WHEN WOMEN SERVE AND PROTECT IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES:
EVIDENCE FROM THE LIBERIAN NATIONAL POLICE

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Introduction

The literature in international relations has consistently found a link between gender equality and peace. Countries that are more gender equal are less likely to become involved in inter-and/or intra-state war, are less likely to attack first, or violate human rights (Bjarnegård and Melander 2011, 2013; Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Caprioli 2000, 2003; Caprioli et al. 2009; Hudson and Boer 2002; Hudson et al. 2012; Melander 2005a; Melander 2005b). The central question in gender and conflict studies then becomes, how is it possible to make countries more gender equal?

Peace building initiatives in post-conflict countries present a unique opportunity to help promote gender equality globally. In most cases, peace building operations involve a peacekeeping force or other third party actors that invest in rebuilding the post-conflict country’s domestic institutions—whether political, judicial, or security. As third parties help rebuild these institutions, they can include policies and initiatives to promote gender equality in the country’s domestic institutions. One way to do so is to promote gender balancing—ensuring that institutions include some minimum quota of women—in these different institutions. This means ensuring that women are included in political processes, have access to the justice system, and are included in the security sector.

Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSC 1325) in 2000, peace building activities have increasingly included gender balancing policies. UNSC 1325 notes the distinct role women can play in conflict resolution and calls for the greater participation of women in the reconstruction of post-conflict countries, especially in politics and security forces. Due to UNSC 1325, gender balancing has been particularly salient in the security sector. Many post-conflict countries experienced high
rates of war-time sexual violence (Cohen 2013), which led to international attention on the need to incorporate a gendered perspective in the security sector. As a result, most peace building initiatives and the accompanying security sector reforms include gender balancing (DCAF 2011). While gender balancing has become increasingly popular as a way to increase gender equality in the security sector and in post-conflict societies, it is unclear just how it might help improve gender equality in the post-conflict country.

There are four ways that gender balancing may affect gender equality in the post-conflict country. First, including more women in the security sector may affect the level of gender sensitivity in the institution (security sector). Second, including more women in the security sector may affect the level of female participation in the institution. Third, including more women in the security sector may affect the level of discrimination against women. Lastly, including women in the security sector may enhance the legitimacy of the institution in the eyes of the public.

These four mechanisms are examined in this study. Using a unique lab-in-the-field experiment\(^1\) with the Liberian National Police and a representative survey in two ex-combatant communities in Monrovia, Liberia, this study investigates how gender balancing efforts may affect gender equality in Liberia’s police force and how these efforts might affect public perceptions toward the police.

The study finds that gender balancing has a positive effect on enhancing an institution’s legitimacy in the eyes of the public. However, gender balancing has less of an effect within the institution. Rather, the study finds that individual competency plays

\(^1\) A lab-in-the-field experiment is an experimental condition where individuals are randomly selected to participate in a series of behavioral games. In this case, I randomly selected 612 Liberian National Police and randomly assigned them to groups. In the groups, they played the behavioral games. The treatment in this case was the group assignment, which varied by sex composition.
an important role in improving gender sensitivity and women’s participation within the institution. Thus, both gender balancing and the quality of security sector officers matter in improving gender equality in post-conflict countries. The results suggest that as third parties conduct post-conflict peace building operations, they should focus on both increasing the number of women in the security sector and ensure that new security officials are highly competent.

**Gender Balancing in Context**

Designed to increase the presence of women in political and economic institutions, gender balancing has infused policymaking in areas as diverse as economic development, international trade (UNCTAD, 2009), and climate change (Dankelman 2010). But, nowhere has gender balancing been more salient than in UN policies in war-torn countries—so salient that the Security Council continues to endorse gender balancing in resolutions—Resolution 1325 (2000) being the most prominent. UNSC 1325 marks the first time the UN formally calls for the greater participation of women in reconstruction of post-conflict countries.

