The Impact of Women Peacekeepers on Public Support for Peacekeeping in Troop-Contributing Countries

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Executive Summary

There are several common assumptions about how women peacekeepers may impact public opinion in the countries from which they deploy. First, women peacekeepers may boost public support for peacekeeping by increasing the perceived legitimacy of peacekeeping missions. This perception is often based on stereotypes that women are less violent, less corrupt, and more altruistic than men. Second, women peacekeepers may boost public support for women's rights by challenging norms around the roles women should perform. Finally, there is a belief that the death of women peacekeepers could decrease support for peacekeeping.

Drawing on two rounds of online public surveys in India and South Africa, this issue brief tests these assumptions. It also draws on an additional survey of UN member-state representatives in New York to understand how decision makers believe the deployment of women alters public support for peacekeeping.

The survey in India revealed that reading about women peacekeepers could increase support for UN peacekeeping. Moreover, respondents in both India and South Africa were no more or less likely to support peacekeeping if they read about a woman peacekeeper being killed while deployed. Respondents in South Africa who read about women peacekeeper fatalities were also more likely to support gender equality and exhibit fewer sexist beliefs, and respondents who read about the deployment of a mixed-gender unit wanted to send more women peacekeepers the following year (the same effect was not seen in India).

Overall, the surveys revealed relatively high levels of support for peacekeeping in both India and South Africa. Moreover, member-state representatives in New York indicated that they not only value public opinion on peacekeeping and consider it when making deployment decisions but also believe that the deployment of women peacekeepers increases support for UN peacekeeping.

Differences between the surveys of the two countries underscore that women peacekeepers may be perceived differently by the public in different contexts and may not always increase support for peacekeeping or women's rights. Therefore, scholars and policymakers within national governments and the UN should consider how the deployment of women may interact with other social, cultural, and political norms to moderate how the public will perceive and react to women peacekeepers.

Introduction

How might women's increased participation in peacekeeping impact the legitimacy of UN peace-keeping operations? The UN, scholars, and policy-makers often claim that women peacekeepers increase the effectiveness and legitimacy of peace-keeping operations.[1] In particular, women peace-keepers are pointed to as better able to access and build trust with women from host-country communities. Yet beyond the host country, the deployment of women peacekeepers may also impact public opinion on peacekeeping in troop-contributing countries (TCCs).

There are several common assumptions about how women peacekeepers may impact public opinion. First, women peacekeepers may boost public support for peacekeeping in TCCs by increasing the perceived legitimacy of peacekeeping missions. This perception is commonly based on gender stereo-types that women are less violent, less corrupt, and more altruistic than men.[2] While there is no robust evidence that women peacekeepers behave differ-ently than their male counterparts, these stereotypes may affect the public's view of peacekeeping missions' legitimacy and effectiveness. Second, because women make up a small share of national military personnel and military peacekeepers, seeing a woman deployed as a military peacekeeper may challenge traditional gender norms. This could increase support for women's rights both in host countries and in TCCs.[3] Finally, there is a belief that the death of women peacekeepers could decrease support for peacekeeping.

These assumptions about the impact of women peacekeepers on public opinion have important implications for policymaking. They could affect policymakers' decisions about whether, where, and how to deploy troops to UN peacekeeping missions and whether to deploy women or men. To ensure that these decisions are not based on false gendered assumptions, it is important to have an accurate understanding of how populations in TCCs view women peacekeepers.

Drawing on two rounds of online public surveys, this report examines how the deployment and death of women peacekeepers affect public attitudes toward and support for peacekeeping in two TCCs: India and South Africa. It also draws on an additional survey of UN member-state repre-sentatives on the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to understand how decision makers believe the deployment of women alters public support for peacekeeping.

Assumptions about Public Perceptions of Women Peacekeepers

To date, there is little evidence about how the deployment of women peacekeepers or the death of women peacekeepers impact public support for UN peacekeeping in TCCs. Nonetheless, assump-tions about this impact shape the messaging and decisions of policymakers.

Women Peacekeepers and the Legitimacy of UN Peacekeeping Operations

More than twenty years ago, in 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security (WPS). In this resolu-tion, as well as in several subsequent WPS resolu-tions, the UN called for increased women's partici-

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1   See, for example: UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), "Women in Peacekeeping," available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/women-peacekeeping ; Donna Bridges and Debbie Horsfall, "Increasing Operational Effectiveness in UN Peacekeeping: Toward a Gender-Balanced Force," *Armed Forces and Society* 36, no. 1 (October 2009); Louise Olsson and Torunn L. Tryggestad, eds., *Women and International Peacekeeping* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Lisa Sharland, "Women, Gender and the A4P Agenda—An Opportunity for Action?" Challenges Forum, November 2019.

2   Tiffany D. Barnes, Emily Beaulieu, and Gregory W. Saxton, "Restoring Trust in the Police: Why Female Officers Reduce Suspicions of Corruption," *Governance* 31, no. 1 (January 2018); Gustavo Flores-Macías and Jessica Zarkin, "Militarization and Perceptions of Law Enforcement in the Developing World: Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment in Mexico," *British Journal of Political Science* (2021); Norma M. Riccucci, Gregg G. Van Ryzin, and Cecilia F. Lavena, "Representative Bureaucracy in Policing: Does It Increase Perceived Legitimacy?" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 24, no. 3 (July 2014); Sabrina Karim, "Restoring Confidence in Post-Conflict Security Sectors: Survey Evidence from Liberia on Female Ratio Balancing Reforms," *British Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (2019); Bridges and Horsfall, "Increasing Operational Effectiveness in UN Peacekeeping."

3   See, for example: Lori Beaman et al., "Powerful Women: Does Exposure Reduce Bias?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124, no. 4 (November 2009). However, it is important to note that some studies have found that only women (and not men) update their gendered beliefs after exposure to a woman in power or in a tradi-tionally male occupation. See: Amanda Clayton, "Do Gender Quotas Really Reduce Bias? Evidence from a Policy Experiment in Southern Africa," *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 5, no. 3 (2018); and Dara Kay Cohen, Connor Huff, and Robert Schub, "At War and at Home: The Consequences of US Women Combat Casualties," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65, no. 4 (2021).

pation in and protection by peace and security organizations.[4] In 2020, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2538, the first stand-alone resolution on women in peacekeeping operations. This resolution recognizes the indispensable role of women in improving the performance, effectiveness, and credibility of UN peacekeeping operations and calls upon troop- and police-contributing countries to deploy more uniformed women peacekeepers.[5]

Many researchers and policymakers have claimed that women's participation in peacekeeping operations increases these operations' perceived legitimacy among host-country populations.[6] There is also evidence that as more women participate in domestic public institutions like the police and military, the public begins to view these institutions as more legitimate, trustworthy, and fair.[7] Yet to date, no study has assessed how the deployment of women peacekeepers affects perceptions among the populations military peacekeepers

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are being deployed from.

Increasing women's participation in peacekeeping could increase the perceived legitimacy and credibility of peacekeeping within TCCs for two reasons. First, when the public in a TCC sees peacekeepers with whom they share similar characteristics—such as gender—they may perceive those peacekeepers and their institution as more legitimate.[8] Second, stereotypes that women are less violent and more trustworthy, fair, compassionate, caring, and motivated by altruism and humanitarian concerns may lead the public to believe that missions with more women peacekeepers are less violent and more humanitarian-oriented.[9]

It is important to note that average civilians living in a TCC have relatively little knowledge about UN peacekeeping and therefore may not be aware of when women peacekeepers are deployed, what peacekeepers do, or why or where they are

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4 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 31, 2000), UN Doc. S/RES/1325 (2000).

5 UN Security Council Resolution 2538 (August 28, 2020), UN Doc. S/RES/2538 (2020).

6 One survey of military, police, and civilian peacekeepers and academic experts found that 82 percent believed increased participation by women in peacekeeping operations increased the operations' perceived legitimacy by the local population. Kari M. Osland, Jenny Nortvedt, and Maria Gilen Røysamb, "Female Peacekeepers and Operational Effectiveness in UN Peace Operations," Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, January 2020. See also: Bridges and Horsfall, "Increasing Operational Effectiveness in UN Peacekeeping"; Robert U. Nagel, Kate Fin, and Julia Maenza, "Gendered Impacts on Operational Effectiveness of UN Peace Operations," Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, May 2021; Olsson and Tryggestad, Women and International Peacekeeping; Sharland, "Women, Gender and the A4P Agenda"; and Jamille Bigio and Rachel Vogelstein, "Increasing Female Participation in Peacekeeping Operations," Council on Foreign Relations, September 2018. However, some of these arguments have been criticized for relying on gender stereotypes and creating an "added burden" for women peacekeepers. See: Nadine Puechguirbal, "Discourses on Gender, Patriarchy and Resolution 1325: A Textual Analysis of UN Documents," International Peacekeeping 17, no. 2 (2010); Nina Wilén, "Female Peacekeepers' Added Burden," International Affairs 96, no. 6 (November 2020); and Kari M. Osland, "Much Ado about Nothing? The Impact of International Assistance to Police Reform in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and South Sudan," Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, May 2014.

7 These studies focus on domestic institutions, not international deployments. Therefore, it is not clear whether these findings will hold internationally. Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton, "Restoring Trust in the Police"; Flores-Macías and Zarkin, "Militarization and Perceptions of Law Enforcement in the Developing World"; Riccucci, Van Ryzin, and Lavena, "Representative Bureaucracy in Policing"; Karim, "Restoring Confidence in Post-Conflict Security Sectors"; Bridges and Horsfall, "Increasing Operational Effectiveness in UN Peacekeeping."

8 Theories of symbolic representation argue that perceptions of institutional legitimacy increase when the demographic identity of institutional representatives matches that of the public. Riccucci, Van Ryzin, and Lavena, "Representative Bureaucracy in Policing"; Kenneth J. Meier and Jill Nicholson–Crotty, "Gender, Representative Bureaucracy, and Law Enforcement: The Case of Sexual Assault," Public Administration Review 66, no. 6 (November–December 2006); Nick A. Theobald and Donald P. Haider-Markel, "Race, Bureaucracy, and Symbolic Representation: Interactions between Citizens and Police," Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 19, no. 2 (April 2009); Amie M. Schuck, Paola Baldo, and Christopher Powell, "Women in Policing and Legitimacy: A Vignette-Based Study of Symbolic Representation," Women and Criminal Justice 31, no. 5 (2021); Tiffany D. Barnes and Emily Beaulieu, "Women Politicians, Institutions, and Perceptions of Corruption," Comparative Police Studies 52, no. 1 (2019); Flores-Macías and Zarkin, "Militarization and Perceptions of Law Enforcement in the Developing World"; Laura Huber, Sabrina Karim, and Lindsey Pruett, "The 'Commando' Effect: The Impact of Gender on Misconduct among Security Force Personnel Using Experimental Survey Evidence from Four Countries," Working Paper, 2022.

