

## Toward an equal peace or stuck in the twilight zone? The known knowns and the known unknowns of gender disaggregated data in peacekeeping research

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Advancing research on peacekeeping requires a more in-depth understanding of what kind of peacekeeping operations contribute to establishing.<sup>1</sup> A central dimension of peace which we have previously highlighted is the gender-specific dimension of the “peace” in peacekeeping.<sup>2</sup> This is the focus of this commentary and we argue that this area of research requires an almost paradigmatic shift in how we define peace. To advance research by taking a closer look at peace from a gender perspective is very timely. In some sense, such a shift is underway in some of the suggestions outlined in the United Nation High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operation’s recommendations and the recently adopted resolution on sustainable peace (UNSCR 2282).<sup>3</sup>

We argue that such progression could be fruitfully developed along two paths prominent in current research debates and data collection. The first trend is to expand on the form of negative peace to include not only loss of life but also sexual violence and other non-lethal forms for both men and women. The second trend outlines an understanding of peace which encompasses gender equality considerations more broadly defined as captured by indicators of development.<sup>4</sup> If peace is not broadened, many of the security threats and effects of conflict affecting women will not be visible.

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Page Fortna, and Lise Morjé Howard. “Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Literature”. *Annual Review of Political Science*. 11: 283-301, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Louise Olsson and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis “Advancing Gender and Peacekeeping Research.” *International Peacekeeping*, 21(4): 250–258, 2014, and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Louise Olsson. *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, New York: Routledge, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, “The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations”, A/70/357-S/2015/682, 2 September 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Jana Krause. Exploring gender mainstreaming in security and development” in Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Louise Olsson (eds.) *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, New York: Routledge, 2015.

In this commentary, we expand on the “known knowns” on how existing gender disaggregated data can be leveraged to advanced research and as well as “known unknowns”, or data we still lack. We do this around the identified two versions of peace; the expanded form of negative peace and the broader peace including peacebuilding dimensions. We will give a few examples of recent or ongoing projects which have systematically addressed these areas and illustrate interesting data conundrums as well as bring out gaps in existing data and suggestions for relevant research questions.

### *Gender-disaggregated data on extended negative peace*

The extended versions of negative peace – lack of physical violence by the warring parties – should be understood in terms of how violence and protection are distributed between men and women, i.e. security equality. There are a number of key areas where gender disaggregated data and data collection are key. Following policy debates, research has begun to examine peacekeeping operations’ capacity to handle conflict-related sexual violence<sup>5</sup> as well as the related areas of implementing gender-aware protection of civilians.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the halting of sexual exploitation and abuse by peace operation personnel is a growing research area in empirical research.<sup>7</sup>

So, does wide-spread conflict-related sexual violence affect the probability of a peacekeeping mission being established? And can such operations actually contribute to protecting civilians from such violence? These are questions raised in two projects, by Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Michelle Benson, and by Lisa Hultman and Karin Johansson, which seek to develop mainstream peacekeeping research through gender disaggregated data. Ideas around gender-aware protection of civilians developed in the mid-2000 when sexual violence, in a sense, piggy backed on the development of the protection of civilian mandates resulting in Security Council Resolution 1820. With this resolution, the mandates and expectations to be able to handle sexual violence became more pronounced. Combining peacekeeping data with data

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, this question was brought up by already in 2001 by Inger Skjelsbeak, *Sexual violence in times of war: A new challenge for peace operations?*, *International peacekeeping* Vol. 8, No.2, 2001. See also Jana Krause *Revisiting Protection from Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Actors, Victims, and Power in T-I*. Gizelis and L. Olsson (eds): *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UNSCR 1325*. Routledge 2015.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, R. Charlie Carpenter, ““Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups”: Gender, Strategic Frames and the Protection of Civilians as a Transnational Issue”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 49, Issue 2, pages 295–334, June 2005

<sup>7</sup> See for example, Paul Higate “Peacekeepers, Masculinities, and Sexual Exploitation.” *Men and Masculinities*, 2007 vol. 10, no. 1: 99-119.

from the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict dataset, Hultman and Johansson's preliminary study indicate that missions operating in an environment where rebels control the territory then the pressure and oversight of a peacekeeping operation might decrease levels of sexual violence. If there is low cohesion and poor command and control in the forces, however, the effects can be very limited.<sup>8</sup> Looking at UNSC resolutions, Benson and Gizelis find that indeed there is a strong correlation between reports of sexual violence in a conflict and the likelihood that the UN SC will refer to the conflict in a resolution. This pattern precedes resolution 1325 and seems more likely to follow the debates on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the genocide in Rwanda which had very high levels of violence.<sup>9</sup>