Through UNSC 1325 and subsequent resolutions, gender balancing has become a central component of peacekeeping and peace-building operations worldwide (DCAF 2011) and of international interventions in developing countries more generally (Bush 2011). The implications of this shift have been especially visible in the security sector, from the inclusion of women in combat in the US military to the adoption of gender quotas in the police forces of Liberia and Kosovo (DCAF 2011). As gender balancing has become a pervasive international policy, peacekeeping missions have increasingly
adopted gendered approaches and taken the lead to include gender as they re-build domestic institutions (Kronsell 2012). Such reform to integrate women into domestic security forces may help increase gender equality by making institutions more gender sensitive, cooperative, less discriminatory, and more legitimate (Kanter 1977; Jewell 1994; Rosenthal 2002; Thomas 1994; Rehn and Sirleaf 2002).

First, gender balancing may enhance gender awareness. Some advocates argue that women are more sensitive than men to other women’s needs, and that their presence will improve outcomes on issues that disproportionately affect women rather than men. For example, UNSC Resolution 2106 (2013) emphasizes that women can exert “influence over parties to armed conflict with respect to addressing sexual violence.” With the police in particular, gender balancing has been proposed as a way to improve responsiveness to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). Immediately following high-profile rape cases in India, for example, the Indian government began recruiting more female police officers to address similar crimes in the future (Ghosh 2013). In addition to female awareness of SGBV, women’s presence in the security forces may also make men more sensitive to gender issues. Female presence may influence or cue men to think about gender, when they otherwise may not (Williams and Heikes 1993). Consequently, when men are outnumbered by women, they may be influenced by the presence of women (Barnello and Bratton 2007).

Second, gender balancing may enhance women’s participation and cooperation in groups. Existing research has found that in gender-balanced groups, women tend to interact in a more stereotypically feminine style that emphasizes cooperation, intimacy, and inclusion of all participants. For example, scholars have found that women pursue
more cooperative political strategies, while men prefer competitive, zero-sum tactics, and that women are more oriented toward consensus, preferring less hierarchical, more participatory, and more collaborative approaches than their male counterparts (Jewell 1994; Rosenthal 2002; Thomas 1994).

In policing, there is evidence suggesting that women behave in a more “humanistic way,” are better communicators, more empathetic, and have a calming presence in groups (Garcia 2003; McDowell 1992; Schuck and Rabe-Hemp 2007; Schuck 2014). Studies have found that women are quieter and less likely to participate in group activities when they are outnumbered by men (Dindia and Allen 1992; Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2007; McCarrick, Manderscheid, and Silbergeld 1981; Smith-Lovin and Brody 1989). Women in groups with majority women or all women may be more comfortable in asserting their perspectives, advocating for other women and feeling confident in themselves (Niederle and Vesterlund 2007). This means that women may participate more as there are more women in the group.

Third, it is possible that integrating women may lead to less discrimination. Such ideas stem from the fact that, as women are integrated, more people observe that women are just as capable as men. In fact, this was the reason for the removal of the combat exclusion rule in the United States (Bumiller and Shanker 2013). Women participated in combat roles in both Iraq and Afghanistan, which demonstrated that women could operate in the same combat roles as men.

However, it is also possible that, as women are integrated into the group, men may become more antagonistic against women (Carli and Eagly 1999). Men may dominate in groups when they are outnumbered, because they may feel alienated or may
redouble their efforts to assert dominance if they believe the presence of women will disrupt social cohesion in traditionally male environments (Fenner and deYoung 2001; Maginnis 2013; Gutmann 2000, Febbraro and McCann 2003). Some studies also suggest that the increased presence of women cause men to assert their masculinity more forcefully (Smith-Lovin and Brody 1989).

Lastly, including women in the security sector may lead to increased legitimacy for the institution. Institutions that are representative of the population tend to have more legitimacy (Rehfeld 2008). Given that the security sector in many post-conflict countries did not include women before or during the conflict, including women after the war makes the institution more legitimate, as it is representative of the broader population. When individuals have contact with a security sector that looks more like them, they may be more willing to trust it (Tyler 2004, 2005).

