004).

Press freedoms further encourage oversight of public and private actors. A free media can publicize violations of laws and social norms, which in turn facilitates prosecution and promotes accountability. Livingston (1997) argues that peacekeeping missions are susceptible to media attention in proportion to the host country's degree of instability. Because human rights abuses fundamentally conflict with the UN's peacekeeping mandate, they are particularly high profile targets of media attention. Overall, while the literature suggests that both rule of law and press freedoms should discourage abuses by peacekeepers, these possibilities have not yet been rigorously analyzed.

Society. Societal norms also play a role in peacekeeping missions. Peacekeepers are, first and foremost, citizens. They are thus influenced by the unique norms, biases, and preferences of their home-country social environments (Campbell 1964; Carlson 2001; Durkheim 1956; Horne 2003;

Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe 1965). Norms are non-legal obligations, such as beliefs, values, and social customs (McAdams 1997). Once internalized, norms are difficult to remove. Harro (2000) contends that socialization is a cyclical process, begun before birth and continuously reinforced over an individual’s lifetime. Peacekeepers behave normatively by establishing internal sanctions for themselves—and external sanctions for others—when violating societal norms.

The connection between a peacekeeper’s social environment and his or her subsequent behavior in a peacekeeping mission is complex. Nonetheless, there is a clear connection between inequality, broadly defined, and human rights violations (Landman and Larizza 2009; Melander 2005). For example, Gizelis (2009) finds that gender equality increases the success of post-conflict peacekeeping operations and reduces the probability of civil war recurrence. Karim and Beardsley (2016) similarly find that gender equality in troop-contributing countries reduces allegations specifically of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). However, the influence of gender equality on peacekeeper abuses in general—as well as the influence of other forms of inequality, such as economic or educational—remains unexplored.

Military. Peacekeepers are also influenced by military culture. For example, IHL binds all actors in a conflict to the laws of war, which include protections for civilians, noncombatants, and hors de combat (Askin 2003; ICRC Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law 2004). Yet, while most mission mandates reiterate IHL principles, some scholars question IHL’s efficacy in limiting abuses (Notar 2006; Spencer 2005). Further, governments may employ laws of war strategically, in order to strengthen their own battlefield performance, in which case IHL does not exert a strong normative influence (Morrow 2014).

Military recruitment also affects culture. Governments face a tradeoff between a well-trained but costly all-volunteer force (AVF), or a cheaper but potentially inadequate conscription force (Ross 1994, 117). Conscript militaries are more likely to include uninvested elites, while AVFs include more ideologically motivated career soldiers (Moskos 1970; Vasquez 2005). AVFs may also exhibit increased morale and combat effectiveness (Gal and Manning 1987; Wong, Kolditz, Millen, and Potter 2003). Conscript militaries’ low group cohesion may lead to perverse consequences. For example, rebel groups that rely on forced abduction and press-ganging for recruitment have used wartime rape to create bonds of loyalty and trust (Cohen 2013, 461). Similar motivations may extend to peacekeepers, many of whom come from conscript militaries. Peacekeeping missions themselves often suffer from poor group cohesion. As Wood (2009) notes, soldiers build ties not only through formal training, but also through informal rituals, such as hazing.

Institutional, Societal, and Military Influences on Peacekeeper Violations

In hypothesizing the effects of institutional, societal, and military influences on peacekeeper abuses, we conceptualize peacekeeping missions as collections of individuals who are influenced both by the

characteristics of their home countries and by the institutions of mission-host countries. We assume that missions can be usefully characterized as equivalent to the sum of their parts. For example, we argue that as a mission’s proportion of peacekeepers from strong rule-of-law countries increases, the likelihood of observing human rights violations should decrease, *ceteris paribus*. This mission-level perspective depends in part on data limitations. As discussed below, the media reports from which we derive the data do not contain sufficient information to attribute peacekeeper abuses to specific national contingents.

At the same time, this mission-level approach is consistent with prevailing narratives about how missions function. First, missions are heterogeneous in composition, combining multiple languages, cultures, religions, and professional standards under a single command. Prior research suggests that the diverse worldviews of soldiers influence their behavior during mission deployments (Higate 2007; Karim and Beardsley 2016; Moncrief 2017).

Second, peacekeepers are typically deployed for short 6-12 month periods (Moncrief 2017), which, coupled with heterogeneity between soldiers, restricts opportunities for group socialization and predisposes peacekeepers toward acting disparately rather than as cohesive units (Checkel 1999; Wood and Toppelberg 2017).

Third, TCCs may direct their respective contingents even during deployment. TCCs negotiate specific tasks and zones of deployment for their troops, and the mission’s force commander cannot alter these conditions “without the consent of the TCC” (Leck 2009, 354). In some cases, peacekeepers may even “[seek] national direction before executing the orders of the Force Commander” (Leck 2009, 355). Such discrepancies between command and personnel allow for substantial home-country influence.

Finally, despite known weaknesses in command structure, the UN lacks sufficient resources and political will for long-term improvements (Diehl, Reifschneider, and Hensel 1996).³ Peacekeeping missions tend to be deployed reactively rather than proactively, which poses larger structural challenges in effectively transforming individual military contingents into socially unified groups.

The structural weaknesses of peacekeeping missions thus provide an opportunity to consider which features of contributing and host countries most effectively limit human rights abuses. Nonetheless, we do not dismiss the possibility that structural variations across missions also affect levels of abuse. In the supplementary information (SI), we control for a variety of structural influences, such as budgets and troop allotments. We find that, although structural variations are sometimes related to abuses, TCC and host-country influences are far more substantively significant.

Perhaps the key limitation of our mission-level approach is that it does not explicitly assess the micro-level mechanisms that lead individual soldiers to choose abuse over protection. Our theory is consistent with two basic mechanisms—instrumentalist responses to external constraints versus internalization of rules, norms, and principles—that are well established across multiple literatures

³For example, Higate (2003) finds inconsistent implementation of gender training across missions, and Martin (2005) finds variation in standards of conduct between peacekeepers and civilians.