9 For example, in a different context, one study found that when women fought in a hypothetical rebel group, participants believed that group's use of violence was more legitimate. Devorah Manekin and Reed M. Wood, "Framing the Narrative: Female Fighters, External Audience Attitudes, and Transnational Support for Armed Rebellions," Journal of Conflict Resolution 64, no. 9 (2020). See also: Daniel B. Kennedy and Robert J. Homant, "Attitudes of Abused Women toward Male and Female Police Officers," Criminal Justice and Behavior 10, no. 4 (December 1983); Barnes and Beaulieu, "Women Politicians, Institutions, and Perceptions of Corruption"; Flores-Macías and Zarkin, "Militarization and Perceptions of Law Enforcement in the Developing World"; Karim, "Restoring Confidence in Post-Conflict Security Sectors"; Amalia R. Miller and Carmit Segal, "Do Female Officers Improve Law Enforcement Quality? Effects on Crime Reporting and Domestic Violence," Review of Economic Studies 86, no. 5 (October 2019). However, this does not hold in all settings. See, for example: Sabrina Karim, "Relational State Building in Areas of Limited Statehood: Experimental Evidence on the Attitudes of the Police," American Political Science Review 114, no. 2 (2020); Laura Sjoberg, "Women Fighters and the 'Beautiful Soul' Narrative," International Review of the Red Cross 92, no. 877 (March 2010); Jocelyn Viterna, "Radical or Righteous? Using Gender to Shape Public Perceptions of Political Violence," in Dynamics of Political Violence: A Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict, Chares Demetriou, Lorenzo Bosi, and Stefan Malthaner, eds. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

deployed.[10] Yet because of this lack of prior knowledge, when they do encounter information about peacekeeping, they may be especially likely to draw conclusions from context clues such as whether women peacekeepers are deployed. Governments often take advantage of this to try to increase support for peacekeeping. They regularly promote women peacekeepers in press releases and statements. For example, the Indian government has symbolically promoted women peacekeepers to demonstrate its promotion of gender equality and participation in peacekeeping and increase support for peacekeeping and the government itself.[11]

Public perceptions of peacekeepers are also liable to be shaped by the media. Women peacekeepers are commonly reported on by the media, often in gendered ways.[12] For example, Indian media reporting on Indian women peacekeepers have been found to frame them as "naturally" peaceful, more caring, and better able to relate to the public and often refer to them as "girls," "ladies," and "mothers."[13] This gendered framing can shape the way the public perceives women peacekeepers and could thus also influence public perceptions of peacekeeping more broadly.

Women Peacekeepers and Support for Women's Rights

Beyond increasing support for peacekeeping, the UN, TCCs, and scholars often claim that women peacekeepers increase support for women's rights by acting as role models. Seeing women military peacekeepers can challenge traditional gender roles, demonstrate women's agency and capabilities, and encourage greater acceptance of women's roles in other realms and activities. For example, the government of India and the UN have credited the all-women Indian formed police unit in Liberia with improving women's rights in Liberia and encouraging women in both Liberia and India to join the police and military forces.[14] Government officials and media reports also highlighted how the women peacekeepers in Liberia were strong and capable, thus demonstrating what women could do.[15]

Although women peacekeepers are typically cited as role models for women in the host country, they could also serve as role models for women in TCCs. Because women peacekeepers are relatively rare, even in countries with higher numbers of women in their military, they may receive special attention from the media and the government, increasing public awareness of women playing these roles.[16] Moreover, peacekeeping deployments are sometimes seen as prestigious and can provide women soldiers more training, experience, and opportunities for promotion.[17] Relatedly, the deployment of women internationally may challenge beliefs about the agency and courage of women soldiers by highlighting their willingness and capability to deploy abroad.[18]

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10 For example, when given a list of four possible options, only 33 percent of survey respondents from India and 41 percent from South Africa correctly identified that Germany was not a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

11 Klossek and Johansson-Nogués argue that the Indian government values and promotes female peacekeepers more for their symbolism and their ability to act as goodwill ambassadors rather than their effectiveness at carrying out mission mandates. Lara Klossek and Elisabeth Johansson-Nogués, "The Female 'Boot on the Ground': Indian Ambivalence Over Gender Mainstreaming in UN Peacekeeping Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 4 (2021). This echoes criticisms that women peacekeepers are often expected to do emotional and physical labor beyond their official duties to encourage women's rights, foster positive relations with the community, and act as spokespeople for the mission. Wilén, "Female Peacekeepers' Added Burden."

12 For example, the research database Nexis Uni lists over 3,000 articles containing the phrase "female peacekeepers" or "women peacekeepers."

13 In contrast, stories that featured men peacekeepers did not discuss their role as loving and supportive fathers but instead focused on sexual abuses they had committed that led to unsupported families in both India and the host country. Lesley J. Pruitt, "All-Female Police Contingents: Feminism and the Discourse of Armed Protection," *International Peacekeeping* 20, no. 1 (2013).

14 Klossek and Johansson-Nogués, "The Female 'Boot on the Ground.'"

15 Pruitt, "All-Female Police Contingents: Feminism and the Discourse of Armed Protection."

16 For example, Karim and Beardsley find that women's participation in the national armed forces or police force does not predict the proportion of women deployed to peacekeeping missions. This could indicate that having more women in the police or military does not necessarily mean that these women will be deployed. Additionally, as women tend to make up a relatively small proportion of the armed forces more generally, the public may not be aware of or exposed to women soldiers within their own country. Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping: Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

17 However, troops' perceptions of the prestige and usefulness of peacekeeping deployments may differ across both countries and ranks. For example, see: Nina Wilén and Lindy Heinecken. "Peacekeeping Deployment Abroad and the Self-Perceptions of the Effect on Career Advancement, Status and Reintegration," *International Peacekeeping* 24, no. 2 (2017).

18 This may challenge assumptions that women are serving in traditionally feminine or administrative roles. Yet it is important to note that there may be gaps between what people think being deployed to a peacekeeping mission entails and what the actual tasks of peacekeepers are. In fact, many women and men deployed to peacekeeping operations have primarily support or administrative roles. Karim and Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*.

Fatalities among Men and Women Peacekeepers and Public Opinion

One concern raised by some government officials in TCCs is that fatalities among peacekeepers could decrease public support for peacekeeping or draw criticism of the government—a phenomenon known as "body bag syndrome."[19] However, the degree to which fatalities impact public opinion and deployment decisions is still debated. The impact of fatalities on support for military operations varies depending on factors such as individual characteristics of members of the public, support for the war, partisanship and the messaging of political elites, and military developments.[20]

> There is little evidence that the public reacts more negatively to women fatalities, including in peacekeeping settings.

Although any fatalities may cause public criticism, fatalities among women may create stronger negative reactions due to the gendered protection norm, whereby women are seen as weak, innocent, and in need of protection.[21] Thus, women who die while deployed may be viewed as tragic victims, while men who die may be viewed as suffering the unfortunate outcome of fulfilling their societal role. For example, women fatalities have been described by critics of women's participation in the military as "more tragic than a man [dying] because it's contrary to her nature to be there,"[22] and as doubly demoralizing compared to fatalities among men.[23]

Despite this widespread belief, there is little evidence that the public actually does react more negatively to women fatalities, including in peacekeeping settings.[24] Even so, this belief can limit women's deployment. Leaders and decision makers who fear public backlash if women are killed while deployed may deploy fewer women or relegate them to safe tasks within the mission.[25] Similarly, there is evidence that women are less likely to be deployed to UN peacekeeping operations during their early phases, when the safety of peacekeepers is most uncertain.[26]

Survey Findings on Perceptions of Women Peacekeepers

To examine how the deployment of women peacekeepers impacts public support for peacekeeping as well as government representatives' beliefs surrounding this question, we conducted several surveys. First, we conducted two rounds of online public surveys in India and South Africa to

19 For example, in several interviews conducted by the author in 2019 with members of the government, armed forces, and police, participants stated that their country did not deploy women to missions or areas within missions that were considered too dangerous, uncertain, or high-risk.

20 For more on how military casualties impact public opinion, see: Scott Sigmund Gartner, "The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach," *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008); Scott L. Althaus, Brittany H. Bramlett, and James G. Gimpel, "When War Hits Home: The Geography of Military Losses and Support for War in Time and Space," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 3 (2012); Adam J. Berinsky, "Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict," *Journal of Politics* 69, no. 4 (November 2007); James Burk, "Public Support for Peacekeeping in Lebanon and Somalia: Assessing the Casualties Hypothesis," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 1 (Spring 1999); Scott Sigmund Gartner, Gary M. Segura, and Michael Wilkening, "All Politics Are Local: Local Losses and Individual Attitudes toward the Vietnam War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 5 (October 1997); Scott Sigmund Gartner and Gary M. Segura, "War, Casualties, and Public Opinion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 3 (June 1998); Bruce W. Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March 1992); Bruce W. Jentleson and Rebecca L. Britton, "Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 4 (August 1998); Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for US Military Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1996); John Mueller, "The Iraq Syndrome," *Foreign Affairs*, November–December 2005; Erik Voeten and Paul R. Brewer, "Public Opinion, the War in Iraq, and Presidential Accountability," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 6 (December 2006).

21 Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); R. Charli Carpenter, "'Women and Children First': Gender, Norms, and Humanitarian Evacuation in the Balkans 1991–95," *International Organization* 57, no. 4 (Autumn 2003); R. Charli Carpenter, "'Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups': Gender, Strategic Frames and the Protection of Civilians as a Transnational Issue," *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (June 2005); R. Charli Carpenter, *'Innocent Women and Children': Gender, Norms and the Protection of Civilians* (London: Routledge, 2006); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (London: Pandora, 1989); Karim and Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*.

22 As cited in Gretchen Cook, "Controversy Arising over Female Combat Veterans," Women's eNews, November 11, 2003, available at https://womensenews.org/2003/11/controversy-arising-over-female-combat-veterans/ .

23 As cited in Cohen, Huff, and Schub, "At War and at Home: The Consequences of US Women Combat Casualties."

24 For example, Cohen, Huff, and Schub found that women casualties among US soldiers did not decrease support for military operations more than men casualties. However, they did find that casualties among women increased support for women's equality. Ibid. Similarly, another study found that female casualties only decreased support for military operations if they occurred when the public had relatively few indicators to judge the success of a military operation. Scott Sigmund Gartner, "The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War."

25 Karim and Beardsley, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*.

26 Kajsa Tidblad-Lundholm, "When are Women Deployed? Operational Uncertainty and Deployment of Female Personnel to UN Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 27, no. 4 (2020).

examine how the deployment of women peace-keepers and women peacekeeper fatalities impact public support for peacekeeping and for women's rights.[27] India and South Africa were chosen as they are both democratic countries that are either major troop contributors (India) or act as leaders in peacekeeping in their region (South Africa).[28] Additionally, both countries have a history of deploying women peacekeepers and promoting the WPS agenda, yet they have varying levels of women's participation in peacekeeping and of gender equality more broadly.

Two sets of online surveys were run in both India and South Africa between March and April 2022.[29] The first survey presented each respondent with a hypothetical news story describing the deployment of a military peacekeeping contingent from India or South Africa to the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).[30] Each respondent randomly saw either a news story about a contin-gent that was all-men (250 men) or mixed-gender (200 men and 50 women). Additionally, the story included a quote from one of the peacekeepers describing how they were looking forward to their deployment. The respondents who read about the all-men contingent saw a quote from a man, and those who read about the mixed-gender unit saw a quote from a woman.

In the second survey, each respondent read a hypothetical news story about a military peace-keeper deployed to MONUSCO from India or South Africa who had been killed by a militia. For each respondent, the peacekeeper killed was randomly identified as a man or a woman. The story also contained quotes from a representative of the country's armed forces and the deceased peace-keeper's parents. The hypothetical news stories used for both sets of surveys can be found in Annex 3.[31]

After reading the news stories, the respondents to both surveys were asked:

- How much they support their country contributing peacekeepers to UN peacekeeping missions;
- How many peacekeepers and, more specifically, how many women peacekeepers they would prefer their country to send in the future;
- How effective the peacekeeping unit was in conducting various tasks; and[32]
- How much they agree with several statements about gender roles and women's rights.