**Gender Balancing in Liberia**

Liberia is an ideal case to look at the mechanisms of how gender balancing may affect gender equality in the security sector. Since the end of the wars in 2003 and the UN’s involvement in security sector reform in Liberia, through the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), there has been a major focus on gender in policing. In 2005, the Norwegian and Danish governments partnered with UNICEF, UNDP, and UNMIL to create the Women and Children Protection Unit in the LNP. The Women and Children Protection Section was established to handle cases of crimes committed against women and children, such as child abuse and abandonment, sexual assault, corruption of minors, and other criminal offences. The LNP also has a special gender unit, which is responsible
for promoting gender equality within the Liberian National Police. The unit was started by a UN Police female police officer in 2008, and is responsible for gender training in the LNP’s police academy, gender training more broadly, and female recruitment.

Additionally, one of the peacekeeping mission’s first tasks was to develop the LNP’s Gender Policy (2005), which served as the primary document to ensure gender balancing within the LNP and was the first such policy in any UN Mission. In 2008, as a part of the Gender Advisory Work Plan, the UN helped the Liberian National Police introduce a 15% and then a 20% gender quota (and in 2012, a 30% quota). By March 2014, the LNP had 18% female officers (compared with the 2% in 2005).

Research Design

In order to understand the effects of gender integration in the security sector, I conducted two studies. In the first, I collaborated with the LNP to conduct a lab-in-the-field experiment with 612 male and female officers. In the second, I surveyed 291 individuals from two ex-combatant communities in Monrovia to assess how interacting with female officers change their perceptions about the security sector.

Lab-in-the-field-experiment with the LNP

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4 See Appendix for a break down of the officers in each unit.
I conducted a lab-in-the-field experiment with Liberian National Police (LNP) officers in the capital city of Monrovia in January of 2013. The experiment consisted of a set of behavioral games designed to assess unit cohesion, stereotyping, and sensitivity to gendered clues in crime scene investigations, among other outcomes. The games were designed in collaboration with a police trainer from the UNMIL to ensure as much correspondence as possible between the stylized scenarios in the games and the real-world challenges of policing.

Officers were randomly selected from available personnel in Monrovia. The games were conducted in groups of six, with treatment being the sex composition of the group: groups contained zero, two, four or six women. Table 1 provides the breakdown and quantity of the groups. Officers were randomly assigned to one of each of these four types of groups once. Teams of trained Liberian enumerators were randomly assigned to the groups to implement the games and record interactions among participants. In addition to the games, the enumerators also administered background and exit questionnaires, including a survey experiment designed to assess gender discrimination in training.

Table 1: Treatment arm and number of groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment Arm 1</th>
<th>Treatment Arm 2</th>
<th>Treatment Arm 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 men, 0 women</td>
<td>4 men, 2 women</td>
<td>2 men, 4 women</td>
<td>0 men, 6 women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 groups</td>
<td>29 groups</td>
<td>21 groups</td>
<td>19 groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5 The project was conducted with Kyle Beardsley, Michael Gilligan, and Robert Blair, and with the full support of the Liberian National Police. The full details of the research design can be requested from the author.

6 The sample included 356 men and 256 women. As of 2012 (the numbers were the same in January 2013), in total the Liberian National Police is comprised of 768 females and 3607 males. In total, we surveyed 54% of the manpower in Monrovia, and 92% of LNP women in Monrovia and 42% of LNP men in Monrovia.
Enumerators conducted games to assess the level of group participation, gender sensitivity, and discrimination against women. The objective was to see whether group composition affected these outcomes. Officers were given photographs of a hypothetical crime scene. The photographs contained a number of ambiguous clues suggestive of several possible crimes: burglary, physical assault, murder, domestic violence or rape. Enumerators tested whether certain groups were more gender sensitive by asking the subjects a series of questions about what crime(s) they thought the photo depicted, what evidence led them to that conclusion, and what they would do upon arrival at the crime scene. The enumerators first asked the officers to answer these questions privately in a questionnaire and then enumerators asked them to conduct a group discussion to come up with a consensus “crime report” based on the evidence in the photo. In all of the games, one major concern was whether women were included in the decision-making processes and the extent to which they participated. During the group deliberations, enumerators recorded who spoke, who argued, and who was ignored.