(e.g., Carlson 2001; March and Olsen 1998; Plante and Devine 1998; Simmons 2009). Peacekeepers, like all individuals, develop internal constraints on their behavior in response to normative and moral standings (Horne 2003). At the same time, external checks against deviant behavior, such as material or social punishments, establish socio-legal constraints (Harro 2000). Empirical analysis of norms is difficult (Rauhut and Winter 2010). Effectively distinguishing between instrumental and normative behavior typically requires an experimental research design (Plante and Devine 1998), which is both infeasible and unethical in the current context. Thus, although we discuss the relative significance of internal and external constraints when theorizing peacekeeper abuses, we do not empirically test these micro-level mechanisms. Rather, we assume that, *ceteris paribus*, aggregate institutional, societal, and military influences yield observable differences in the average behavior of peacekeepers across missions.

Institutions: Rule of law and press freedoms

Effective rule of law ensures protection of political rights and civil liberties through clearly defined legislation and institutionalized accountability mechanisms (O'Donnell 2004), such that civilians can predict the legal consequences of misconduct and alter their behavior accordingly (Maravall and Przeworski 2003). For peacekeepers, rule of law matters at both the host-country and TCC levels. While the above-mentioned SOFA limits the jurisdiction of host countries over peacekeepers, strong rule of law nonetheless allows hosts to promote accountability in at least three ways.

First, host countries may play a role in victim redress. While mission SOFAs routinely incorporate standing claims commissions as a means of investigating peacekeeper misconduct, such commissions have never been invoked (United Nations General Assembly 1997, 4). Instead, third-party claims typically go through informal “local claims review boards” or through negotiations with host countries (Dannenbaum 2010). Local boards are limited—for example, the UN maintains exclusive control over the reviewing panel and can withhold information from the public (Bode 2016, 772)—but they do sometimes hold peacekeepers accountable and award compensation. Host countries often play a role in this process. Shortly after the Kosovo War in 1999, three brothers were detained by personnel of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). After finding no grounds for detainment, a panel of international judges ordered that the brothers be released and compensated (Rawski 2002; Sweetser 2008). Notably, the panel’s decision cited *The Provisional Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo*, which preserves a right to compensation for victims of false detainment (United Nations Mission in Kosovo 2003). Ultimately, the brothers received an undisclosed amount from a UNMIK claims commission (Rawski 2002). Absent Kosovo’s existing legal and administrative institutions, this compensation may have never materialized.

Second, host governments may file a complaint with the UN and negotiate on behalf of their citizens (Dannenbaum 2010). If a ruling finds in favor of the host, the UN pays a lump sum, which the host then distributes to victims (United Nations General Assembly 1996). For example, following misconduct against Belgian nationals during an early mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Belgian government successfully pressed claims of “damage to persons and property”

(United Nations Security Council 1965, Annex I, 1). In practice, successful claims are rare, as many host countries suffer from weak institutions. For example, despite documented irregularities in the UN’s mission in Somalia, “the lack of an organized government in Mogadishu” precluded the Somali government from filing a claim (Gibney, Tomaševski, and Vedsted-Hansen 1999, 280). Nonetheless, effective rule of law should improve a host’s ability to utilize this resource.

Third, host countries promote accountability by arresting and detaining perpetrators directly. For example, the mandate for UNMIK established guidelines for an interim government (United Nations Security Council 1999), which in turn allowed the UNMIK civilian police force to train and work alongside the Kosovo Police Service (KPS). UNMIK and KPS jointly investigated a trafficking ring in 2006, ultimately arresting and detaining three UN police officers for human trafficking (United States Department of State 2007). Despite limited legal-juridical capacity, host countries can sometimes impose nontrivial “on the ground” constraints.

TCCs exercise a more direct legal influence over peacekeepers than do hosts. SOFAs stipulate that contributors bear primary responsibility for applying appropriate legal standards to suspected human rights violators—as defined by their domestic laws—and for subsequently bringing prosecution. *Ceteris paribus*, a country with strong rule of law is better equipped to efficiently arrest, prosecute, and punish violators. The Canadian government’s response to the “Somali Affair” provides an illustration (Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces in Somalia 1997). Canada’s reputation as a peacekeeping contributor was tarnished in 1993 by the shooting of an unarmed Somali man and the torture and death of a Somali teenager (Whitworth 2004).⁴ The Canadian government convened a commission to investigate the events and assess the overall efficacy of Canada’s peacekeeping operations. The commission was expansive and transparent. An estimated “116 witnesses offered their evidence in open sessions broadcast on television across Canada” (Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces in Somalia 1997, ES-3). Soldiers and officers testified both in Somalia and at the National Defence Headquarters. The four-year inquiry uncovered allegations of excessive brutality and institutionalized racism, as well as a history of military leaders knowingly neglecting misconduct (Whitworth 2004). Though prematurely discontinued, the investigation led to the prosecution of nine Canadian peacekeepers (Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces in Somalia 1997; O’Brien 2012).

Together, host and contributor institutions impose external constraints on peacekeepers, limiting the ability of an individual soldier to contradict UN guidelines. By conducting investigations, detaining perpetrators, and convening trials, host-country institutions reduce barriers to accountability on the ground. At the same time, TCCs impose accountability on individual soldiers by holding out the possibility of prosecution at home. *Ceteris paribus*, missions composed more of troops that hail from strong rule-of-law countries should generally see fewer human rights abuses. We thus hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1 *The stronger the rule of law in mission-host countries, the lower the propensity for human rights abuses*

⁴Also see “Canadian Peace Keepers Accused,” *Washington Post*, May 22, 1993.

Hypothesis 2 *The stronger the rule of law in TCCs, the lower the propensity for human rights abuses*

Media plays a pivotal role in conflict by grabbing the attention of policymakers, the public, and international organizations (Belknap 2002; Puddephatt 2006). In communicating the urgency of human rights crises, the media acts as an agenda setter. This agenda-setting ability depends, in turn, on the extent to which a country guarantees basic press freedoms, such as protections on free expression, unimpeded access to media sources (digital, print, and broadcast), and transparent private ownership of media conglomerates. These freedoms allow the media to increase both public awareness of peacekeeper abuses and the likelihood that a given instance of abuse will receive a formal response.

Media portrayals of abuse affect public opinion of peacekeepers irrespective of a mission's efficacy. As the public's primary source for understanding crime, media fosters passive public participation while also shaping viewers' perceptions of criminal and deviant behavior (Ericson 1991; Jewkes 2004). The media also has an incentive to sensationalize events.⁵ By emphasizing content that reinforces the perception of "moral panic," news outlets transform abuses into captivating narratives (Jewkes 2004).⁶ These narratives in turn induce public interest in the successful detainment and prosecution of peacekeepers.