Since the public does not decide who to deploy and when to deploy them, it is not enough to under-stand public opinion of women peacekeepers; it is also vital to understand government representa-tives' beliefs on and perceptions of public support for peacekeeping and women peacekeepers and whether they consider public opinion when making deployment decisions. To this end, we distributed a survey to member-state representa-tives on the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) and their staff in February and March 2022.[33]

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27 The results reported include the percentage of respondents who selected each possible response in a multiple-choice question. Additionally, an ordinary least squares regression was used to test whether respondents' answers were significantly different when treated with the mixed-gender unit (in the first survey) or a woman peacekeeper fatality (in the second survey). If there is a significant difference based on treatment at the 0.1 level or below, this is noted in the discussion. If no differences between treated and control groups are noted, there was not a significant difference, and the result may not be reported but can be found in Annex 4. As the treatment was randomly assigned, controls are not required. However, the models were rerun with controls for political ideology, knowledge of peace-keeping, and demographic characteristics. The results of all the models can be found in Annex 4.

28 Moreover, as the survey was an online survey, it was important that both countries have relatively high Internet coverage. However, since the surveys were only conducted in two countries, their findings cannot be generalized to other countries.

29 Each survey had approximately 1,125 respondents. The samples were representative of both countries in terms of gender and education levels and, in India, religious groups. See Annex 2 for more detail on survey demographics. Each survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. Since these surveys were conducted online, the responses may differ from members of the broader public within those countries.

30 MONUSCO was chosen because it is one of the largest UN missions currently in operation, has a relatively high peacekeeper fatality rate, and includes peace-keepers from both India and South Africa.

31 The hypothetical news stories used for both sets of surveys can be found in Annex 3. Surveys were translated into Afrikaans, Sesotho, and Zulu in South Africa and Hindi in India. Although the participation of women peacekeepers is often promoted in highly gendered ways, the news stories used in the surveys were relatively subtle in their treatment of gender. Therefore, the findings may understate the impact of more strongly gendered public relations campaigns surrounding women peacekeepers. Additionally, these surveys only examined military peacekeepers and therefore cannot shed light on police peacekeepers.

32 This question was asked in the first survey but not in the second.

33 The C-34 is composed of 147 member states that are past or current contributors to peacekeeping operations and is mandated to review all peacekeeping-related issues. Members of the C-34 were emailed a link to anonymously and voluntarily participate in the survey either themselves or via a member of their staff. The email was sent on behalf of the author to the C-34 email list provided by the permanent mission of Canada to the UN. Twenty-six respondents completed the survey, eleven respondents tried to take the survey outside of the US but were unable to complete it, and an additional nine respondents opened the survey but did not complete it. Due to the requirements of the author's institutional review board, all respondents had to be physically located in the US at the time of the survey. To protect the respondents' privacy, respondents were not asked which country they represented but only the region in which their country was located.

## Women Peacekeepers and Support for Peacekeeping

The majority of the surveyed C-34 representatives believed that the deployment of women peacekeepers would improve support for peacekeeping both within the host country (84 percent) and in the country they represent (60 percent; see Figure 1). The public surveys offered mixed support for this belief. Respondents in India who read about a mixed-gender unit were more supportive of future peacekeeping contributions (see Figure 2).[34] However, the same effect was not apparent in South Africa, where respondents who read about a mixed-gender unit did not show greater support for peacekeeping (see Figure 3).

When respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of peacekeepers in performing various tasks, results were similarly mixed (see Table 1).[35] There were some differences between those who read about an all-men versus a mixed-gender unit. In South Africa, respondents who read about a mixed-gender unit rated it as more effective at working with local women than those who read about an all-

men unit. This aligns with a common argument made by the UN and TCCs that women peacekeepers are better able to work with local women, especially in countries where there are cultural norms that limit men from interacting with women. Similarly, South African respondents who read about the mixed-gender unit rated it as less effective at working with local men, reflecting the belief that peacekeepers can better interact with members of the public of the same gender.[36] This may be especially true in countries where men do not wish to recognize the authority of women peacekeepers.

In India, respondents who read about a mixed-gender unit rated it as less effective at preventing sexual violence, such as rape, than those who read about an all-men unit. One possible reason for this could be that women peacekeepers are perceived as weaker or nonviolent, which respondents may believe hampers their ability to physically intervene to prevent sexual violence. Similarly, in South Africa, those who read about the mixed-gender unit rated it as less effective at preventing violence between the government and rebels. This may

Figure 1. UN diplomats' perceptions of whether deploying women peacekeepers increases public support for peacekeeping in T/PCCs and host countries
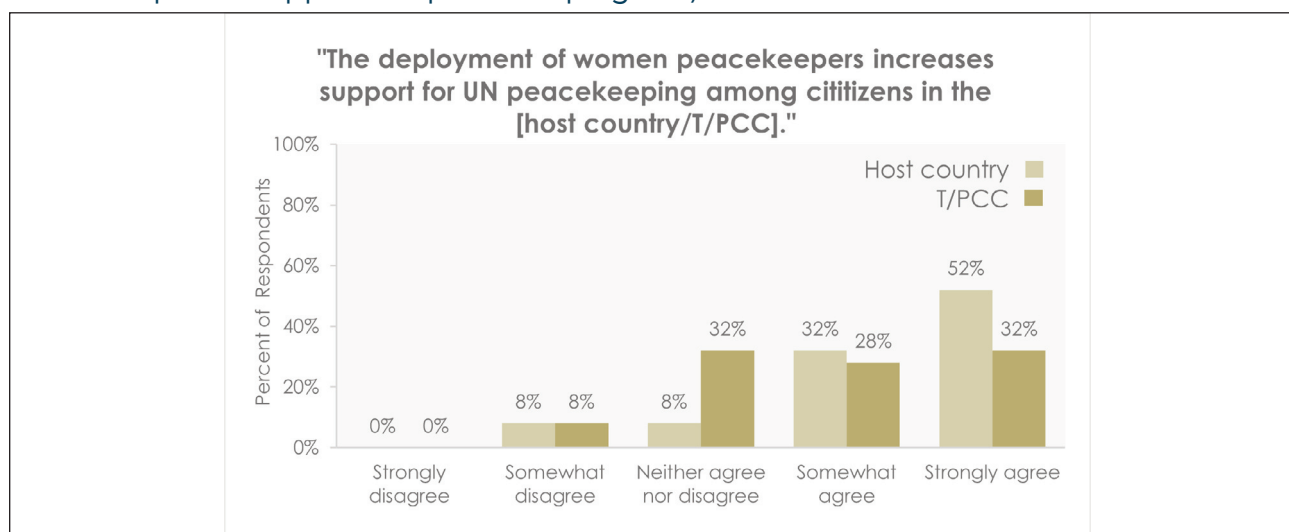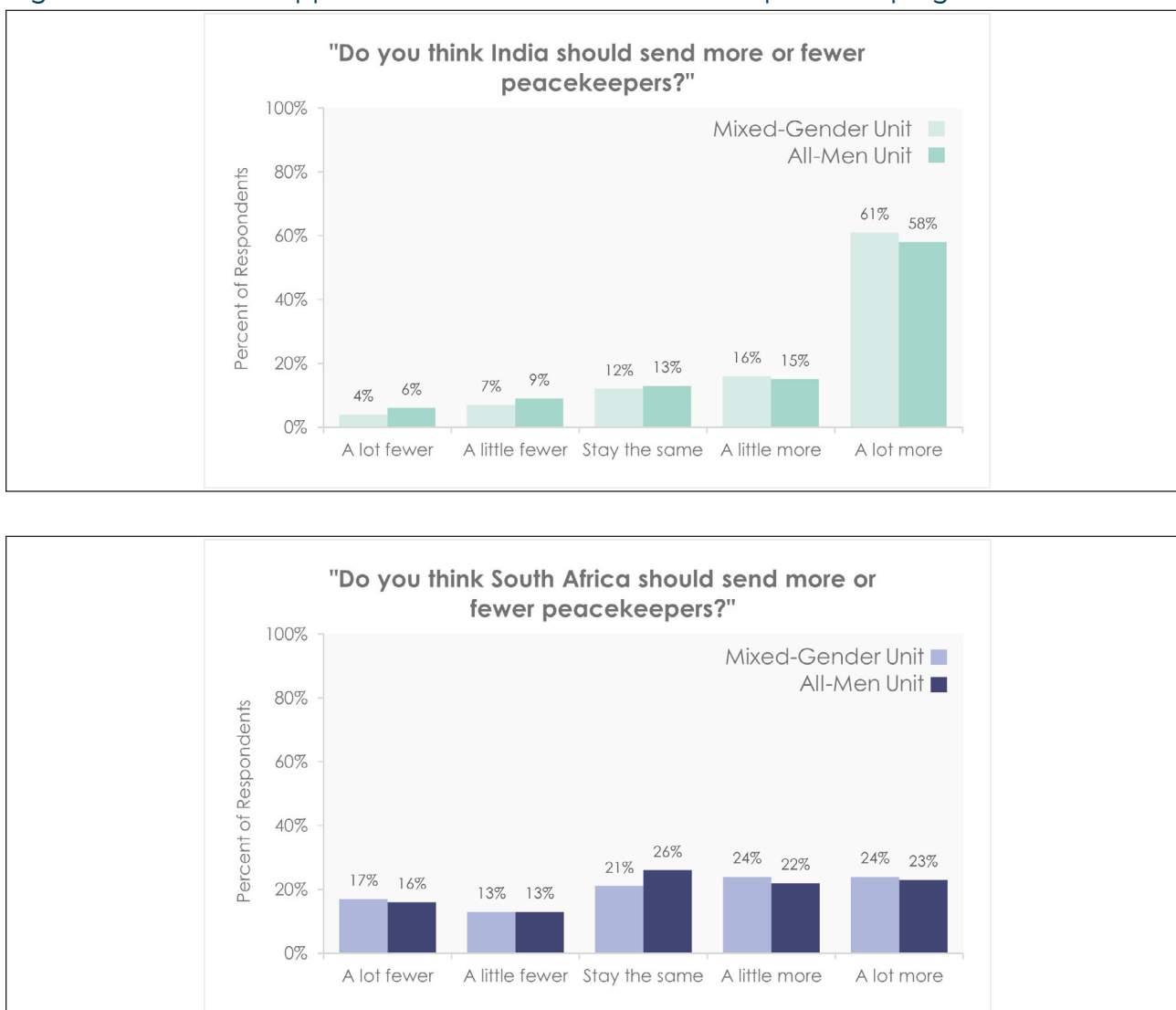

While respondents were disproportionately from Western Europe, the survey included respondents from most regions of the world. Since the survey is anonymous and over-represents Western countries, it cannot reveal how opinions differ between countries or among individuals within the same government and its results are not representative of decision makers in all TCCs. The survey took on average 4.8 minutes to complete with a median time of 3.5 minutes.

34 However, when respondents who failed the manipulation check are removed from the sample, this effect is no longer statistically significant.

35 Additionally, it is important to note that these results are less robust when controlling for demographic and political variables and when respondents who failed the manipulation check are removed from the sample. See Annex 4 for more details.

36 For both questions, the difference between the two treatment groups of Indian respondents was not statistically significant.

Figures 2–3. Public support in India and South Africa for peacekeeping contributions

"Do you think India should send more or fewer peacekeepers?"

Mixed-Gender Unit
All-Men Unit

	A lot fewer	A little fewer	Stay the same	A little more	A lot more
Mixed-Gender Unit	4%	7%	12%	16%	61%
All-Men Unit	6%	9%	13%	15%	58%

Percent of Respondents

"Do you think South Africa should send more or fewer peacekeepers?"