Enumerators used an exit questionnaire to establish the severity of gender biases within the LNP, and to assess whether participation in the group activities might alleviate those biases. The first was a survey experiment in which we offered each officer two short profiles of potential firearms instructors and then asked which of the two instructors they would prefer. The qualifications of the instructors were similar. One of the profiles always had the name “Abraham”, while the other was assigned either “John” or “Patience” at random. Aside from the randomly assigned names the descriptions of this second instructor’s qualifications were identical. This allowed enumerators to test

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7 See appendix for the photographs of the crime scene
8 Names were chosen based on common gendered Liberian names.
whether participants tended to prefer the male candidate to the female candidate, despite their identical qualifications. In addition, enumerators asked the participants to vote on which member of the group they thought should serve as leader in the future.

Survey of ex-combatant communities in Monrovia

In July 2012, I surveyed 291 randomly selected individuals from two ex-combatant communities in Monrovia. The enumerators asked individuals how much contact they have had with the security sector and with women in the security sector, particularly, female peacekeepers and LNP female officers. In the sample, 11% of individuals had contact with a female peacekeeper, in comparison to 36% of individuals who had contact with a female LNP officer. In total, 74% of the sample had contact with the security sector in general. The goal of the survey was to understand how such contact affects people’s preferences for security response. Thus, survey questions asked people which security organizations they preferred for responding to general security provision, armed violence, riot, rape, and domestic violence (beating). Ten options were offered and respondents were allowed to select more than one answer. If people answered that they wanted UNMIL/LNP or female LNP/UNMIL to respond, it was coded as a one and all other answers were coded as a zero, making the variable dichotomous.

In addition to contact, individual knowledge of women’s rights may also have an effect on how individuals perceive women in the security sector. I created a score measuring people’s knowledge about women’s rights. The score ranged from 0-9.

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9 The full details of the research design can be found in the attached appendix.
10 These included: AFL, Police, UNMIL, Religious Leader, Liberian NGO, International NGO, Women’s Group, Council of Elders, Judicial System, Township Commissioner/Community Watch, Other. These options are based off of focus group answers about where people seek protection.
Survey questions also included questions related to perceptions of UNMIL, whether the individual participated in an armed group, views about traditional authority, individual sex, how long they have lived in the community, and how many disputes they have experienced. These variables are included in the statistical models I use to assess the relationships between contact and preferences for security response.

Results and Discussion

The objective is to understand how gender balancing in post-conflict countries affects gender equality (and thereby long-term peace). To do so, the lab-in-the-field experiment and survey are used to explore the effects of gender balancing policies within security institutions and on society as a whole. The results of the lab-in-the-field experiment provide evidence about whether the inclusion of women in groups have led to more gender awareness and sensitivity, more collaborative groups, and less discrimination within security institutions. It is important to note that the study is not an impact evaluation of gender balancing policies in the LNP, but rather a way to test gender equality seven years after gender reforms in the security sector. The lab-in-the-field experiment is able to test the short term effects of gender integration in group dynamics. Second, the results of the survey provide evidence about whether the inclusion of women has increased the legitimacy of the police force, by changing public perceptions toward the security sector.

Gender Sensitivity
The enumerators asked the groups to assess three crime scene photos that had hints of a gender and sexual based crime. The officers had to identify the crime(s) they thought occurred, identify evidence to match the crime, and suggest what they should do upon arrival of the crime scene. In total, 44% of officers suggested that rape or domestic violence occurred. Among these officers, more were likely to see the crime as rape than domestic violence; only two officers wrote domestic violence. This suggests that the disproportionate attention to rape by the international community may have conditioned officers to think about rape, but not necessarily domestic violence.11

Nevertheless, group composition does not affect whether individuals identified gendered crimes. Figure 1 shows that the group composition did not affect individual likelihood of seeing crimes as gendered.12 Figure 1 depicts the predicted probability of members in the groups choosing a crime as gendered. For example, the first point (Fem 2f, 4m) suggests that females in groups that had two females and four males were about 37% likely to choose a gendered crime (the predicted range is 21-50%). The next point (Fem, 4f, 2m) suggests that females in groups with four females and two males were between 39-58% likely to say they saw a crime as gendered. There is no difference between individuals in these groups—they were equally likely to see the crime as gendered. The figure demonstrates that individuals were equally likely to see crimes as