As with rule of law, press freedoms matter for both host and contributor countries. For contributors, a free press can monitor the activities of their country's soldiers abroad, possibly through embedded journalists and other avenues of first-hand reporting. Further, by regularly reporting on high-profile cases, a TCC's media can publicize instances of abuse and inform the public of whether their government has adequately fulfilled its prosecutorial obligations. Peacekeepers recognize that even journalistic accounts of human rights abuses can ultimately result in criminal prosecution because the SOFA binds them to the legal jurisdiction of their home countries.

For hosts, a free press provides yet another constraint on peacekeeper behavior. When deployed to a country with strong press freedoms, for example, peacekeepers are more likely to observe widely circulated forms of print and broadcast media, unimpeded access to digital media, a more visible presence for embedded journalists and war correspondents, and government disinterest toward media accounts of military misconduct. Further, even if violations fall outside the jurisdiction of the host country, reports of misconduct generated by the host's media sources can percolate to international fora, including to the news outlets of TCCs.

An incident involving Uruguayan peacekeepers during the UN's mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) provides an example. In 2011, a local journalist received cellphone video footage of four Uruguayan peacekeepers collectively assaulting a Haitian teenager on the MINUSTAH base camp.⁷ The in-

⁵Previous work shows that media over-represents physically violent criminal behavior and under-represents petty crimes (e.g., Ditton and Duffy 1983).

⁶Despite the potential for misinformation, research shows that the public largely accepts distorted news without question (Edelman 1988).

⁷"Video of U.N. Peacekeepers' Sexual Assault of Haitian Prompts Calls to Focus on Post-Quake Rebuilding," *Democracy Now*, September 6, 2011.

cident prompted widespread condemnation from Haitians and local media outlets, leading to a demonstration by several hundred Haitians outside the mission base (Ives 2013).⁸ Haitian President Michel Martelly released a statement “vigorously condemning” the assault, which was followed by a public apology from Uruguayan President Jose Mujica and the repatriation of the perpetrators.⁹ In 2012, the peacekeepers were charged and prosecuted in Uruguay. However, the sentences were significantly lighter than what the peacekeepers would have received under Haitian laws, prompting renewed protests and demands for the withdrawal of Uruguayan forces, to which President Mujica conceded the following year (Center for Economic and Policy Research 2012; Ives 2013).

Events in Haiti and Uruguay illustrate how a free press can impose accountability on individual peacekeepers. News of the 2011 assault appeared in print, broadcast, and digital media, and it elicited critical responses from both the public and state leaders. Local and international condemnation heightened Uruguay’s sensitivity to the good standing of its peacekeepers, which in turn led to the prosecution, conviction, and punishment of individual violators—and ultimately the repatriation of all Uruguayan peacekeepers. As with rule of law, press freedoms act more as an instrumental constraint on individual soldiers than as a normative influence. Even a minimal recognition of the power of the press should encourage soldiers to regulate their behavior when deployed abroad. *Ceteris paribus*, host countries with strong press freedoms should see fewer abuses, as should missions comprised more of troops whose home governments recognize strong press freedoms. In sum:

Hypothesis 3 *The greater the freedom of press in mission-host countries, the lower the propensity for human rights abuses*

Hypothesis 4 *The greater the freedom of press in TCCs, the lower the propensity for human rights abuses*

Society: Gender and income inequality

The social environment in TCCs also affects peacekeeper behavior. Oppressed communities and marginalized groups, such as women and children, are particularly vulnerable to abuses (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2010; Martin 2005; Zeid al Hussein 2005). The disproportionate targeting of women depends, in part, on gender norms in contributing countries. In their analysis of SEA, Karim and Beardsley (2016) find that peacekeepers tend to abuse the same groups abroad that they are socialized to devalue at home. Gender norms are not limited to SEA, however; they provide insight into a society’s overall egalitarianism (Hudson, Ballif-Spanvill, Caprioli, and Emmett 2012). Indeed, the protection of women’s rights serves as a barrier against other human rights abuses. For example, Melander (2005) finds that rejecting the subordination of women decreases personal integrity abuses.

Egalitarianism manifests in myriad ways, from women’s political participation to opportunities for gainful employment (Karim and Beardsley 2016; Melander 2005). Education plays an especially

⁸Also see “Haiti: Boy who claims sexual assault by Uruguay peacekeepers supported by demonstrators,” *Huffington Post*, September 6, 2011.

⁹“Uruguay apologizes over alleged rape by UN peacekeepers,” *Reuters*, September 6, 2011.

important role, given the linkages between women’s education and such vital outcomes as economic development (Duflo 2012). Karim and Beardsley (2016) examine TCCs’ ratio of girls to boys in primary schools, ultimately concluding that greater female participation reduces incidents of SEA. We instead focus on secondary school enrollment, as primary enrollment is sensitive to repetitive enrollments for over-age children (World Bank 2016a).

We also consider healthcare accessibility, which connects to physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing, and is fundamental to a woman’s human rights and social perceptions of her gender (Otto 1995). Healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth, in particular, reveals the value a society assigns to women. Social indicators like maternal mortality provide crucial information about overall social standing. *Ceteris paribus*, a country with high maternal mortality rates is more likely to exhibit pervasive inequalitarianism, which translates into fewer normative constraints on that country’s soldiers and, thus, an increased risk of abuses.

Peacekeepers are also influenced by forms of inequality beyond gender. Income inequality, for example, reflects an obdurate gap between the “haves” and the “have nots,” which creates incentives for the “haves” in society to “maintain control of their resources and to exclude access to those resources by the ‘have nots’ in ways that use coercive means that undermine the protection of personal integrity rights” (Landman 2013, 124). The wealthy citizens of heavily unequal societies may willfully violate the personal integrity of poorer citizens in order to profit from valuable resources (Landman and Larizza 2009, 719). Governments are often complicit in these violations. Ignoring abuse of the poor—or even promoting corruption, nepotism, and other policies that harm poor communities—allows governments and leaders to actively restrict the distribution of resources (Landman and Larizza 2009). Individuals exposed to environments that promote inequality and reward elitism are more likely to hold negative views of those perceived as different, inferior, or undeserving (Kraus, Park, and Tan 2017).

