

Deepening the Conversation: The Successes and Dangers of Gendered Police Reform in Liberia

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Abstract

While scholarship on international police reform and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) has flourished in the last decade, there has been little engagement across these two bodies of literature. Given the increased use of police personnel in international peace missions and shifts in the policy to gender mainstream this process, the need for assessing the impact of these two trends has never been greater. Thus, this paper seeks to bridge gaps between the mainstream policing scholarship and feminist scholars focused post-conflict peacebuilding police reforms. We explore how feminist scholars can engage with policing literature's technocratic language and 'in the field' experience as well as how policing scholars can interact with feminist scholars to transform traditional approaches to security. We demonstrate the benefits of increased dialogue and interaction by highlighting the common and diverging challenges, themes, theories, and developments in both fields in three areas: the design, implementation, and evaluation of international police reform. Finally, to illustrate the dynamic intersection of these areas of study, we examine the transnational policing efforts to gender mainstream the Liberian National Police (LNP) in the context of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Key Words: Feminism, Police, Gender, Security Sector Reform, Peacekeeping

Word Count: 9,954

Introduction

Policing has become a significant component of international peacekeeping and peacebuilding,¹ reflected by growing research on international police reform in conflict-affected countries.² These developments are not surprising given the UN Security Council's greater approval of peacekeeping mission mandates with broader police functions and larger UN Police (UNPOL) deployments since 1999.³ At the same time, UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2000 emphasizes the need to increase women's participation in peace processes. SCR 1325 led to rhetorical, legal and procedural shifts that broaden the global security agenda to include women and gender.⁴ 'Gendering' security institutions is a principal mechanism for implementing SCR 1325, particularly by focusing on women's rights to protection and participation. Recruiting more women as soldiers, police officers and senior leaders in UN missions has been central to integrating a gender perspective.⁵ Mirroring these developments, feminist scholarship has grown exponentially, analyzing the

¹ Garth den Heyer, 2013, 'Police as Nation Builders: Distinguishing Between Countries That Contribute Police Officers to United Nations Peace Operations,' *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17: 74-115; William Durch, Madeline England and Fiona Mangan with Michelle Ker, 2012, 'Understanding the Impact of Police, Justice and Corrections Components of UN Peace Missions,' The Stimson Center, Washington DC:

http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Stimson_Police_Justice_and_Corrections_Impact_Report_FW_small_2.pdf Goldsmith, Andrew and James Sheptycki, eds. 2007, *Crafting Transnational Policing: Police Capacity Building and Global Policing Reform* Oxford: United Kingdom: Hart Publishing.

² See, special issues on policing in the *Journal for International Peacekeeping* 15.1 (2011) and *Policing and Society* 19.4 (2009).

³ B.K. Greener, 2009, 'UNPOL: UN Police as Peacekeepers,' *Policing and Society* 19(2):106-118.

⁴ Natalie Flora Hudson, 2009, *Gender, Human Security and the UN: Security Language as a Political Framework for Women*, London: Routledge.

⁵ Increasing the number women as 'mainstreaming' is not without its critiques. See Sandra Whitworth, 2004, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers; Johanna Valenius, 2007, 'A few kind women: Gender essentialism and nordic peacekeeping operations,' *International Peacekeeping* 14(4): 510-23; Sahana Dharmapuri, 2011, 'Just add women and stir?' *Parameters* (Spring): 56-66.

achievements, missed opportunities and negative consequences of the WPS agenda on gender equality in conflict-affected countries.⁶

While there have been notable developments in research and policy related to these two trends, it is surprising how little engagement exists between these two fields. Given the push for the inclusion of more police personnel in peacekeeping *and* increased awareness of the importance of gender-sensitive practices, there is a great need to assess the impact of these two trends. This paper aims to bridge gaps between mainstream policing scholarship and feminist literature on gender issues in post-conflict police operations. Specifically, we describe and compare the literatures' conceptualizations, practices and theories to explore the intersections, silences, gaps and contributions of each. Better understanding these overlaps and disconnects is critical for theoretical development and policy advancement. We explore how feminist scholars can engage with policing literature's technocratic language and 'in the field' experience to strengthen their understanding of police reform. Similarly, we also examine how police reform scholars can interact with feminist scholars to challenge and expand traditional notions of security and improve design and implementation of police reform.