Mixed-Gender Unit
All-Men Unit

	A lot fewer	A little fewer	Stay the same	A little more	A lot more
Mixed-Gender Unit	17%	13%	21%	24%	24%
All-Men Unit	16%	13%	26%	22%	23%

Percent of Respondents

again reflect the perception that women are less effective at tasks that might require them to be violent or aggressive.[37]

The Role Model Effect: Women Peacekeepers and Support for Women's Rights

Another claim tested in the surveys is that exposure to women peacekeepers will increase support for women's rights as these women will act as role models. When respondents were asked what percent of a new unit should be women, respondents in South Africa who read about a unit with only men wanted the new unit to be 48.7 percent women, while respondents who read about a mixed-gender unit wanted it to be 52.4 percent women (see Figure 4). Reading about women peacekeepers thus slightly increased their willingness to deploy more women in the future. This could indicate that reading about women peacekeepers challenges traditional gender roles and

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37 Moreover, there is some evidence that the perceived effectiveness of the mixed-gender unit at addressing sexual violence also differed based on the respondents' views on gender equality. Respondents in both countries who held sexist views were more likely to think the mixed-gender unit would be relatively more effective at addressing sexual violence. Respondents with sexist views were also more likely to evaluate the mixed-gender unit as more effective at preventing violence between the government and rebels. This may reflect beliefs that women are more likely to be a "calming" presence based on stereotypes that they are less violent and aggressive. However, it is important to note that questions measuring the extent of respondents' sexist beliefs were asked after respondents read the story about the peacekeeping units. Therefore, it is possible that their responses to these questions were different based on whether they read about a mixed-gender or all-men unit, so findings should be interpreted with extreme caution.

Table 1. Average rating by the public in India and South Africa of peacekeepers' ability to effectively carry out key mission tasks in MONUSCO (with 0 being the worst and 10 the best) depending on whether respondents read the article about a mixed-gender unit or an all-men unit

Mission Task	India		South Africa	
	Mixed-Gender Unit	All-Men Unit	Mixed-Gender Unit	All-Men Unit
Prevent violence between the government and the rebels	8.4	8.3	**6.2***	**6.5***
Protect civilians from violence	8.6	8.5	6.7	6.8
Promote human rights	8.6	8.5	6.9	6.8
Train the Congolese military	8.5	8.4	6.3	6.4
Protect refugees	8.5	8.4	6.5	6.5
Work with local men	8.5	8.4	**6.5***	**6.9***
Work with local women	8.4	8.3	**6.4***	**6.0***
Prevent sexual violence	**8.5***	**8.2***	6.0	6.2

Bold indicates a statistically significant difference in ratings between respondents who read about the mixed-gender unit versus respondents who read about the all-men unit.

normalizes the idea of women playing traditionally masculine roles. For example, one South African respondent said, "South Africa should consider sending the same amount of women as the men and stop doubting the capabilities women have."[38] Another spoke more broadly about how international initiatives should be gender-balanced: "Everything international should be equal from both genders male and female." However, it is unclear whether this exposure to women peacekeepers fundamentally changes these beliefs in the long term or temporarily cues people to think about women in these roles without changing their core beliefs.

Although reading about a mixed-gender unit did

not similarly increase the desired representation of women peacekeepers in India, several Indian respondents still mentioned their desire to deploy more women. One respondent in India commented, "[Peacekeeping] should take both men and women who are capable for it." Another noted that women should also have greater representation within the police force, not just among troops.

Seeing women in these traditionally masculine roles may also challenge traditional gender norms more broadly, making people more accepting of women in other powerful or nontraditional roles. In both India and South Africa, respondents who read about the deployment of a mixed-gender unit

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38 At the end of the survey, respondents had the option to provide additional information or comments about the survey in an open-ended format. The quotes come from these voluntary responses.

Figure 4. Public perceptions in South Africa of what proportion of peacekeepers should be women depending on whether they read the article about a mixed-gender unit or an all-men unit
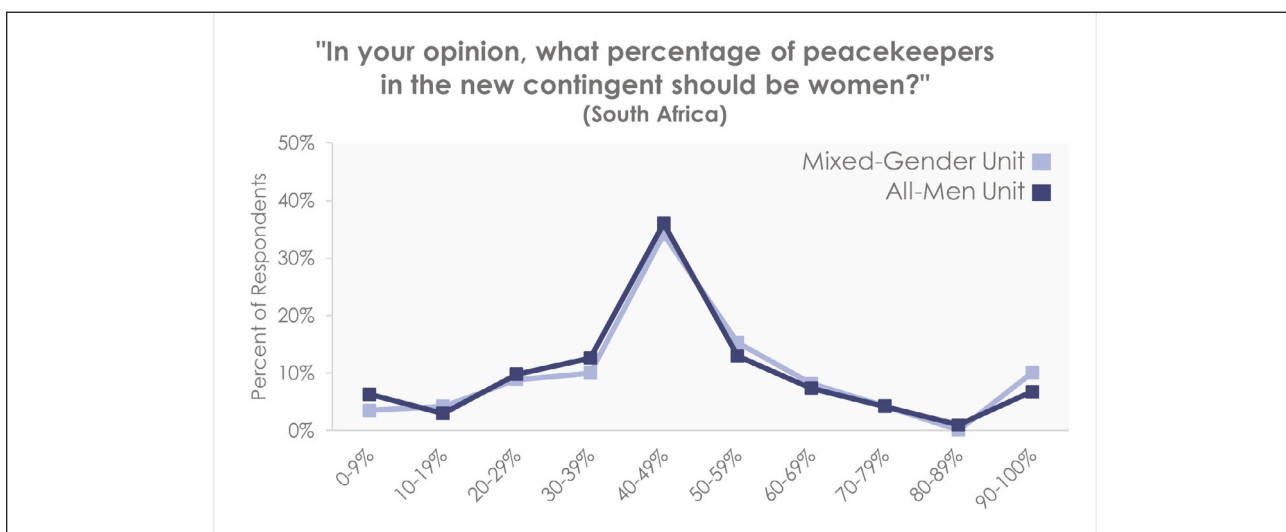
were neither more nor less likely to express sexist views or to support gender equality.[39] However, respondents in South Africa who read the story about a woman peacekeeper being killed on mission were less likely to agree with statements supporting hostile sexism (10 percent lower support; see Figure 5), supporting benevolent sexism (4 percent lower support), and disagreeing with gender equality (11 percent lower support).

While these changes are relatively small, attitudes and beliefs on gender tend to be deeply rooted in one's belief system and cultural values. Therefore, even relatively small changes may demonstrate the potentially significant impact of exposure to information about women peacekeeper fatalities. As with the willingness to deploy more women, however, it is unclear whether this effect is short-term or long-term. Given the "stickiness" of views on gender, long-term impact is more likely when

exposure to this information is repeated over time.

These results may indicate that while reading about women being deployed is not enough to challenge gender roles, women fatalities can shift ideas about gender equality. There may be several reasons for this. First, a willingness to give one's life for others is often considered the ultimate sacrifice.[40] Reading about a woman peacekeeper making that sacrifice may not only invoke her courage but also her equality with male soldiers who have also made that sacrifice. Second, respondents who read about women's deployment but not about women fatalities may believe that women peacekeepers are being deployed to support or administrative roles rather than active combat roles or that they are protected from violence. Hearing about a woman peacekeeper being killed while on duty may challenge this assumption and thus challenge their belief that women will (or must) be protected from violence.[41]

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39 Respondents rated their beliefs on a scale of one to five. The scale is adapted from Glick and Fiske; see: Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske, *The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism* (Routledge, 2018). Because beliefs on gender equality and sexism may vary in degree and nature, several manifestations of sexism and support for gender equality were measured. This is important as some forms of sexism may reflect overt opposition to women peace-keepers (i.e., "hostile sexism"), such as peacekeeping not being a "woman's role" or that women are not effective as soldiers. Other forms of sexism may reflect less overt opposition and are grounded in the belief that women need protecting (i.e., "benevolent sexism"). Respondents were first asked to respond to a set of state-ments that reflected hostile sexist beliefs, including that men are better political leaders, better automobile drivers, better at addressing crime, and more entitled to jobs. They then responded to a second set of statements that reflected benevolent sexist beliefs, including that women are more sensitive and compassionate, less corrupt, better at handling education, and more entitled to be rescued first in a disaster. Finally, respondents were asked more directly about their support for women's rights and traditional gender roles, including whether women are demanding too much in their call for equal rights or whether they should be subject to traditional laws and customs. The questions are adapted from several questions used in AfroBarometer surveys. For more information, see: www.afrobarometer.org/surveys-and-methods/ . A full list of questions can be found in Annex 3. When respondents who fail the manipulation check are removed from the survey, respondents in India who read about a mixed-gender unit were significantly less likely to agree with both benevolent and hostile sexist statements (see Annex 4).

40 Cohen, Huff, and Schub, "At War and at Home."

41 Respondents were also less likely to believe that women were less capable of combat after reading about a woman peacekeeper fatality. This makes it less likely

Figure 5. Hostile sexism among the South African and Indian public after reading about a woman/man peacekeeper fatality
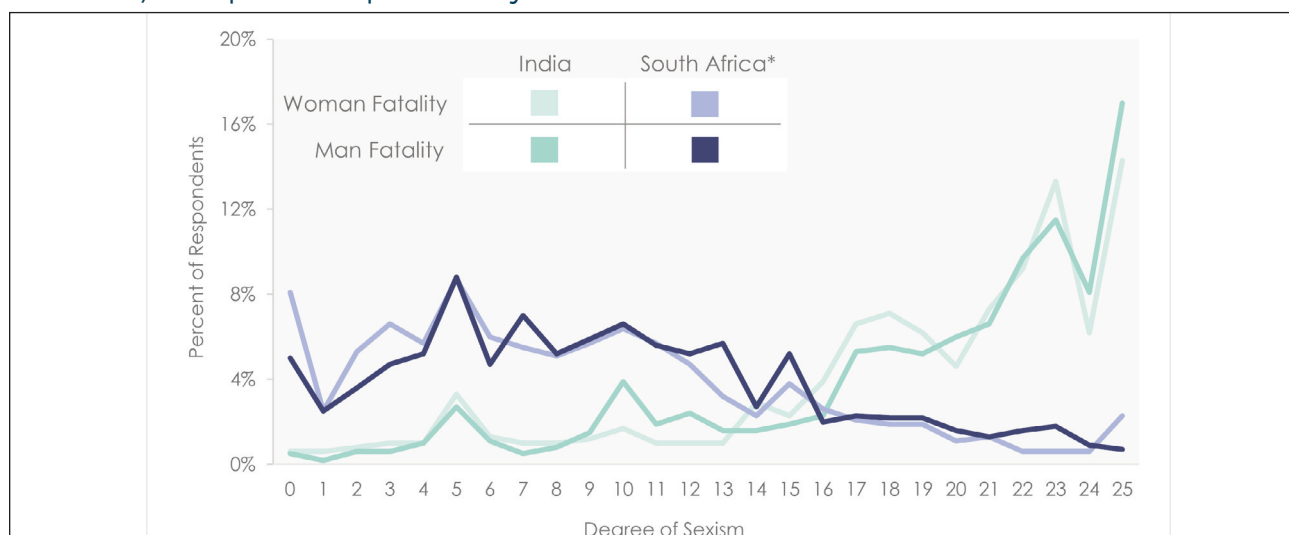
The difference between those who read about a woman or a man fatality was only statistically significant for South Africa.