11 The government developed the National Action Plans to End Gender-Based Violence. In 2006, the Liberian Ministries of Gender and Justice launched the National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action. The Plan includes four pillars: protection of women and children from sexualized and gender-based violence; prevention of sexual and gender-based violence; promotion of women’s human rights; and participation of women in peace processes. Liberia has enacted two major laws aimed at enhancing protection against sexualized violence, and has one pending to address domestic violence. In 2008, Liberia amended its judicial law to establish a separate court with exclusive jurisdiction over sexual offenses. This Criminal Court E commenced operations in February 2009. In contrast, there has been no legislation or policy on domestic violence.

12 All statistical tables can be requested from the author.
gendered despite placement in certain groups. Additionally, men and women, regardless of group composition, were equally likely to see crimes as gendered, which suggests that sex does not necessarily play a role in being more gender sensitive. This means that, at least in the short-term, group composition, or integrating more women in groups does not necessarily affect men or women’s likelihood of gender sensitivity.

Figure 1: Probability of individuals and groups observing gender crime (90% CI)

Group Collaboration and Participation

The lab-in-the-field experiment tested whether women’s or men’s participation has changed as a result of women’s integration into groups. Participation is measured as the total number of times each individual spoke or argued divided by the total number of times everyone in the group spoke or argued. On average, each man talked about 17% of the time and each woman spoke about 15% of the time, and both men and women argued...
at the same level. This suggests that participation may be equal between the sexes. However, group composition did affect participation rates.

In the short term, female participation in groups was not directly affected by group composition, but male participation was affected. When outnumbered by women, men were more aggressive. They were both more talkative and more argumentative than men and women in other groups. Figure 2 displays these results. The points represent the average proportion of individual participation. For example, males in the group of four women and two men (Male, 2m, 4f) were likely to speak on average between 19-21% of the time, whereas men in groups with four men and two women (Male, 4m, 2f) were likely to speak between 17-18% of the time. Women in groups with four females and two males (Females, 4f, 2m) were likely to speak between 14-16% of the time. The same pattern (of male dominance) emerges for arguments.

Men in groups of four men and two women (Male, 4m, 2f) were much more talkative and argumentative than women in groups of four women and two men (Fem, 4f, 2m) which suggests that in heterogeneous groups, men still dominate most of the participation. Men and women in homogenous groups talked and argued at the same rate and at the same level, which suggests that homogenous groups may be more collaborative and inclusive. But, this is not necessarily a reason to disaggregate groups by sex. Rather, it demonstrates that security institutions should be aware of group dynamics when these groups are heterogeneous with regards to sex composition. Thus participation levels appear to be the same between men and women, but group composition affects the likelihood of men participating and dominating.
Figure 2: Proportion of individual participation in groups (90% CI)
Discrimination against women

The lab-in-the-field experiment also measured whether integrating women has affected levels of discrimination. Currently, there is still gender discrimination within the LNP. Based on the survey experiment of “Abraham”, “John” and “Patience,” when given identical backgrounds (between “John” and Patience), individuals (both men and women) chose Patience as the fire arms instructor 38% of the time compared to Abraham, whereas officers chose John 46% of the time compared to Abraham (See Table 2). The difference between the two groups is statistically significant. This means that in comparing the same biographies of firearms instructors, when choosing between John and Patience (who had the same background), individuals were more likely to choose John. Figure 3 demonstrates that compared to women, men were much more likely to be discriminatory. Men were between 46-57% likely to choose Abraham when compared to John, but 56%-71% more likely to choose Abraham when compared to Patience. Females were equally likely to choose Abraham when the alternative was Patience or John. This suggests that men may still not be conditioned to think of women as equals despite seven years of gender reforms in the LNP.