This article seeks to bridge the academic, theoretical and practical gaps between international police reform scholarship and feminist security studies to demonstrate the benefits of increased dialogue, understanding and interaction by highlighting common and diverging

⁶ See, for example, Sanam Anderlini, 2007, *Women building peace: What they do, why it matters*. 1st ed. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers. C. Binder, C., K. Lukas, and R. Schweiger, 2008, 'Empty Words or Real Achievement: The Impact of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women in Armed Conflicts,' *Radical History Review* 101(Spring): 22-41; Angela Raven-Roberts, 2005, 'Gender Mainstreaming in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Talking the Talk, Tripping Over the Walk,' in Dyan Mazurana and Angela Raven-Roberts (ed) *Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.; *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security* (Forthcoming), Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True (eds); *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, 2015, [Louise Olsson](#) and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (eds).

theories, developments and challenges in three areas: the design, implementation and evaluation of international police reform. First, we discuss differing conceptions of security and gender within the two literatures, while highlighting similar challenges faced in Western-driven reforms.⁷ Second, we investigate reform implementation and highlight tensions surrounding the proper ‘place’ of gender. Third, we examine the complex process of monitoring and evaluation and its implications for gendered reform.

Finally, to illustrate this dynamic intersection, we examine transnational policing efforts to gender balance and mainstream the Liberian National Police (LNP) with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Beginning in 2005, the LNP reform represents the first major international post-conflict reform to attempt to gender mainstream the police while facing immense structural constraints and security threats. While the LNP reform demonstrates an important advancement in the incorporation of gender mainstreaming, it also highlights the shortcomings and missed opportunities that occur as a result of tepid and shallow engagement between mainstream and feminist policing scholars and practitioners. This disconnect undermines gender mainstreaming, harms security sector reform and jeopardizes security. Thus, this case study highlights how the theoretical and methodological gaps identified manifest on the ground. It not only illustrates the complex challenges in gendering police reform, but also the importance of local context. Lastly, we conclude with a discussion of the benefits of greater engagement for *both* feminist and international policing scholars, including improved theoretical development and policy recommendations for a stable and just security for both men and women.

Police Reform Design

⁷ By Western, we are primarily referring to Europe, North America, and Australia.

During the design of international police reform, the government, police and international partners establish their priorities, structure and mission.⁸ There are different perspectives between policing and feminist scholars regarding the purpose and goal of police reform, the role of various actors and the proper place of gender.

First, both literatures define and conceptualize gender in distinct ways. Feminist scholars define gender as a socially constructed concept, distinct from biological sex.⁹ Gender is seen as performative.¹⁰ Additionally, feminist scholars reject gendered dichotomies, which establish men and women and femininity and masculinity as distinct, instead embracing a continuum of gendered practices. While police reform scholars may acknowledge gender's social foundation, there is a tendency to conflate gender and sex.¹¹ This reduces gender reform to women's reform, overlooking hegemonic masculinity in the practices and power hierarchies of police institutions, disadvantaging not only women, but non-hegemonic masculinities.¹² For example, gender reform often becomes synonymous with increasing women's participation without challenging conceptions of masculinity and patriarchy embedded in police forces. These differing conceptions of gender influence how gender reform is designed, prioritized and implemented.

Second, a divergence arises regarding the conceptualization of security. Traditionally, police literature defines security as the protection of citizens and the state from violence through

⁸ Monica Duffy Toft, 2010, *Securing the Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁹ See Millett, K., 1971, *Sexual Politics*, London: Granada Publishing Ltd.

¹⁰ Judith Butler, 1990, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, p. 25.