Mismatch between Elite Beliefs and Public Response to Fatalities among Women Peacekeepers

While fatalities among women peacekeepers may alter support for women's rights, they may also impact support for peacekeeping more broadly. The surveys demonstrate a gap between how government representatives believe the public will react to fatalities among women peacekeepers and how the public actually responds. More than half of C-34 respondents believed that a casualty would decrease support for peacekeeping (56 percent for a woman casualty and 48 percent for a man casualty; see Figure 6). About one-third believed that a woman casualty would cause a larger decrease in support than a man casualty (see Figure 7).
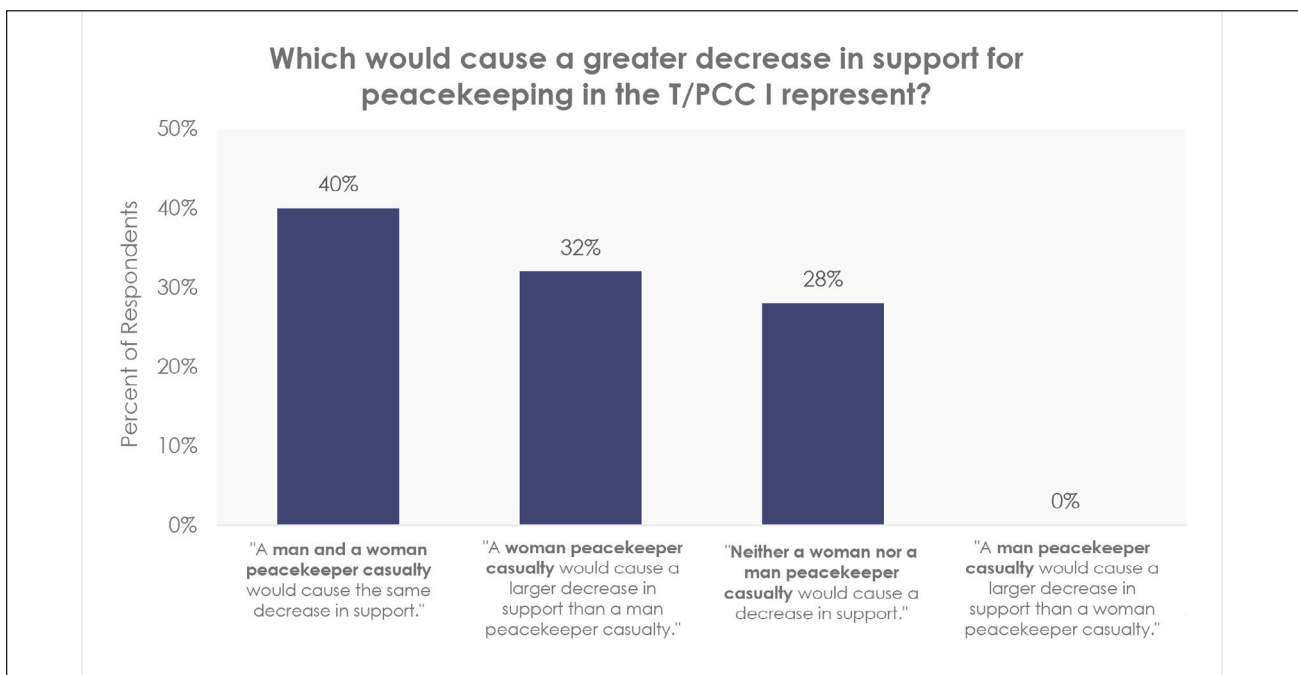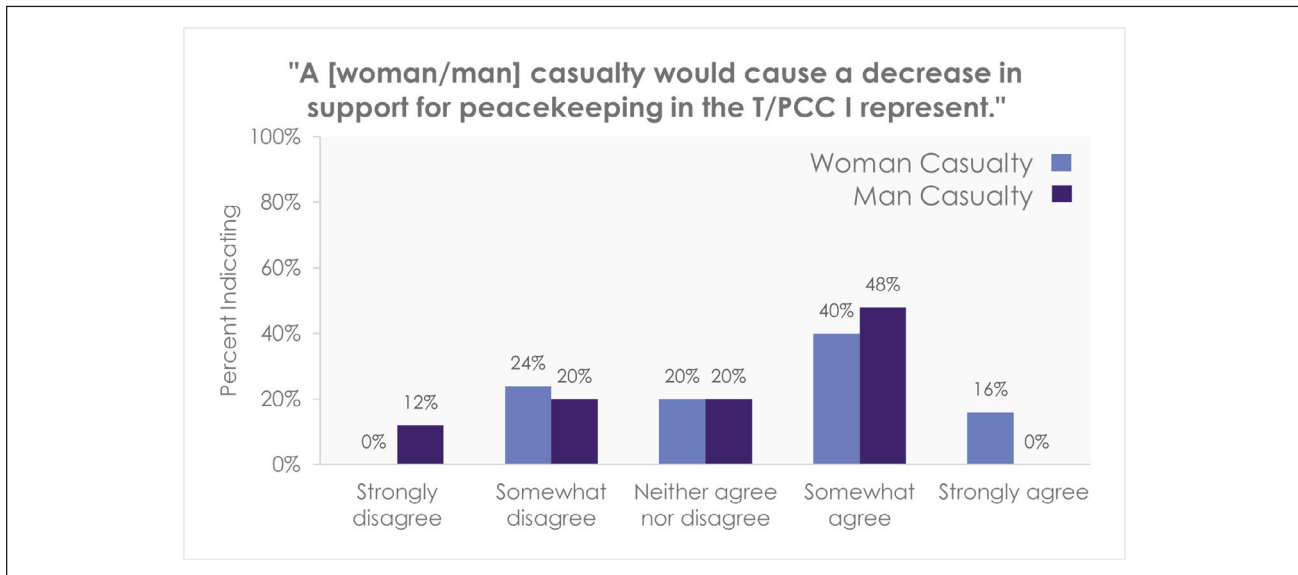
In contrast, in the public surveys in India and South Africa, women fatalities did not reduce support more or less than fatalities among men (see Figures 8–9). Those who read about a woman being killed did not demonstrate lower support for troop or financial contributions or the desire to send

fewer peacekeepers the following year. Even after reading about a peacekeeper's death, whether a man or a woman, the majority of respondents—77 percent in India and 56 percent in South Africa—still believed that peacekeepers should do everything possible to protect civilians, even risking injury or death (see Figures 10–11). Moreover, respondents who read about a woman fatality were not more or less likely to say that sending peacekeepers was a mistake than those who read about a man dying (see Figure 9).[42]
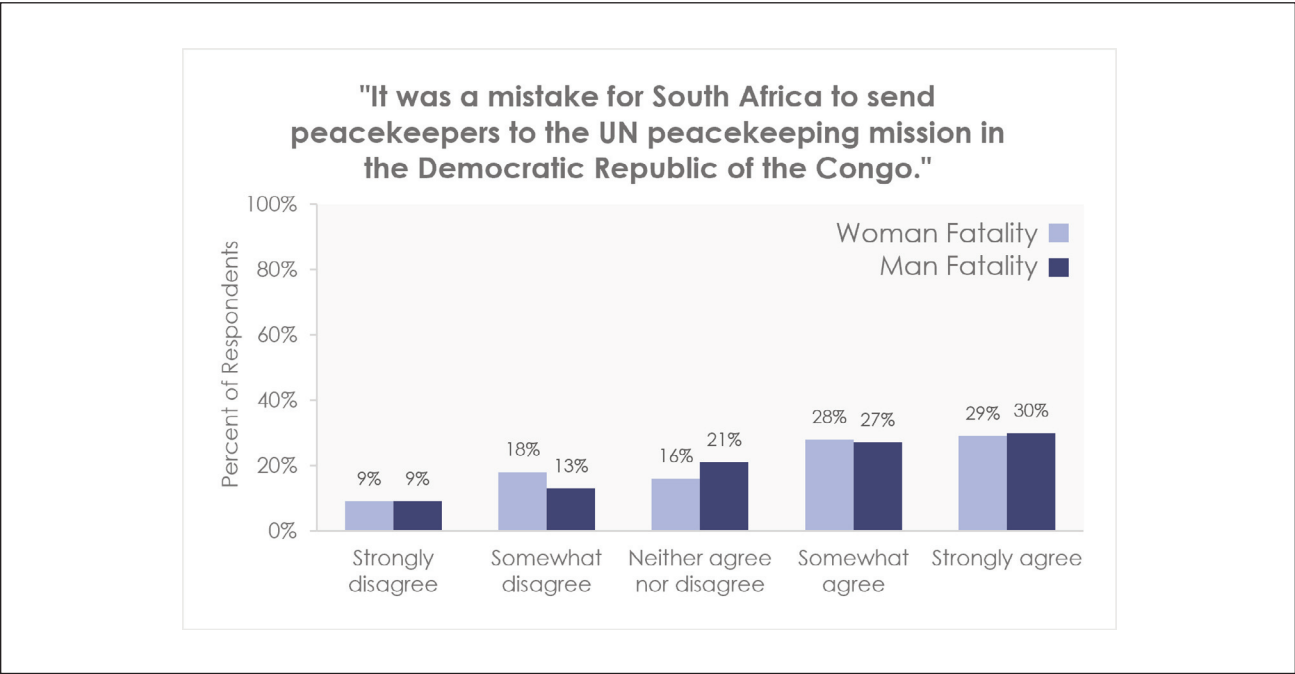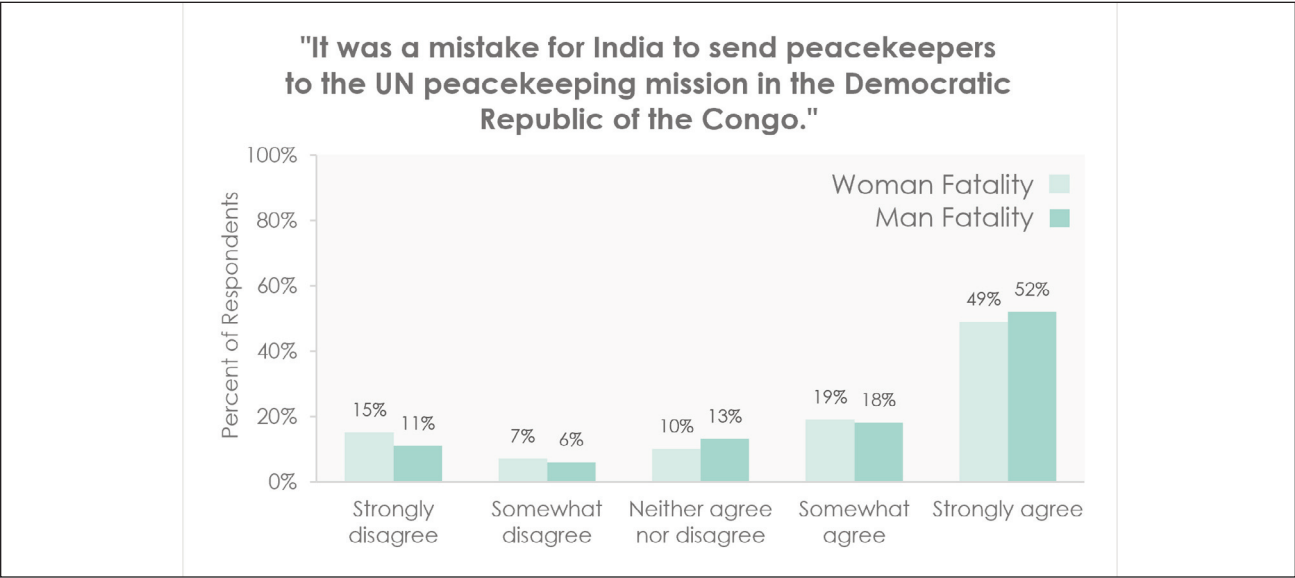
This does not mean respondents were not upset or distressed by these fatalities. Several respondents raised the need for more protection of peacekeepers and expressed frustration at a soldier's life being "wasted." As explored above, scholars and policymakers have often claimed that this anger and criticism may be especially acute in response to a woman fatality. There is some evidence that women fatalities upset respondents more. In South Africa, respondents who read about a woman peacekeeper being killed were more likely to report feeling sad and angry than respondents who read about a man being killed (see Figures 12–13). However, even these respondents were not less