Table 2: Proportion of officers choosing firearms instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Compared to Abraham</th>
<th>Compared to John</th>
<th>Compared to Patience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose Patience</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose John</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose Abraham</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is also a difference in sex with respect to believing that women are equal to men. Ninety-five percent of women thought that females were just as good as men in terms of policing, compared to 76% of men. Among the women, 97% thought that female LNP make good unit leaders. Conversely, among the men, only 75% thought female LNP make good unit leaders.

Lastly, in total, 39% of LNP officers voted for a female leader, but 76% of female LNP officers voted for a female team leader and 12% of men voted for a female team leader. Figure 4 shows that there is a large discrepancy here between men and women in believing that women should be team leaders. Again, this suggests that there is still latent discrimination in the LNP, despite seven years of reforms.
Figure 4: Probability of voting for a female leader (90% CI)

Table 3 looks at which sex LNP officers believed the public trusts more based on different functions of the LNP. Interestingly, most women thought that women are better at handling rape than men, but most men thought that both men and women are equally capable of handling rape. Similarly, the majority of men thought that men are better at handling political violence, but the majority of women thought that both men and women are equally competent at handling situations of political violence. This suggests that officer sex corresponds with preconceived notions about gendered work (Dovidio et al. 1988). Women, however, do not think that they are any worse than men in the gendered male activity (handling political violence), and men do not think they are any worse in handling the gendered female activity (rape).
Table 3: Officer perceptions of gendered security response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Responders</th>
<th>Male Responders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is better at handling cases of rape and domestic violence?</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is better at handling cases of political violence and riot?</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you think the public trusts more with community issues?</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of competency

While there is some evidence that group composition may actually lead to initial backlash by men when females outnumber males, competency of both male and female officers helps to increase gender equality within the security institution. The competence measure is a latent-variable index generated using a scaling model. The measurement model creates a competency score by weighting answers to cognitive and memory questions, and the validity of crime scene answers. The model scales the answers

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13 To create the score, I used three cognitive questions from the background survey, six memory questions about the crime scene photos, and the crime scene questions to create a latent competency score. I asked a UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Police peacekeeper to post-code the crime scene questions based on the training the LNP receive in their academy. Crimes that matched a statutory crime were coded as correct. When the evidence matched the crime, each piece was coded as correct. If they correctly listed the immediate action upon arrival (per their training), it was coded as correct. Correct answers were always coded as a one, ensuring that the direction of the scale remained consistent.
based on their level of difficulty, which is more accurate of a measure than simply adding the scores together.\textsuperscript{14}

Competency affects the likelihood that individuals see a crime as gendered. The findings in Figure 5 demonstrate that as competency increases, the probability that the individual chooses rape or domestic violence as the crime increases. The effect is the same regardless of officer sex or group composition. Figure 6 also confirms that, regardless of group composition, competent men and women were more likely to be sensitive to gender. In Figure 6, the competency differential refers to the difference between each individual’s competency score and the group’s median value. The plot shows one standard deviation below and above the differential median (0). Competent women in the groups of four women and two men (Fem, 4f, 2m) were much more likely than competent men in any group to be sensitive to gender and more likely to be gender sensitive than competent women in groups of two women and four men (Fem, 2f, 4m). Less competent women in the mixed sex composition groups (Fem 4f, 2m; Fem, 2f, 4m) saw crimes as gendered at a much lower percentage. In other words, among less competent women, group composition did not affect their likelihood of seeing a crime as gendered, but group composition did affect competent women’ likelihood of seeing a crime as gendered. Among heterogeneous groups, women in groups with more women tended to be more gender sensitive. Group composition did not affect gender sensitivity among competent or less competent men. Competent men were across the board more likely to see crimes as gendered than less competent men.

\textsuperscript{14} See appendix for the mathematical details.
Figure 5: Predicted Probability of choosing gendered crime by competency

Figure 6: Predicted Probability of choosing gendered crime by competency and group composition
Competency also affects the level of participation and individual influence by men and women. Figure 7 and 8 break the competency score into the competency differential by group composition. Overall, competent individuals were more likely to participate and influence the group. In Figure 7, compared to less competent women, competent women in groups with four or more women were much more likely to participate compared to women in the groups with two women. Rather, competent women and less competent women in groups with two women spoke about the same amount, but competent women in groups with four or six women spoke much more frequently than non-competent women in those groups.