¹¹ Vandra Harris and Andrew Goldsmith, 2010, 'Gendering Transnational Policing: Experiences of Australian Women in International Policing Operations,' *International Peacekeeping* 17(2):292-306. Birgit Vallmuur, 2016, 'Exploring Gender-neutrality of police integrity in Estonia,' *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 39(2): 401-415.

¹² Cynthia Enloe, 2000 'How Do They Militarize a Can of Soup?' In *Maneuvers: International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press and Sandra Whitworth, 2005, 'Militarized Masculinities and the Politics of Peacekeeping: The Canadian Case,' In Ken Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies in World Politics*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 89-106.

the enforcement of law and order.¹³ Increasingly, police scholars emphasize the importance of legitimacy, respect for human rights and police-citizen cooperation.¹⁴ While feminist scholars appreciate the importance of law and order, they argue that this conceptualization is oversimplified, state-centric and inefficient or even harmful to long-term security. Feminist scholars long critiqued the tie between security and the militarization of society and its reification of the centrality of the state as sole protector, which ignores state perpetrations of violence, especially against women.¹⁵ Feminists maintain that security must consider individuals' lived experiences and argue that basic needs and individual security are key components of security.¹⁶ Therefore, in contrast to traditional notions of security, which privilege the state and the men who control it, often at the expense of overlooking women, feminists consider security not only as power over, but also power with and power through.¹⁷

In contrast, police literature highlights the complex process of security, which requires the prioritization of certain reforms in the face of material and social constraints. For example, Toft and Celador both argue that SSR is vital to long-term peace.¹⁸ Policing literature recognizes security's multifaceted nature, however, practitioners often intentionally or unintentionally

¹³ Tonita Murray, 2007, 'Police-Building in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Civil Security Reform,' *International Peacekeeping* 14 (1): 108-26; Arianit Koci and Tonin Gjuraj, 2016, 'The relationship between community policing and human rights in Albania's police reform' *The International Journal of Human Rights*; Bryn Hughes and Charles Hunt, 2009 'The Rule of Law in Peace and Capacity Building Operations: Moving Beyond a Conventional State-Centred Imagination,' *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 13:267-293.

¹⁴ Koci and Gjuraj 2016; Hughes and Hunt 2009, Anneke Osse, 2014, 'Police reform in Kenya: a process of meddling through' *Policing and Society* 26(8): 907-924.

¹⁵ J Tickner 2005, 'What is Your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions,' *International Studies Quarterly* 49(1), 435.

¹⁶ Johan Galtung, 1969, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,' *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3): 167-191; M. Caprioli, 2005, 'Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict,' *International Studies Quarterly* 49(2): 161-178; Tickner 2005, 435.

¹⁷ Murray 2007, Koci and Gjuraj 2016, Hughes and Hunt 2009

¹⁸ Toft 2010; Gemma Collantes Celador, 2006, 'Police reform: Peacebuilding through 'democratic policing'' *International Peacekeeping* 12(3):364-376

prioritize its state-centric components when facing time and resource constraints.¹⁹ For example, Murray attributes the failure of police reform in Afghanistan to the prioritization of state and military security over civil security.²⁰ Police reform requires trade-offs, but the extent of these challenges and the choices made deserves further exploration.

While differing conceptions of security can be complementary, lack of engagement leads to partial, incomplete reform. For example, the perceived role of police differs if security is conceived in terms of the state or of individuals and communities. In the former, the police serve as state agents to impose state-sanctioned law and order to protect state stability as much as citizen safety.²¹ In the latter, police function to ensure the welfare of individual citizens and a safe environment with basic resources, freedom, and liberties.²²

Another point of divergence is the ‘proper’ prioritization and timing of gender reforms. While many international security actors and scholars are receptive to gender concerns, there is a prominent mentality that gender is secondary to more urgent concerns, such as disarmament. For Western actors, police reform is self-evidently necessary – as a first order of business for post-conflict reconstruction.²³ Under this framework, police reform firstly and primarily focuses on ‘hard’ security, or the conceptualization of security as a state-centric, militaristic phenomenon, and should only turn to gender reforms once the ‘more urgent’ security issues have been solved.²⁴ For example, Koci and Gjuraj argue that as Albania transitioned to democracy, the