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42 However, when respondents who failed the manipulation check are removed or when controlling for demographic and political characteristics, the difference between respondents who read about a woman fatality versus a man fatality was statistically significant and negative (meaning those who read about a woman fatality were less likely to say it was a mistake). Moreover, in South Africa, when respondents who failed the manipulation check are removed, respondents who read about a woman fatality were also less likely to say that sending peacekeepers were a mistake. However, when respondents who failed the manipulation check are removed, respondents in South Africa who had read about a woman fatality were also less likely to say that peacekeepers should protect civilians at all costs than those who read about a man fatality.
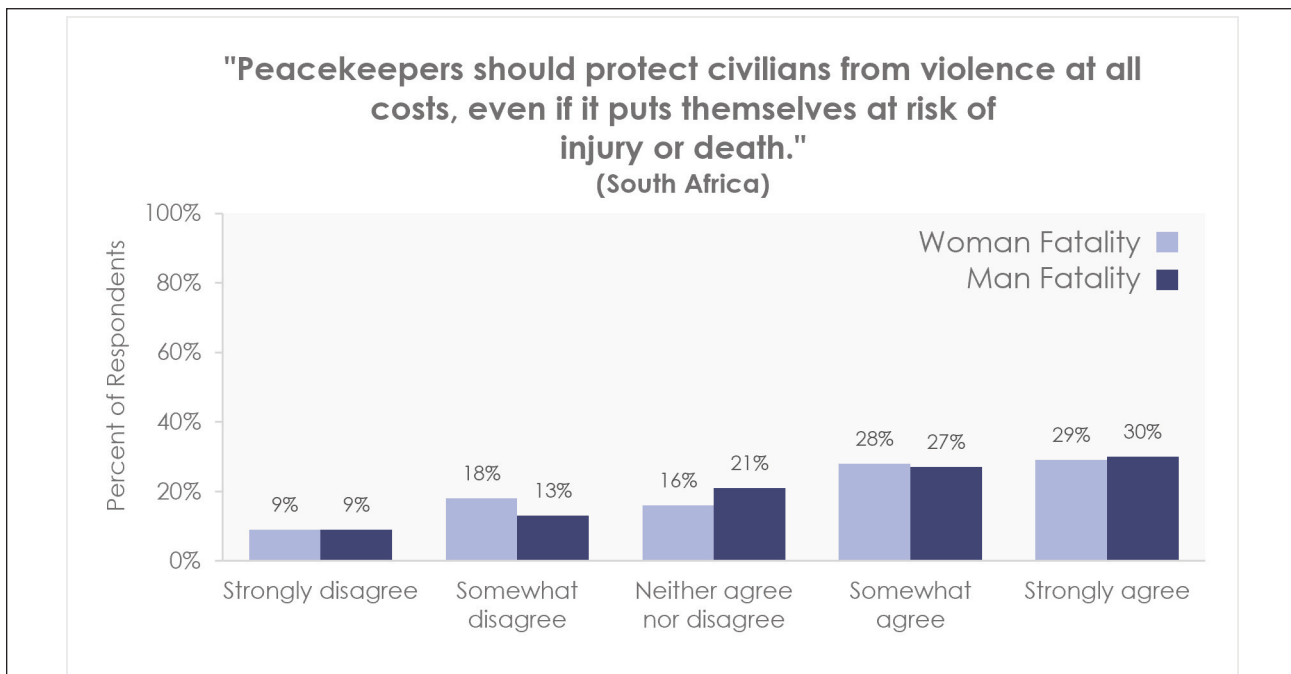
Figures 6–7. UN diplomats' perceptions of the effect of woman/man peacekeeper casualties on public support for peacekeeping in their country

"A [woman/man] casualty would cause a decrease in support for peacekeeping in the T/PCC I represent."

Percent Indicating

- Woman Casualty
- Man Casualty

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Woman Casualty	0%	24%	20%	40%	16%
Man Casualty	12%	20%	20%	48%	0%

Which would cause a greater decrease in support for peacekeeping in the T/PCC I represent?

Percent of Respondents

"A **man and a woman peacekeeper casualty** would cause the same decrease in support."	"A **woman peacekeeper casualty** would cause a larger decrease in support than a man peacekeeper casualty."	"**Neither a woman nor a man peacekeeper casualty** would cause a decrease in support."	"A **man peacekeeper casualty** would cause a larger decrease in support than a woman peacekeeper casualty."
40%	32%	28%	0%

Figures 8–9. Public support in India and South Africa for deployment of peacekeepers to MONUSCO after reading hypothetical article about man/woman peacekeeper fatality

"It was a mistake for India to send peacekeepers to the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

Legend: Woman Fatality, Man Fatality

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Woman Fatality	15%	7%	10%	19%	49%
Man Fatality	11%	6%	13%	18%	52%

Percent of Respondents

"It was a mistake for South Africa to send peacekeepers to the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

Legend: Woman Fatality, Man Fatality

|	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Woman Fatality	9%	18%	16%	28%	29%
Man Fatality	9%	13%	21%	27%	30%

Percent of Respondents

Figures 10–11. Public support in India and South Africa for peacekeepers' use of force after reading hypothetical article about man/woman peacekeeper fatality

"Peacekeepers should protect civilians from violence at all costs, even if it puts themselves at risk of injury or death."
(India)