At the individual level, societal influences primarily involve norm internalization. A given soldier’s perception of (un)acceptable behavior depends upon socially inherited beliefs and principles. Peacekeepers refrain from abuses less because they fear material punishments and more because they believe such actions to be morally wrong. At the aggregate mission level, we anticipate that missions composed more of troops from countries with strong records on gender parity, maternal mortality, and income inequality should, all else equal, see fewer human rights abuses.

Hypothesis 5 *The greater the gender parity of secondary enrollments in TCCs, the lower the propensity for human rights abuses*

Hypothesis 6 *The greater the maternal mortality rate in TCCs, the greater the propensity for human rights abuses*

Hypothesis 7 *The greater the income inequality in TCCs, the greater the propensity for human rights abuses*

Military: Humanitarian law and conscription

Finally, we consider military culture, focusing on two characteristics: modes of military recruitment, and adherence to IHL.¹⁰ UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued a bulletin on peacekeeping and IHL in 1999, informing member states that “the fundamental principles and rules of international humanitarian law” apply to UN forces when engaged as “combatants,” which Annan expanded to include “enforcement actions, or in peacekeeping operations when the use of force is permitted in self-defence” (Annan 1999). Legal scholars generally agree that IHL applies to peacekeepers (Shraga 2000). We focus on the extent to which contributor countries have incorporated IHL into their domestic civilian and military legal structures. *Ceteris paribus*, soldiers who have been trained to observe IHL protections—and who have been informed of the consequences of IHL violations—are less likely to engage in abuses. For example, the Deputy Force Commander of the peacekeeping mission to the former Yugoslavia attested to multiple incidents “involving the abuse of basic human rights,” where “a deplorable lack of knowledge of the basics of international humanitarian law [prevented] soldiers from taking positive action to stop or limit such abuses” (MacInnis 1996). While mission host countries can play a role in holding peacekeepers accountable, contributing countries are ultimately responsible for instilling professional standards of conduct.

States vary widely in their ratification and domestic incorporation of key IHL treaties. We anticipate that greater efforts toward incorporation increase constraints on peacekeepers and reduce their propensity to commit abuses. As Morrow (2014) argues, states ratify IHL treaties in part to signal to military personnel the need for restraint on the battlefield. Important steps toward IHL compliance include ratification of Additional Protocols I and II of the Geneva Conventions, and the creation of national committees for IHL implementation. National committees “advise and assist governments in implementing and spreading knowledge of IHL,” including by monitoring the application of IHL, proposing new legislation, and assisting in the training of armed forces (International Committee of the Red Cross 2016*b*). National committees are voluntary, not mandatory. As such, the creation of a committee indicates a strong commitment to compliance. Finally, a country’s overall IHL-related legislative activity provides further evidence of compliance. Legislation involving civilian protections on humane treatment, torture, and sexual violence is especially relevant to peacekeeper abuses.

At the micro level, military culture both socializes soldiers to specific norms and imposes material consequences for noncompliance (Wilson 2008). In countries with strong IHL standards, this dual impact involves training and education for soldiers, as well as active monitoring by commanders and political officials. Overall, missions comprised more of troops from IHL-abiding countries should see fewer abuses.

¹⁰Military culture is complex and difficult to measure. Many scholars focus on military professionalization, measured as some variant of militarization rates, per-troop defense spending, or overall military capabilities (e.g., Biddle 2004; Bove and Elia 2011; Pickering 2011; Vasquez 2005). However, such measures are only indirectly connected to peacekeeper behavior. In the SI, we consider numerous additional facets of military culture, none of which is as substantively or statistically significant as those considered here.

Hypothesis 8 *The stronger the adherence to international humanitarian law in TCCs, the lower the propensity for human rights abuses*

H8 poses a potential research design problem. Paradoxically, IHL-related treatymaking and legislation may be greatest among worst offenders. Frequent violators are likely to face pressure, international or domestic, to reform their IHL practices. At the same time, countries that perceive themselves as compliant with IHL may consider treaties and implementing legislation unnecessary—a position sometimes ascribed to the United States (Aldrich 1991). If IHL-related activities are most prevalent among noncompliant governments, then IHL measures will *positively* correlate with abuses. As described below, a carefully specified research design distinguishes genuine efforts at IHL compliance from more superficial activities.

A second influence on military professionalism is recruitment practices. Involuntary recruitment practices, such as state-endorsed conscription, negatively influence group cohesion and solidarity relative to AVF (Gal and Manning 1987; Wong et al. 2003). Conscripts often lack a connection to the cause of conflict and a sense of loyalty to the mission (Cohen 2013; Gates 2002; Osiel 1999). In contrast, soldiers from AVF militaries are more likely to express solidarity with the group, to show professional respect for established rules of conduct, and to informally police the activities of their fellow soldiers. At the individual level, these influences are generally consistent with mechanisms of norm internalization—though rigorous disciplinary standards may also function as an external constraint (Osiel 1999). *Ceteris paribus*, missions composed more of AVF soldiers should have fewer human rights violations.

Hypothesis 9 *Involuntary recruitment in TCCs increases the propensity for human rights abuses*

We note two potential counterarguments to H9. First, because peacekeeping missions themselves are not “all volunteer” forces, contributors’ recruitment methods may be irrelevant. Group cohesion at the mission level will remain low regardless of how TCCs build their militaries. If this counterargument holds, conscription will have little impact on abuses. Second, the group solidarity associated with AVFs may in fact lead national contingents to obfuscate abuses committed by their fellow nationals.¹¹ Tripodi (2003) argues that volunteer soldiers are strongly motivated by traditional values like “patriotism and warriorism,” and that the voluntarism of AVFs promotes militaries that are insular and isolated from the civilian world. More bluntly, Dandeker and Gow (2000, 76) argue that volunteer soldiers adhere to a stereotypical concept of “macho solidarity.” If this counterargument holds true, then missions dominated by AVF troops may in fact commit *more* abuses rather than fewer.

¹¹We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this possibility.

Research Design

We collected original event data on peacekeeping abuses for the period 2000–2010. First, we obtained media reports using tailored keyword searches in LexisNexis. Second, we converted these reports to raw text and implemented the Phoenix event data parsing platform, which relies on the Petrarch engine to reduce sentence structures to syntax trees and extract precise information about “who did what to whom” (Open Event Data Alliance 2014). Third, the Phoenix pipeline assigns specific event codes using the CAMEO ontology (Norris 2016). Finally, the data are deduplicated via Phoenix’s “one-a-day” filter and merged with the mission-year peacekeeping dataset. The SI covers each of these steps in extensive detail. These data identify instances of abuse that would be unobservable from large-scale measures of mission success (as provided by the UN or otherwise). We identified 1,509 reported instances of abuse during the time period under consideration. When no abuses were reported, we coded those mission-years as zero.