Competent men were more likely to participate in all the groups, but competent men, when outnumbered by women were much more likely to participate than in groups where competent men were not outnumbered. Less competent men, when they were outnumbered, were as likely to talk as competent women in the same group, but much more likely to talk than less competent women in the same group. Competent males and females in all female and all male groups talked at the same level, as did less competent men and women in the same homogenous groups. This suggests that while competency does make women participate more, competent men and less competent men, when outnumbered by women, tended to participate more.

Figure 8 demonstrates the level of influence of individuals in each group. This is measured by looking at when individual answers to the crime scene questions matched the group answers. In other words, we would expect that if individuals had an influence in the group’s decisions, their individual answers would match that of the group’s.
Again, across the board, more competent individuals influenced group answers more so than less competent individuals. Group composition did not affect influence.

Notably, competency and rank are not correlated, nor is rank and the gender equality outcomes. This means that rank is not necessarily a good predictor of competency. Those that are more gender sensitive, more participatory, and more influential in groups are not individuals of higher rank, suggesting that rank may not affect gender equality within institutions, but promoting competent individuals may have an effect in promoting gender equality.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{15}\) The same holds true for education level, which did not correlate with the gender outcomes.
The lab-in-the-field experiments with the LNP provide a number of useful insights about the effects of gender balancing on gender equality within post-conflict security institutions. The analysis above demonstrates that gender equality within the LNP is affected by group composition and, to a much larger extent, by competency. To increase participation and influence of women, and make the institution more gender sensitive, promoting competent individuals may be more important than pure gender balancing.

Nevertheless, for enhancing women’s participation, gender balancing, in addition to competency, may make a difference. Competent women when surrounded by women are more assertive. However the evidence also shows that there may be a backlash among men who are used to the institution being dominated by males. When women outnumber men, men were more aggressive and discriminatory, even when they were...
This suggests that more gender awareness should be accompanied by equal ratios of men and women to mitigate the backlash that might occur when rapid gender changes occur in an institution. This is not to say, however, that agencies should not promote groups where there are majority women. Rather, steps should be taken to mitigate men’s reaction when they may be outnumbered. The quality of both male and female officers, in addition to increasing the quantity of female officers improves group dynamics within the institution.

*Increasing the Legitimacy of Security Institutions*

In addition to understandings how gender integration within the LNP affects groups dynamics, it is important to know how the public views female LNP officers and the LNP in general. It is possible that the LNP quota has had an impact on Liberians. With the quota, there has been a significant visible increase in the number of women officers on the streets. Does this improve the image of the domestic security provision? Do people prefer local females to respond to incidents?

Based on the survey results in the two ex-combatant communities, contact with women in the security sector does change perceptions. Whereas the more contact people had with the security sector in general (not just with women), the less they wanted the LNP to respond to rape (See Figure 9), contact with female LNP led people to prefer female LNP to respond to rape and domestic violence and prefer the LNP (as an institution) to respond to armed violence and general security provision (Table 4).

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16 Contact with the security sector is measured based on the level of contact with male and female members of the Armed Forces of Liberia, Liberian National Police, and UNMIL.
When individuals in these two communities had contact with female LNP officers, they were 7% more likely to prefer that the LNP provide security, 12% more likely to prefer the LNP respond to armed conflict, 10% more likely to prefer female LNP respond to rape, and 12% more likely prefer female LNP respond to domestic violence. This means that including women in the security sector may change people’s minds about
trusting the security sector when it comes to protection. When individuals interact with women, they are more likely to prefer female LNP and the LNP, as an institution, but when they have repeated interactions with the security sector (presumably men), then they do not prefer the institution to respond to these concerns.