The last point concerns the "unintended" effects on negative peace, sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel. By addressing this form of violence and crimes by international personnel the Security Council resolution 2272 has raised awareness on this debate. In research, the lack of data has long been a problem by preventing any progress, but recently, we have seen a gradual improvement. Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley's upcoming book and recent article<sup>10</sup> using a combination of secondary sources and survey data, and Ragnhild Nordås and Siri Rustad's data set<sup>11</sup> using formal reports show that it is possible to improve our knowledge of this area. It would also be very interesting to relate this research to sexual violence by military groups in conflict settings.<sup>12</sup>

### *Into the twilight: data on peace, development and gender equality*

If we are instead to view peace in a broader sense we come to the areas where peacekeeping transitions into peacebuilding. Here, gender equality aspects become more apparent and there are a number of central areas for women's security and for the distribution of resources and power which should be considered in gendered terms. However, if we want to expand the

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<sup>8</sup> Discussions at the International Studies Association Panel, Atlanta 2016, at the panel TD17: The United Nations (UN) and Peacekeeping.

<sup>9</sup> See also Skjelsbaek 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley. *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*, Oxford University Press, forthcoming; and Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley "Explaining sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions: The role of female peacekeepers and gender equality in contributing countries" *Journal of Peace Research* January 2016, 53: 100-115,

<sup>11</sup> Ragnhild Nordås and Siri Aas Rustad (2013) "Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers: Understanding Variation", *International Interactions* 39(4): 511-534.

<sup>12</sup> See for example, Dara K Cohen, "Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980-2009)", *American Political Science Review*, Volume 107, Issue 03, August 2013, pp 461-477, and Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond*. London: Zed Books. 2013.

concept of violence to also include broader gender-based violence, there is still very limited data on physical violence against women (including domestic violence).<sup>13</sup> Since there is now a Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality where eradication of violence against women is a sub-goal, the hope is that data will be more systematically collected and linked to peacebuilding processes.<sup>14</sup>

Hence, moving forward on understanding what peace entails for women and what it entails for men. I.e. how equal is the peace? In this area, we need to collect more disaggregated data, particularly in-depth data on more cases in order to obtain comparative studies on how peace is shaped in the post-conflict environment for both genders, but especially for women. Current lack of data hampers our ability to answer the following questions: Is it a situation where there is more crime substituting residual violence? Or is there more sexual violence against women? What type of society emerges from the conflict experience? Do different types of peacekeeping and peacekeeping policies impact the levels of violence in a post-conflict country?

As peace(keeping) starts transitioning into the peacebuilding phase related to development, it is also important to consider what kind of economy emerges in a post-conflict country and to what extent peacekeeping missions shape the economic structures. What are the effects of the measures undertaken for gender equality? For example, do gender mainstreaming policies lead to more inclusive development pathways? How can peacebuilding and post-conflict development use gender mainstreaming to encourage pathways to development that improve social equity and minimize structural conditions for conflict?<sup>15</sup>

A way forward is to think creatively of combining existing datasets such as Women's stats with datasets on the location of peacekeepers to evaluate if peacekeeping makes a difference on women's life and under what conditions. An example will be the recent study of Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Xun Cao on peacekeeping and maternal health indicators with strong evidence that peacekeeping has positive effects on both education and health indicators and subsequently on maternal health.<sup>16</sup> This is one of the first studies to look at different

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<sup>13</sup> Louise Olsson (forthcoming) Same Peace, Different Quality? The Importance of Security Equality for Quality Peace. In *Dimensions of Quality Peace*, edited by M. Joshi and P. Wallensteen. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>14</sup> See, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. United Nations. Internet source <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>. (Accessed on 12/05/2016).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Louise Olsson. "Mainstreaming Gender in Multidimensional Peacekeeping: A Field Perspective", *International Peacekeeping*, 7(3): 1-16, 2000, Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Jana Krause, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Xun Cao. *Peacekeeping and Post-conflict Maternal Health*. Typescript: University of Essex and Penn State University, 2016.

dimensions of peace and in particular women's health and compare countries and regions within countries that experienced peacekeeping missions to those without.

Concluding, to answer these questions, we need more data on peacekeeping activities and policies and extension of the peacebuilding into the post-conflict phase and how the continued path of development can be more or less equal.