A potential danger of this approach is that abuses may be underreported, which may in turn bias the results of the analysis. This issue is especially relevant in estimating the effect of press freedoms on abuses (Weidmann 2016). We address reporting bias in two ways. First, we note that if bias exists in media reports, it likely works against our hypotheses and in fact raises the bar for the empirical tests. That is, reporting bias implies that, on average, countries with strong press freedoms should see more reported abuses while countries with weak press freedoms should see fewer. This expectation runs exactly counter to H3 and H4. If we find that press freedoms reduce abuses even in the presence of reporting bias, that would constitute powerful evidence for the hypotheses. Second, in the SI we explore numerous controls for reporting bias, including total event counts, country-level cellphone coverage, and binary logit models. Our core results are generally robust to these alternative model specifications.

Following Karim and Beardsley (2016), we use a mission-year unit of analysis. The dependent variable is operationalized as the number of reported human rights abuses within a given mission-year. Available media reports do not permit systematic attribution of abuses to specific peacekeepers or national contingents. While some scholars have used individual-level data to study SEA events (e.g., Moncrief 2017), individual-level data are unavailable for human rights abuses more generally (which include not only SEA but also assault and other physical violence, torture, unconventional violence, and homicides). Despite these data limitations, expanding the purview beyond SEA is essential in understanding the larger phenomenon of peacekeeper abuses.¹²

The mission-year unit of analysis easily accommodates data on mission-host countries. Data on contributing countries pose more of a challenge, however; nearly all missions consist of multiple contributors. We again follow the approach of Karim and Beardsley (2016). For each TCC variable, we calculated a weighted average of that variable across all the countries in the mission, where the

¹²Note that the slippage between individual responsibility for abuses and the mission’s overall composition may introduce measurement error into the dependent variable. Any such error should be randomly distributed. Another possibility is that contingents from some TCCs consistently influence the behavior of others, leading to systematic measurement error. As described above, the structural weakness of peacekeeping missions make this unlikely. We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting these possibilities.

weighting for each TCC is defined by that country’s annual average troop contribution. These variations in composition, combined with host-country attributes, distinguish missions over time and space. In the SI, we also control for structural mission-level attributes, such as OECD force commanders, approved budgets, and troop allocations.

Because the number of observations is small, and because the operationalization of TCC variables requires careful attention to multicollinearity, we test the hypotheses with multiple specifications. We first specify an “institutional model,” which focuses on H1–H4. For both hosts and contributors, we use the Freedom House data on press freedoms, which assigns annual scores on a 101-point scale, based on a combined analysis of each country’s legal, political, and economic environments (Freedom House 2016). We invert this scale so that larger values correspond to a freer press. To measure rule of law, we rely on the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), which define rule of law as “perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence” (World Bank 2016*b*).

Second, we specify a “societal model,” which focuses on H5–H7. To capture gender inequality in TCCs, we include maternal mortality rates and secondary school enrollment rates distributed by gender (World Bank 2016*a*). Larger values of maternal mortality should correspond to lower levels of development, while the converse is true of secondary enrollment. We also include the Gini coefficient, which measures the extent to which a country’s distribution of income differs from a perfectly equal distribution (World Bank 2016*a*). We anticipate positive parameter estimates for the Gini coefficient and maternal mortality, and a negative estimate for secondary enrollment.

Finally, we specify a “military culture” model, which tests H8 and H9. Notably, we distinguish IHL *legislation* from efforts at IHL *compliance*. While legislation is of course a mechanism of compliance, legislation may also be a response to local and/or global pressures. That is, countries that frequently pass IHL-related legislation may simply be more prone to violations. For example, Sri Lanka has enacted extensive legislation on fundamental guarantees, largely in response to international pressures, but has adopted none of the measures that we identify as necessary for enforcement. Legislation alone, without concrete implementation mechanisms, has little impact on compliance. We operationalize an IHL legislation index, focusing on six rules within customary IHL—as identified by International Committee of the Red Cross (2016*a*)—that are particularly relevant to human rights abuses.¹³ To operationalize compliance in particular, we develop an index based on whether governments have (1) fully ratified Additional Protocols I and II, (2) established national committees on IHL enforcement, and (3) implemented legislation on fundamental guarantees specifically at the military level (e.g., military penal codes and/or military courts) (International Committee of the Red Cross 2016*a,b,c*). By separating legislative activity from good-faith efforts at compliance,

¹³These are Rule 87, on humane treatment of civilians and hors de combat; Rule 139, on respect for humanitarian law; Rule 142, on providing instruction in IHL to armed forces; Rule 143, on teaching of IHL rights and responsibilities to civilians; Rule 149, on the state’s responsibility for IHL violations; and Rule 151, on criminal responsibility of individuals for war crimes. See International Committee of the Red Cross (2016*a*).

we hope to minimize the potential selection effects of IHL. Finally, we account for recruitment practices using conscription data from Asal, Conrad, and Toronto (2017), updated through 2010.

All three of the institutional, societal, and military models also include controls, at both the host and contributor levels, for log-transformed per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) (World Bank 2016a) and democracy (Boix, Miller, and Rosato 2012).¹⁴ Controlling for economic development is especially important, as citizens in need of food, water, and other basic human needs are more willing to exchange sexual favors for resources, more vulnerable to prostitution and human trafficking, and more likely to experience abuses overall (Csáky 2008; Kirby 2008; Martin 2005; Zeid al Hussein 2005).

Finally, we control for the total number of peacekeeping troops within each mission-year, calculated as the sum of countries' average annual contributions. While previous studies find that a larger troop presence reduces civilian deaths (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013), decreases civil war recurrence (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2016), and increases mission efficacy overall (Kathman and Melin 2016), larger peacekeeping operations are also strongly associated with increased abuses (Karim and Beardsley 2016; Nordås and Rustad 2013; Smith and Smith 2011). Because this variable is skewed, we use a square-root transformation. We expect the parameter estimate to be significantly positive.