At the same time, contact with female LNP officers overwhelmingly led to people rejecting assistance by female peacekeepers and UNMIL. Table 5 suggests that when individuals have contact with female LNP officers, it makes international missions less important. For example, contact with female LNP leads to a 35% decrease the probability that people prefer UNMIL to provide security. The presence of female LNP may signal a reformed security such that individuals think that the UN may no longer be needed. When individuals observe a reformed security sector, they may be more likely to prefer the domestic security sector to the international one. The implication is that contact with female LNP serve to increase the legitimacy of local institutions in two ways: increasing preferences to use the domestic institution and by rejecting the continued presence of international institution. Thus, integrating women has a clear positive effect on institutional legitimacy.
Table 5: Substantive effects for contact with female LNP and preferred response by foreign security forces (90% CI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference for Responder</th>
<th>No contact with LNP female</th>
<th>Contact with LNP female</th>
<th>Percent change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL female provide security</td>
<td>0.47 (0.38-0.56)</td>
<td>0.21 (0.17-0.43)</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL provides security</td>
<td>0.74 (0.67-0.81)</td>
<td>0.39 (0.5-0.78)</td>
<td>-35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL female respond to armed conflict</td>
<td>0.56 (0.47-0.64)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.23-0.52)</td>
<td>-31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL responds to armed conflict</td>
<td>0.89 (0.83-0.93)</td>
<td>0.68 (0.46-0.84)</td>
<td>-21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL responds to riot</td>
<td>0.90 (0.84-0.93)</td>
<td>0.67 (0.48-0.83)</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female UNMIL responds to rape</td>
<td>0.62 (0.53-0.69)</td>
<td>0.42 (0.26-0.53)</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL respond to rape</td>
<td>0.59 (0.52-0.67)</td>
<td>0.27 (0.25-0.52)</td>
<td>-32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female UNMIL responds to domestic violence</td>
<td>0.52 (0.44-0.60)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.15-0.40)</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Conclusion**

If gender equality is important for long-term peace, then it is important to understand how to increase gender equality in post-conflict countries. One solution has been to include gender balancing reforms in the security sector. International efforts to gender balancing security institutions are prevalent in Liberia, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Haiti, and Afghanistan, among other countries. Even without international pressure or guidance, gender balancing has been a favorable policy in Latin American countries such as Peru, as a way to mitigate corruption, and in India, as a way to prevent and prosecute rape cases. Yet, thorough empirical evidence about the effectiveness of such policies is lacking. Just how does gender balancing affect gender equality?

This study provides preliminary evidence that gender balancing policies are beneficial in crafting gender equality in post-conflict countries. The evidence in support of gender balancing policies is stronger for changes in public perception than within the institution. The study finds that when individuals have contact with female police officers, they were more likely to prefer that female police officers respond to rape and domestic violence, and that police respond to security provision. This is the first survey that provides evidence that gender balancing affects public perception.

Gender balancing has less of an effect to change gender equality within security sector institutions. Prima facie evidence suggests that discrimination is still a problem in the LNP, seven year after a number of gender related reforms. Group composition did not affect individual gender sensitivity. The study finds some evidence that gender balancing may have an effect on increasing the participation of some women in groups, but it definitely has an effect on men. When women in groups outnumber men, men tend to be
more aggressive and discriminatory. Again, this evidence does not suggest that groups should be constructed with majority females, but rather that more gender sensitive training is needed. While group composition did not have distinct effects on group dynamics, the competency level of individuals made a significant difference on gender sensitivity, participation, and influence. Competent individuals, both male and female, were more likely to be gender sensitive, participate in group deliberation, and be influential in decision making. Thus, the quality of individuals in the security sector may be just as important as the quantity of women.

The study is particularly useful for policymakers that are working to improve gender equality in post-conflict countries. The study provides evidence that gender balancing works to enhance public perception. It also demonstrates that officer quality can have the side effect of increasing gender equality in security institutions. It also suggests that there should be more training within security institutions about gender sensitivity and more exposure to women in leadership positions (promoting qualified women), to counter the potential backlash against women that may occur in some instances, as women are integrated into the institution.

If gender equality is instrumental for long-term peace, as suggested by numerous scholars of international relations, then understanding how to promote gender equality is of utmost importance. While this study has shown how gender balancing (and competency) affects gender equality (through increasing gender sensitivity and participation, lowering discrimination in security institutions and improving institutional legitimacy), more studies are needed to understand just how to improve gender equality in post-conflict countries.
References