"Peacekeepers should protect civilians from violence at all costs, even if it puts themselves at risk of injury or death."
(South Africa)
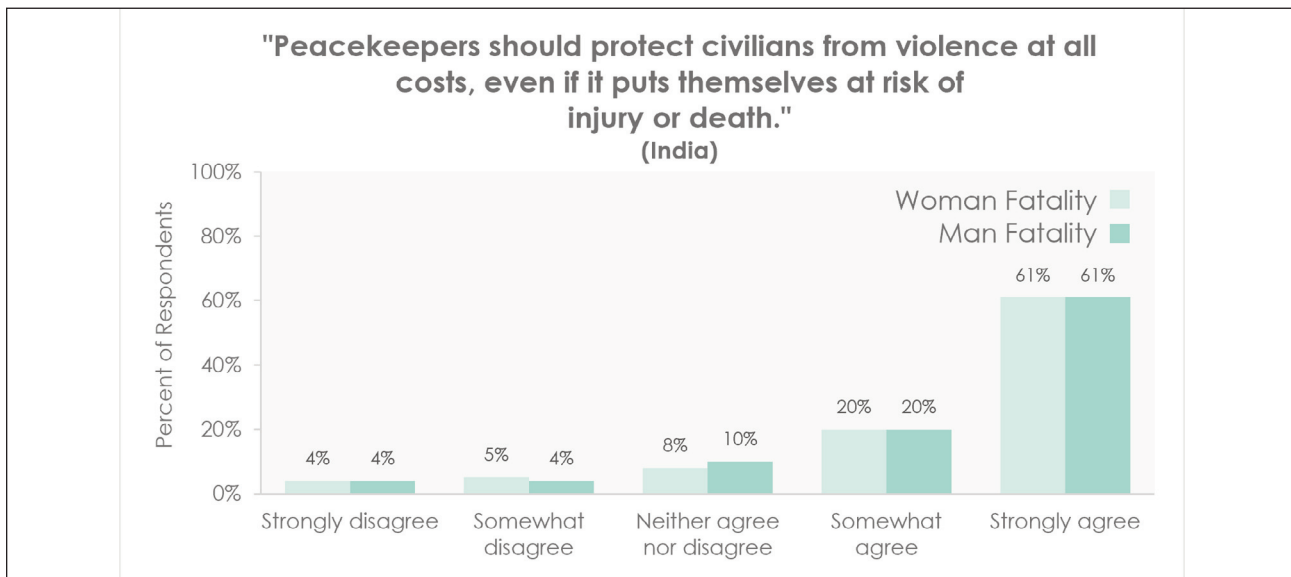
Figures 12–13. Emotional response to hypothetical man/woman peacekeeper fatality among the South African and Indian public
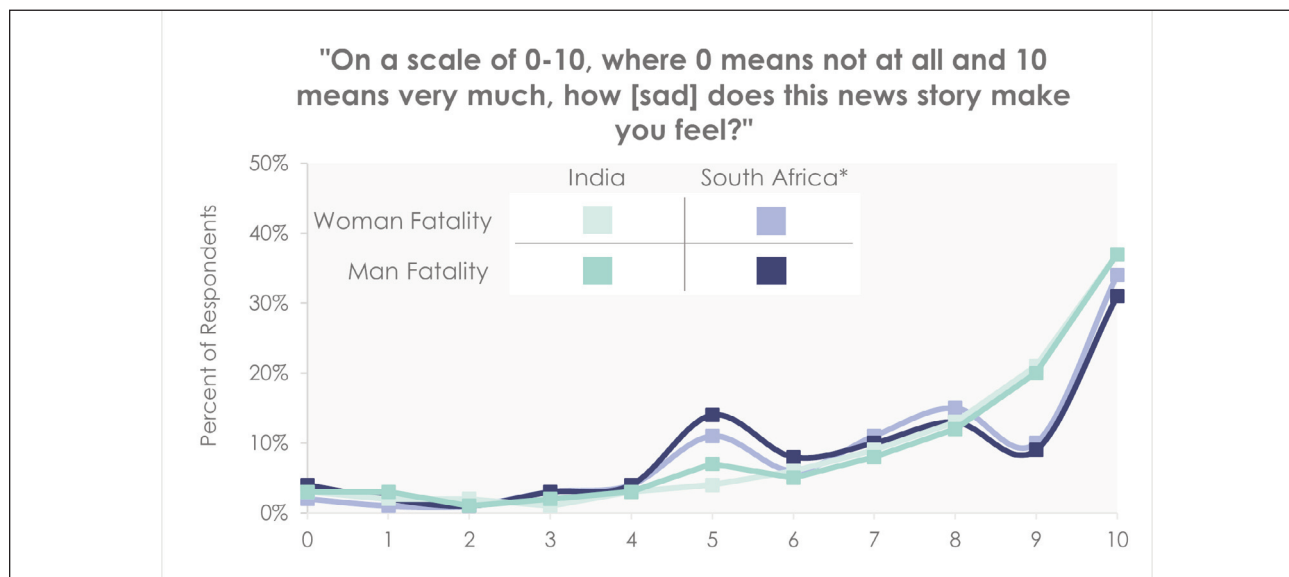
The difference between those who read about a woman or a man fatality was only statistically significant for South Africa.
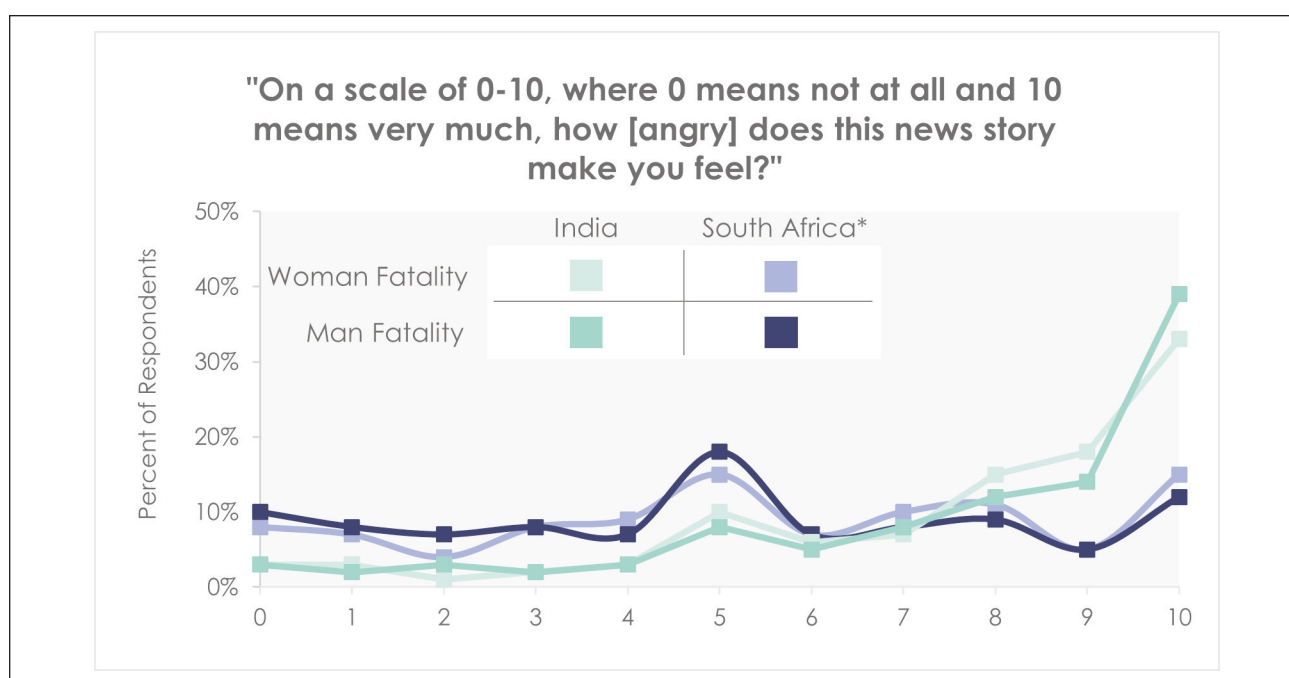
The difference between those who read about a woman or a man fatality was only statistically significant for South Africa.
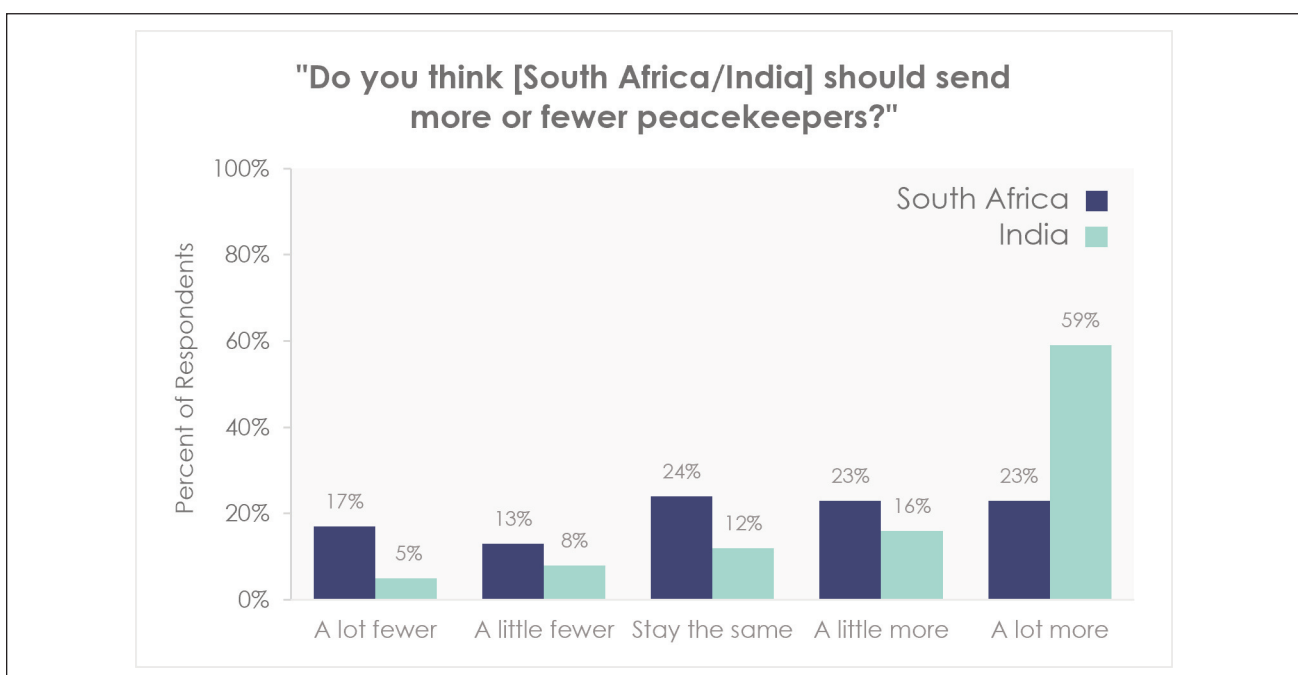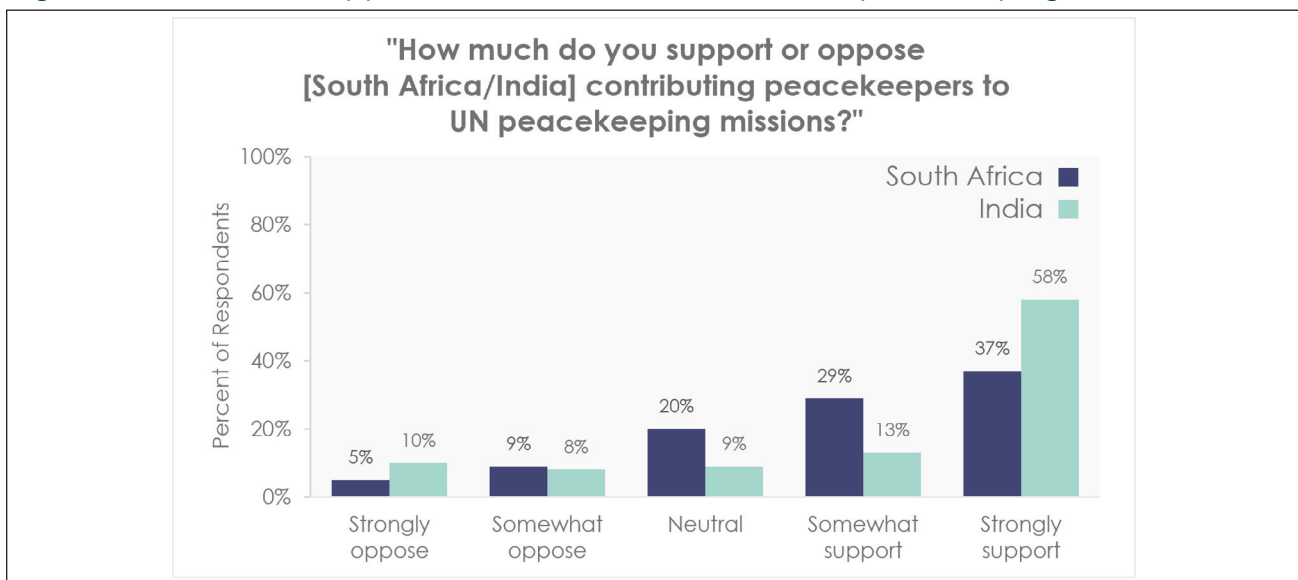
likely to support peacekeeping.

The Majority of the Public Supports UN Peacekeeping

Overall, support for peacekeeping was high among respondents in both India and South Africa (see Figure 14). In the first survey that presented a news story about the deployment of a peacekeeping contingent, 71 percent of respondents in India and 66 percent in South Africa supported their country

contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions. Similarly, 71 percent of respondents in India and 60 percent in South Africa supported their government contributing financially to peacekeeping. Further, 76 percent of respondents in India and 46 percent in South Africa wanted to send more peacekeepers the following year (see Figure 15). In the second public survey, even after reading about peacekeeper fatalities, overall support for peacekeeping among the respondents remained high (see Annex 1).

Figures 14–15. Public support in India and South Africa for peacekeeping contributions

"How much do you support or oppose [South Africa/India] contributing peacekeepers to UN peacekeeping missions?"

"Do you think [South Africa/India] should send more or fewer peacekeepers?"

This high level of support for peacekeeping reflects broad approval of the mandate and goals of peacekeeping operations. Across all tasks and for both all-men and mixed-gender contingents, respondents ranked the effectiveness of contingents highly. In both countries, respondents ranked peacekeepers as most effective at promoting human rights, protecting civilians from violence, and (in South Africa) working with local men (see Annex 1). One respondent in South Africa said, "The UN has helped end conflicts and foster reconciliation by conducting successful peacekeeping operations in dozens of countries, including Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, Namibia, and Tajikistan." Some respondents urged the UN and their government to intervene in other conflicts as well. Others called for more countries to become involved, citing a need for more diversity among peacekeeping troops and the duty of all UN member states to contribute.

However, some respondents demonstrated greater resistance to UN peacekeeping. Overall, the South African respondents seemed to be more skeptical of the effectiveness of peacekeeping than the Indian respondents (see Table 1 and Annex 1). This may be rooted in greater awareness of the perceived failures of UN peacekeeping. For example, one South African respondent said, "I do not trust the UN or its attempts at 'peacekeeping.' Their destruction of Yugoslavia points to this fact." Several accused the UN of being biased or too self-interested. South African respondents also criticized the South African armed forces more generally, with one calling them a "joke" and several cautioning about the corruption of the armed forces, government, and peacekeeping operations.

Moreover, a common theme among respondents in both countries, even if they were generally supportive of UN peacekeeping, was the belief that the government should prioritize domestic issues. For example, one respondent in India said, "I personally feel that each country should first focus on its own national security before sending our soldiers to other countries to peacekeep [sic] when there are so many issues going on within India itself." Similarly, a South African respondent said,

"South Africa has no business donating funds to anyone, for any cause (heartbreaking as it may be) when most people are barely surviving. South Africa needs to fix its own economy and security before attempting to help other countries." Some suggested that peacekeepers should instead come from wealthier countries. Others, especially in South Africa, critiqued the UN for being biased in favor of European countries.