Empirically modeling peacekeeping abuses involves careful model specification. Because the count data are overdispersed, we employ a negative binomial model with standard errors clustered at the mission level. However, as we show later, our results are generally robust to alternative specifications, including population-averaged and random-effects models.¹⁵ In the SI, we estimate models that control for nonrandom selection into missions, reporting bias in media reports, and numerous other issues.

Empirical Analysis

Table 1 presents the results of the negative binomial analysis, grouped into models that separately assess institutional, societal, and military influences, respectively. Model 1 shows the estimates for the institutional model. The significantly negative estimate for host-country rule of law indicates that countries with strong legal and juridical systems are less likely to see human rights violations in peacekeeping missions. However, the estimate for TCC rule of law is insignificant. Thus, we find support for H1 but not H2. These results suggest that, although contributors have the legal capacity to prosecute peacekeepers, individual behavior may be constrained more by host-country standards. This interpretation is consistent with the model SOFA's emphasis on respecting "all local laws and regulations." Formal guidelines are often ambiguous about whether peacekeepers are held to the legal standards of home or host countries (United Nations General Assembly 1990,

¹⁴We use a dichotomous measure of democracy in order to better separate core components of democracy, such as free elections and universal suffrage, from closely related but distinct concepts, such as rule of law and press freedoms. We include Polity IV scores as a robustness check in the SI.

¹⁵We also considered zero-inflated negative binomial regression. A Vuong test indicated that the standard negative binomial functional form is preferable.

Table 1: Negative binomial models, annual number of human rights abuses

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Institutional	Societal	Military
HOST COUNTRY ATTRIBUTES			
Rule of law	-1.947*** (0.434)		
Press freedoms	-0.0458*** (0.0155)		
GDP/capita (logged)	0.959*** (0.220)	0.105 (0.164)	0.243 (0.163)
Democracy	1.946*** (0.565)	-0.460 (0.392)	-0.622* (0.344)
CONTRIBUTING COUNTRY ATTRIBUTES (WEIGHTED)			
Rule of law	0.850 (1.007)		
Press freedoms	-0.0743** (0.0296)		
Maternal mortality		-0.00123 (0.00173)	
Gini coefficient		-0.0312 (0.0225)	
Secondary enrollment		0.0218 (0.0222)	
IHL legislation			2.057*** (0.466)
IHL enforcement			-2.017*** (0.461)
Conscription			1.626 (1.025)
Democracy	-1.179* (0.697)	-2.380*** (0.571)	-4.066*** (0.774)
GDP/capita (logged)	0.790 (0.575)	-0.552 (0.403)	0.189 (0.254)
Total troops ^{$\frac{1}{2}$}	0.0308*** (0.00603)	0.0178*** (0.00553)	0.0139*** (0.00483)
Constant	-9.624** (4.268)	5.960* (3.121)	1.686 (1.750)
$\ln(\alpha)$	0.674 (0.156)	0.846 (0.151)	0.630 (0.141)
N	123	123	123
Pseudo R^2	0.082	0.053	0.084
AIC	660.4	678.5	656.5
Log-likelihood	-319.2	-329.2	-318.3

Standard errors in parentheses, clustered on mission

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Article 6), and contributor countries often have domestic political incentives to avoid prosecution of their own military personnel. Despite these weaknesses, host-country legal and juridical institutions appear to act as a check on peacekeeper behavior.

In contrast, press freedoms matter at both the contributor and host levels. Although the magnitude of the effect is slightly larger for contributors than for hosts, the estimates are not significantly different from one another, which suggests that improvements in press freedoms at the

host and contributor levels are equally likely to reduce violations. These findings strongly support both H3 and H4, and they point toward a vital role for press freedoms.

The results for the control variables are somewhat surprising. For host countries, both per-capita GDP and democracy *increase* violations. However, these estimates are not robust across specifications.¹⁶ For contributors, per-capita GDP has no effect on abuses, while democracy, as expected, reduces the number of violations.

Figure 2 plots the predictive margins for the key variables in Model 1. TCC rule of law shows no evidence of a substantive effect. TCC press freedoms, on the other hand, have a nontrivial impact; increasing this variable from the 10th decile to the 90th reduces the predicted number of violations from about 15 per year to one per year. For hosts, rule of law reduces the predicted number of annual abuses from about 20 to virtually zero. Host-country press freedoms similarly reduce the predicted number of violations from about 12 to about one. As later analyses confirm, press freedoms are consistently one of the most robust predictors of violations.

Figure 2: Predictive Margins, Institutional Model

Note: Figures illustrate predicted outcome of increasing specified variable from 10th to 90th decile, holding dichotomous variables at their medians and all others at their means. Lines are point estimates. Polygons are 95% confidence intervals. Note that y-axis scales differ across panels.

The second column of Table 1 shows the estimated effect of societal influences on peacekeepers'

¹⁶In the SI, we explore in greater detail the sometimes positive correlation between democracy and abuses. In brief, once we account for rule of law and press freedoms, the residual effect of democracy is associated with new, transitional, and/or unstable regimes.

proclivity to engage in human rights abuses. None of the estimates approaches statistical significance. We thus find no evidence that societal characteristics of contributor countries affect the behavior of peacekeepers. Figure 3, which plots the predictive margins of the societal variables, reinforces this conclusion. Even with alternative model specifications, H5–H7 find no support in the data.¹⁷

Figure 3: Predictive Margins, Societal Model

Note: Figures illustrate predicted outcome of increasing specified variable from 10th to 90th decile, holding dichotomous variables at their medians and all others at their means. Lines are point estimates. Polygons are 95% confidence intervals. Note that y-axis scales differ across panels.

The third column of Table 1 shows the estimates for military culture. IHL enforcement is strongly and negatively associated with human rights abuses, while IHL legislation is strongly and *positively* associated with abuses. This pair of results supports H8. When states make a concerted effort to *enforce* humanitarian law—i.e., by signing AP1 and AP2, establishing national IHL committees, and implementing legislation at the level of military penal codes—their peacekeepers are substantially less likely to commit violations. In contrast, when efforts at IHL compliance are merely legislative, peacekeepers are more rather than less likely to commit violations. This result warrants caution. We do not believe that IHL legislation increases human rights abuses. Rather, this measure, in concert with the enforcement measure, proxies for countries that demand attention to IHL compliance issues—as reflected by large volumes of IHL-related legislation—but have not made significant progress toward enforcement. In addition to IHL, Model 3 reveals a positive but not quite significant correlation between conscription and human rights abuses, which partially supports H9.