¹⁹ Mike Brogden and Preeti Nijhar, 2005, *Community Policing: National and International Models and Approaches*, Devon: Willan Publishing; Hughes and Hunt 2009, Michael Brzoska, 2006, ‘Introduction: Criteria for Evaluating Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Security Sector Reform in Peace Support Operations,’ *International Peacekeeping* 13(1): 1-13; Stephen Baranyi and Jennifer Erin Salahub, 2011, ‘Police Reform and democratic development in lower-profile fragile states’ *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 32(1):48-63

²⁰ Murray, 2007

²¹ Brogden and Nijhar 2005; Hughes and Hunt 2009, Brzoska 2006, Murray 2007

²² Alice Hills, 2009, *Policing Post-Conflict Cities*, London: Zed Books.

²³ Brogden and Nijhar 2005

²⁴ Brogden and Nijhar 2005; Osse 2014

government first prioritized ‘coercive policing’ which focused on imposing law and order and only later turned to ‘soft policing’ to improve community policing, legitimacy and professionalization.²⁵

However, feminist scholars urge that gender reform be considered an integral component of police reform and not a secondary ‘add on.’²⁶ First, they claim that gender reforms are central to security since they target inherent security issues in citizens’ lives that undermine stability. While some arguments rely on an assumption, critiqued below, that women behave differently than men, others emphasize that gendered security cultures undermine operational effectiveness. For example, Karm and Beardsley highlight that while UN discourse emphasizes that female peacekeepers improve local trust of peacekeepers and the mission environment, they argue that a more holistic approach to transform the UNDPKO’s gendered culture is needed.²⁷ The mindset that ‘security’ must be established first and then gender can be addressed highlights a deep misunderstanding of gender in police reform.

Second, since security institutions form their own, often hyper-masculine gender norms, gender reforms must be incorporated from the outset to reshape the institutionalized culture. Gender reforms added to a partially completed reform are largely unable to overturn institutionalized gendered norms, and instead will operate within them, mitigating the intended effect.²⁸ Therefore, while feminist scholars benefit from engaging with the hierarchy of security needs outlined by police scholars, the latter would also benefit from increased examination of how ‘soft’ security issues play an immediate, primary role.

²⁵ Koci and Gjuraj 2016

²⁶ Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, 2017, *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping: Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States*, Oxford University Press; Duncanson, Clare, 2013 *Forces for Good? Military Masculinities and Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq*, Palgrave Macmillan; Dharmapuri 2011

²⁷ Karim and Beardsley 2017.

²⁸ Rahel Kunz, 2014, ‘Gender and Security Sector Reform: Gendering Differently?’ *International Peacekeeping* 21(5): 604-622.

Despite these differences, both literatures recognize the complex set of challenges in conflict-affected countries. A Stimson Center report concluded that SSR is dependent on the mission's operational environment – over which the mission cannot exert much direct control as they are 'asked to deploy quickly into places where politics can prevent the quick actions that peacebuilding precepts dictate, or with resources inadequate to substitute for capacities that government lacks.'²⁹ In this environment, police reform encounters lack of political will;³⁰ resistance to foreign intervention;³¹ and distrust by civilians of police.³²

These challenges particularly impact women's experience with police reform.³³ For example structural obstacles and gender norms, such as familial obligations, inadequate transportation, or ill-equipped police stations, limit women's access to the police. These limitations are not only a product of security actors' inability to take women's lives seriously, but also reflect challenges identified by mainstream security scholars, including being underfunded, over-extended and insufficiently supported.³⁴ Therefore, feminist scholars must recognize that their critiques regarding political will and funding are not unique to gender reforms.