The relatively high levels of support for peacekeeping largely match the expectations of C-34 respondents. Representatives in the C-34 overwhelmingly believed that citizens in their country supported UN peacekeeping (see Figure 16). Eighty percent also said their country considered public opinion when deciding whether to deploy peacekeepers and how many to deploy, and 73 percent believed that increasing public support was a valuable goal for their country (see Figures 17–18).[43]
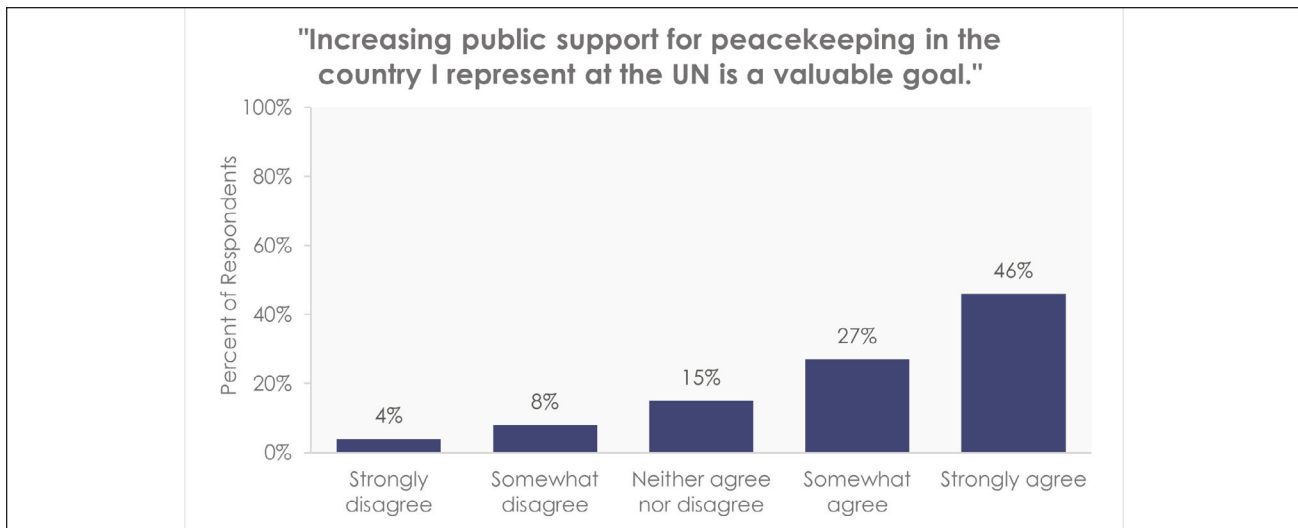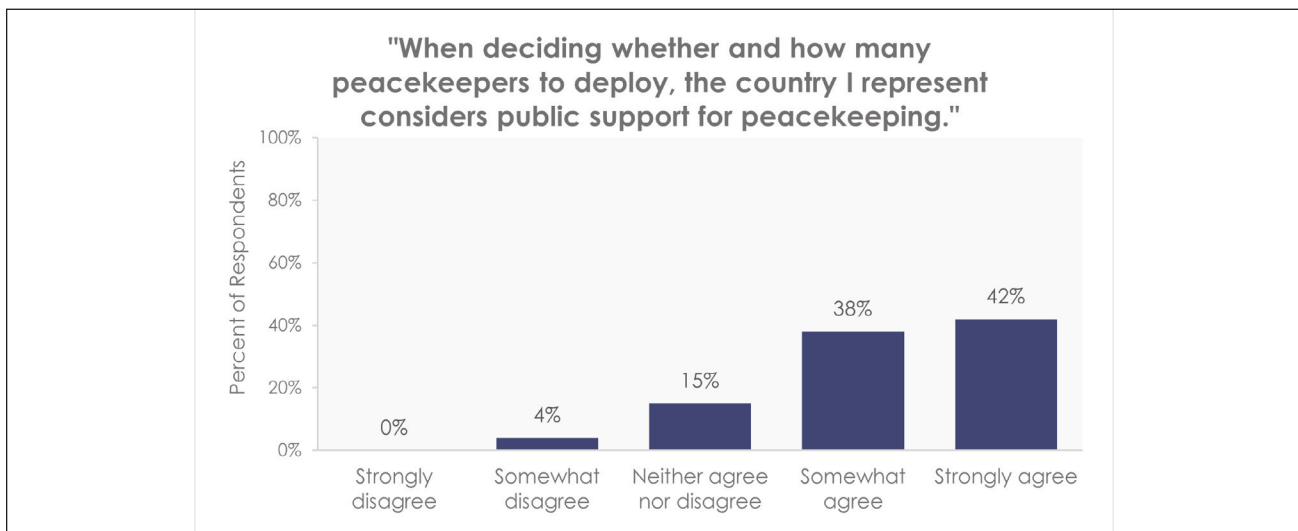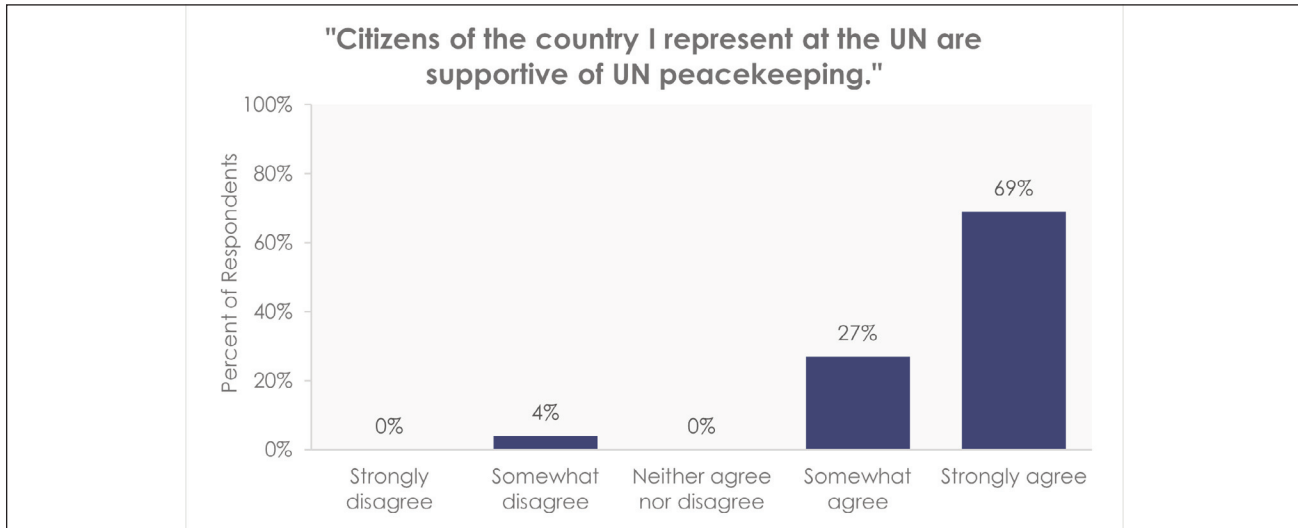
Differences in Public Opinion between India and South Africa

The public surveys in India and South Africa demonstrate different patterns of support for peacekeeping and different reactions to women peacekeepers. For example, while respondents in South Africa were less likely to agree with sexist statements after reading about a woman peacekeeper fatality and were more likely to want to deploy more women peacekeepers after reading about a mixed-gender unit, there was no similar "role-model effect" among the respondents in India. Similarly, although respondents in India who read about a mixed-gender unit were more likely to want to send more peacekeepers in the future than those who read about an all-men unit, this effect did not appear among South African respondents.

There are several possible reasons for these differences. First, previous levels of exposure to women in military and peacekeeping roles differ between the two countries. In South Africa, women are more common in the military than in India. In India, women make up 0.6 percent of the army, 1 percent of the air force, and 6.5 percent of the navy.

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43 The surveys only asked about public opinion regarding peacekeeping and do not reveal how officials would value opinions on peacekeeping compared to other foreign or domestic policy issues. Nonetheless, these findings indicate that member-state representatives in New York value public opinion on peacekeeping at least on the surface.

Figures 16–18. UN diplomats' perceptions of public support for peacekeeping in their country, its impact on decision making, and its importance

"Citizens of the country I represent at the UN are supportive of UN peacekeeping."

"When deciding whether and how many peacekeepers to deploy, the country I represent considers public support for peacekeeping."

"Increasing public support for peacekeeping in the country I represent at the UN is a valuable goal."

Moreover, until 2021, women could not attend military colleges in India and thus were not eligible for many top leadership roles, and women are still not allowed to serve in combat roles.[44] In contrast, in South Africa, women make up 31.4 percent of the armed forces, and six women have been promoted to the rank of major general.[45] Further, women have been allowed in combat roles in the South African armed forces since 1997.[46]

Second, South Africa has made more progress on gender equality than India.[47] For example, there are three times as many women in the parliament of South Africa. As a result, respondents in India may have reacted more negatively to a woman fatality because they saw her as violating traditional gender roles. Similarly, reading about women peacekeepers may not have increased Indian respondents' desire to send more women to peacekeeping missions due to their relatively strict views of gender roles. At the same time, it could make them more willing to send more peacekeepers in general because the presence of women peacekeepers in the mission makes them view it as safer or more humanitarian-oriented.

Third, exposure to peacekeeping more generally may differ between the two countries. On the one hand, India contributes far more peacekeepers per year than South Africa and hosts a small peacekeeping operation.[48] On the other hand, South Africa is located closer to the larger, more well-known peacekeeping missions. For example, several respondents in South Africa specifically mentioned that they supported peacekeeping because many peacekeeping missions are in Africa, while others believed that peacekeeping missions in

Africa were not successful enough to merit support. Moreover, the survey asked about MONUSCO specifically, and South Africans may feel more culturally similar to people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo than Indian respondents, especially because the South African government has contributed significant amounts of economic development aid to the DRC.[49]

Conclusion

This study reveals that in India the deployment of mixed-gender units increased support for peacekeeping, including a desire to send more peacekeepers the following year. Thus, more awareness of the deployment of women peacekeepers within a TCC may increase support for peacekeeping and for the future deployment of women. However, there were differences between the two countries, emphasizing that women peacekeepers will not have an identical impact on public opinion in all contexts.

Further, despite concerns that fatalities among women peacekeepers would lead to public backlash, the surveys showed that respondents in both India and South Africa were no more or less likely to support peacekeeping if they read about a woman peacekeeper being killed while deployed. Thus, despite assumptions that women peacekeepers will be viewed or received differently than men, women peacekeepers may be viewed as blue helmets first and as women second. This underscores the need to understand and explore the ways in which women peacekeepers are not viewed differently than men in some contexts.

44 "India Paves Way for More Women in Armed Forces," BBC, September 8, 2021.

45 Parliamentary Monitoring Group, "Summary of the Meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa: Initiatives by [the South African National Defence Force] to Enhance Gender Parity and Youth Development; with Minister," May 20, 2021, available at https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/32996/ .

46 "Women Advancing in the SANDF," defenceWeb, March 11, 2019.

47 According to the World Bank, 14 percent of the members of the Indian parliament are women compared to 47 percent in South Africa. World Bank, "Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments," available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS . Similarly, the Global Gender Gap Index ranks South Africa significantly higher than India on gender equality (78.1 versus 62.5 on a scale of 1–100). World Economic Forum, "Global Gender Gap Report: 2021," March 2021.

48 The UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

49 Cultural similarity may impact perceptions of both peacekeepers and host-country communities. For example, Heinecken found that South African women peacekeepers found it much easier to relate to and interact with women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo relative to women in Darfur. While this study examined the perspectives of women peacekeepers about local women, a similar phenomenon could impact how the public in TCCs evaluates the legitimacy and effectiveness of peacekeeping contingents. Lindy Heinecken, "Are Women 'Really' Making a Unique Contribution to Peacekeeping? The Rhetoric and the Reality," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 19, nos. 3–4 (November 2015). For more information about South Africa's economic development assistance to the DRC, see: Neissan Alessandro Besharati and Carmel Rawhani "South Africa and the DRC: Evaluating a South-South Partnership for Peace, Governance and Development," South African Institute of International Affairs, 2016.

Moreover, hearing about women peacekeeper fatalities shifted respondents' views on gender equality, though in different ways in each country. While in South Africa, reading about a woman peacekeeper fatality increased support for gender equality and decreased sexism, it had no effect in India. Further, the deployment of a mixed-gender unit also led respondents in South Africa to want to deploy more women in the following year, but there was not a similar impact in India. Although policymakers and scholars often assume that women will have a role-model effect by encouraging support for gender equality, this indicates that for TCCs this effect varies.

> Women peacekeepers may be perceived differently by the public in different contexts, and it should not be assumed that they always increase support for peacekeeping or women's rights.

Finally, the surveys revealed relatively high levels of support for peacekeeping in both India and South Africa. Moreover, member-state representatives in New York indicated that they not only value public opinion on peacekeeping and consider it when making deployment decisions but also believe that the deployment of women peacekeepers increases support for UN peacekeeping.

Thus, women peacekeepers may be perceived differently by the public in different contexts, and it should not be assumed that they always increase support for peacekeeping or women's rights. Despite the commonality of these claims, the public's reaction to the deployment (or death) of women varies. Therefore, scholars and policymakers within national governments and the UN should consider how the deployment of women may interact with other social, cultural, and political norms and practices to moderate how the public will perceive and react to women peacekeepers.

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