Figure 4 plots the predictive margins from Model 3. The impact of IHL legislation in contributor countries is strong and precise. *Ceteris paribus*, increasing this index from the 10th to the 90th decile increases predicted annual abuses from nearly zero to about 25. Inversely, as the IHL enforcement

¹⁷We also estimated separate models for each of Gini coefficient, secondary enrollment, and maternal mortality, and we considered alternative measures of development, including infant and child mortality, primary enrollment, and literacy. None of these variables significantly correlated with abuses.

index increases, the predicted number of annual abuses drops precipitously from about 23 events to virtually zero. Conscription in contributor countries yields, at the 90th decile, a predicted count of nearly 10 abuses, compared to three abuses at the 10th decile, but these estimates have wide confidence intervals.

Figure 4: Predictive Margins, Military Culture Model

Note: Figures illustrate predicted outcome of increasing specified variable from 10th to 90th decile, holding dichotomous variables at their medians and all others at their means. Lines are point estimates. Polygons are 95% confidence intervals. Note that y-axis scales differ across panels.

We next estimate a full model, combining measures of the above three models, as illustrated in Table 2. We urge caution in interpretation of these results; due to the relatively small N , the estimates may be sensitive to specification. Nonetheless, the results from the individual models are generally robust to the full specification. The signs and statistical significance of most estimates remain unchanged. The estimate for contributor democracy is an important exception. While this estimate was significantly negative in each of the three constituent models, it is now indistinguishable from zero. This result implies that influences commonly associated with democracy—such as press freedoms, rule of law, and IHL enforcement—bear the brunt of the work in reducing human rights violations; democracy alone is likely too broad and ambiguous an influence.

Table 2 also shows estimates from two additional model specifications. Model 5 is a population-averaged (PA) model with a negative binomial link function (Zorn 2001). This approach directly models within-group correlations, which are common in cross-sectional time-series data. The mission-year counts of human rights violations may vary systematically by mission, such that the number of violations in a given mission-year depends, in part, on already established patterns of violations within that mission. We thus model the within-group correlation structure as a first-order autoregressive process (AR1). Our key results are robust to this specification. Rule of law and press freedoms are significantly negative for both hosts and contributors, and IHL enforcement is negative for contributors. IHL legislation loses significance, but the parameter estimate for conscription is now positive and significant at the 10% level, supporting H9. Additionally, TCC rule of law is negative and significant at the 10% level.

Table 2: Robustness checks, annual number of human rights abuses

	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Full model	Full model	Full model
HOST COUNTRY ATTRIBUTES			
Rule of law	-1.281** (0.574)	-1.128** (0.512)	-0.324 (0.452)
Press freedoms	-0.0506*** (0.0152)	-0.0449*** (0.0140)	-0.0334** (0.0132)
GDP/capita (logged)	0.829*** (0.265)	0.226 (0.188)	0.367* (0.192)
Democracy	1.338** (0.587)	0.531 (0.547)	-0.177 (0.479)
CONTRIBUTING COUNTRY ATTRIBUTES (WEIGHTED)			
Rule of law	-0.371 (1.062)	-1.708* (0.940)	-1.312* (0.698)
Press freedoms	-0.101** (0.0413)	-0.124*** (0.0409)	-0.103*** (0.0375)
Maternal mortality	0.00331 (0.00254)	0.00193 (0.00235)	0.00539** (0.00248)
Gini coefficient	0.0344 (0.0283)	0.0322 (0.0348)	-0.0130 (0.0255)
Secondary enrollment	-0.00165 (0.0241)	0.0103 (0.0266)	0.0311 (0.0218)
IHL legislation	1.269** (0.578)	0.584 (0.473)	0.0590 (0.456)
IHL enforcement	-2.146*** (0.507)	-1.975*** (0.413)	-1.515*** (0.376)
Conscription	1.190 (1.095)	1.880* (1.042)	0.314 (0.935)
Democracy	-0.887 (1.250)	0.178 (0.943)	0.581 (0.922)
GDP/capita (logged)	2.343*** (0.847)	2.459*** (0.675)	2.110*** (0.617)
Total troops ^{$\frac{1}{2}$}	0.0222*** (0.00584)	0.0183*** (0.00422)	0.00936** (0.00392)
Constant	-17.87** (7.295)	-14.23*** (3.993)	-14.66*** (4.126)
Method	NegBin	PA AR1	RE
$\ln(\alpha)$	0.431** (0.168)		
N	123	111	123
Pseudo R^2	0.111		
AIC	651.7	.	638.9
Log-likelihood	-308.9		-301.5

Standard errors in parentheses; NegBin errors clustered on mission

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

We also estimated a random-effects (RE) model, which allows count dispersions to vary randomly from one group to the next. The RE model provides an alternative means of accounting for unobserved heterogeneity. Again, our key results are robust to this specification, with the most notable exception being host-country rule of law, the estimate for which is now statistically insignificant. However, press freedoms and IHL enforcement continue to be statistically significant,

reinforcing the importance of these two influences.

We use out-of-sample prediction to illustrate the real-world applicability of these results. We identified crises that were considered by scholars and/or policymakers to be prime candidates for peacekeeping interventions but, for various reasons, never received a mission. These “near missions” offer intriguing counterfactuals: If the missions had materialized, how many human rights abuses would we have likely seen? Combining the results of our model with different possible compositions of a hypothetical peacekeeping mission, we predicted the number of abuses in each case. Our hypothetical missions include Spain as a host country in 2006, corresponding to ETA’s declaration of a permanent ceasefire; Ukraine in 2014, following the Minsk Protocol ceasefire; Syria in 2012, corresponding to the attempted implementation of Kofi Anna’s six-point peace plan in the Syrian civil war; Turkey in 2013, corresponding to the unilaterally declared ceasefire by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party; and Colombia in 2015, following a ceasefire with FARC rebels, scheduled to take effect in 2016. By selecting real-world cases that share crucial features with known peacekeeping missions, we minimize the pitfalls of implausible counterfactuals (King and Zeng 2007). Each of the selected cases involved severe domestic strife, limited success in governmental responses, and public discussion of potential peacekeeping missions. Further, the cases are varied in regime type, economic development, rule of law, press freedoms, and other key indicators, which reflects similar variation among observed mission-host countries.

Figure 5: Predicting Human Rights Abuses in Hypothetical Missions

Note: Bar heights indicate predicted number of abuses, based on Model 4. “Best case,” “worst case,” and “average case” scenarios refer to values of contributing-country variables.

For each hypothetical mission, we set the host-country variables to their empirically observed values (using the same sources as referenced above), and we set the contributing-country variables according to three distinct peacekeeping scenarios. In the “average case” scenario, we set the contributing-country variables to the observed means in the full sample of mission-years. In the

“worst case” scenario, we set the contributing-country variables equal to the observed values from the 2006 Congo mission—the mission-year in our dataset with the most documented abuses. In the “best case” scenario, we use values from the peacekeeping mission in Georgia (specifically, the year 2005), which is notable for having no documented abuses despite a long tenure. Using Model 4 from Table 2, we generated forecasts for each hypothetical mission. Figure 5 illustrates the predicted abuse counts.

Figure 6: Predicting Abuses in a Hypothetical Turkey Mission

Note: In left panel, bar heights indicate predicted number of abuses, based on Model 4, using “worst case” values for contributing-country variables. In right panel, lines show percentage deviations in press freedoms and rule of law from 2002 levels.

The forecast for Spain in 2006 is the most optimistic. Spain’s low predicted counts are due primarily to that country’s well-developed rule of law and press freedoms. Conversely, Syria in 2012 shows the worst projected outcomes, due to steady declines in both rule of law and press freedoms. The remaining three hypothetical missions fall between these two extremes. Overall, the results illustrate the joint importance of both host- and contributor-country attributes. For example, the worst-case scenario for Spain yields a predicted number of abuses greater than the best-case scenario for all other mission-years except Syria in 2012. And even an unstable country like Syria yields relatively few predicted abuses if the mission is well composed. Syria’s best-case scenario predicts fewer than ten abuses annually—only slightly more than Spain’s worst-case scenario. Mission composition is clearly a key factor. At the same time, host-country attributes also dramatically influence outcomes. In Spain, a worst-case mission would lead to fewer than ten abuses, while in Syria that same mission would lead to well over 150 abuses. Minimization of human rights violations requires careful attention to both host-country conditions and TCC attributes.

To illustrate temporal dynamics of host-country attributes, Figures 6 and 7 focus on the cases of Turkey and Colombia, respectively. Using the above approach, we predicted the annual number of abuses for a hypothetical “worst-case” peacekeeping mission in each country, covering the period 2002–2015. For reference, we also plot changes in host-country rule of law and press freedoms over this period. In Turkey, both rule of law and press freedoms improve slightly from 2002 through

Figure 7: Predicting Abuses in a Hypothetical Colombia Mission

Note: In left panel, bar heights indicate predicted number of abuses, based on Model 4, using “worst case” values for contributing-country variables. In right panel, lines show percentage deviations in press freedoms and rule of law from 2002 levels.

2010, and, correspondingly, the predicted number of violations for a hypothetical mission generally remains below 50. From 2010 onward, however, the predicted number of abuses moves sharply upward, with a startling 163 abuses predicted for a hypothetical 2015 mission. The right-hand panel clearly shows that this spike results from a sharp downturn in press freedoms. This analysis reinforces the importance of timing. A peacekeeping mission in 2004 or 2005 would have, according to our model, resulted in no more than 30 annual human rights abuses, even in a worst-case scenario. In Turkey’s 2015 political climate, however, the worst-case scenario would yield more than five times as many annual abuses.

Figure 7 illustrates the more optimistic scenario where a country’s prospects improve over time. From 2002 onward, Colombia’s rule of law improved by over 40% while its press freedoms improved by 20-30%. Accordingly, the projected number of abuses associated with a hypothetical peacekeeping mission declines by nearly half, from over 130 in 2002 to just over 70 in 2015.

Conclusion

We draw three main lessons from this analysis. First, there appears to be no “silver bullet” for reducing human rights abuses by UN peacekeepers. Rather, abuses are a multidimensional phenomenon, driven by complex influences at the level of both hosts and contributors. This conclusion, though unsurprising, poses a structural challenge, as it highlights the number of dimensions the UN Secretariat must consider when composing missions. The heterogeneity of states—and the fact that some contributors score well on some metrics and poorly on others—substantially increases the difficulty of paying sufficient attention to each of these dimensions. This task is further complicated by individual-level variations among peacekeepers themselves (Autesserre 2014), and by well-known but unresolved personnel issues, such as entrenched racism (Razack 2004). Given that

missions struggle for contributors in the first place, we are not optimistic about the Secretariat's ability to assemble missions with this degree of attention to detail.

Second, a few influences stand out for their robust and nontrivial influence. Host-country rule of law, for example, consistently decreases human rights abuses, as do press freedoms. In fact, press freedoms are not only robust to model specification, but they increase in both magnitude and precision as additional covariates enter the model. We ran additional simulations of the full model in order to assess the impact of press freedoms on the missions illustrated in Figure 1. We found that increasing host and contributor press freedoms by one standard deviation yielded a predicted ten abuses for the MONUC mission (compared to 277 observed abuses); slightly more than two abuses for UNMIS (compared to 154 observed); and just 1.5 abuses for UNAMID (compared to 99 observed). Of course, press freedoms in host countries are rarely easily changed. Yet, TCC press freedoms matter just as much as host countries. Carefully assembling peacekeeping missions in order to emphasize press freedoms among TCCs promises to reduce abuses.

Third, our findings suggest that host countries can directly hold peacekeepers accountable. The predicted effects of host-country rule of law and press freedoms point to an untapped potential for restraint. In principle, peacekeepers must adhere to the local laws and regulations of the mission host, but hosts often lack the legal capacity to prosecute violators. By failing to utilize host-country institutions, the UN defaults to a relatively weak accountability structure. Of course, missions often occur when host-country institutions are fragile. Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests that hosts are in fact capable of investigating and detaining peacekeepers. Missions can also play an important role in building state institutions (Doyle and Sambanis 2006). Giving host countries the freedom to enforce their respective legal standards against peacekeeper misconduct may help the UN realize its zero tolerance policy.

Supplementary Information

Replication data and supplementary information are available at www.brandonkinne.com/data and at the International Studies Quarterly data archive.

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