Undoubtedly, there is pressure from international donors for quick, identifiable results, which endangers the quality and sustainability of policing reforms by forcing implementers to

²⁹ Durch et. al. 2012, 2

³⁰ Osse 2014; Alice Hills, 2000, *Policing in Africa: Internal Security and the Limits of Liberalization*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; E. Scheye, 2009, *State-provided Service, Contracting Out, and Non-state Networks: Justice and Security as Public and Private Goods and Services*. Paris: OECD; Garth den Heyer, 2010, 'Measuring capacity development and reform in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force,' *Policing and Society* 20(3):298-315.

³¹ Osse 2014; Otwin Marenin. 2009. 'The Futures of Policing in African States,' *Police Practice and Research* 10(4), 349-363. David H. Bayley, 1997, 'Who Are We Kidding? Or Developing Democracy Through Police Reform,' *Policing Emerging Democracies: Workshop Paper and Highlights*. Washington D.C.: National Institute of Justice, 59-64.

³² Amnesty International, 2007, *Above the Law: Police Accountability in Angola*, Available at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR12/005/2007/en>.

³³ Megan H. MacKenzie, 2012, *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security and Post-Conflict Development*, New York: New York University Press.

³⁴ Osse 2014; Otwin Marenin, 2010, 'Understanding Mission Environments: Local Contexts and the Legitimization of Reforms' *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 24:223-247; Soraya El Achkar, 2012, 'Police reform in Venezuela: an ongoing experience,' *Policing and Society* 22(1): 89-100

create short-term programs, which cater directly to the demands of international donors, instead of long-term community-based programs.³⁵ For example, Celador argues that the international community's attempts to quickly democratize and ethnically balance Bosnia and Herzegovina's police force undermined police effectiveness and worsened ethnic tension.³⁶ Reform implementers face immense external pressure to quickly rebuild and professionalize police forces and re-establish law and order within a short time, while many non-conflict-affected states have spent longer attempting to undergo similar reforms with little progress.³⁷

This tension between local, long-term and sustainable desires and the short-term, service driven programs of donors is particularly troublesome with gender reform.³⁸ Gender reforms require a long-term investment without clear progress markers since they entail both institutional change and cultural change within and outside the police. Therefore, both literatures recognize and struggle with a 'disconnect' between the desires of Western actors and structural, financial, and political obstacles. Thus, they could rely upon one another to better articulate the need for long-term investment informed by local dynamics.

Implementation of Police Reform

While both literatures recognize the formidable obstacles to successful implementation, feminist scholars find a troubling lack of will to fully implement gender reforms not faced as uniformly by general police reform given gender's secondary prioritization. Further, while successful implementation of police reform requires institutional changes, gendered police reform is tied

³⁵ 2013 Interviews

³⁶ Celador 2006

³⁷ For example, many Western nations struggle with ethnic bias. Souhami, 2011, 'Institutional racism and police reform: an empirical critique' *Policing and Society* 24(1):1-21

³⁸ Petra Debusscher and Maria Martin de Almagro, 2016, 'Post-conflict women's movements in turmoil: the challenges of success in Liberia in the 2005-aftermath,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 54(2): 293-316.

with larger societal norms. In other words, successful gender reform requires the institution and its personnel to transform gendered norms in police culture – rejecting hypermasculinity and gender binaries, deconstructing gendered power hierarchies and re-valuing femininity.

Feminist scholars emphasize that gender reform cannot successfully be implemented with a ‘just add women and stir’ approach.³⁹ A common gender reform, gender balancing, increase the number of women within the police through programs such as gender quotas, all-female units, women-targeted recruitment, the removal of gendered restrictions to police roles, and the appointment of women into leadership.⁴⁰ However, these policies tend to rely on essentialist or unproven assumptions about women’s impact on police effectiveness. Karim and Beardsley argue that while gender balancing can improve operational effectiveness, instrumentalist arguments undermine larger gender reform by upholding gendered roles, overlooking cultural differences, over-relying on female personnel to invoke change, and ignoring the larger institutional culture.⁴¹ In other words, assumptions that women’s increased presence will reduce police corruption, improve legitimacy, and increase responsiveness to women’s issues, require first that women are less corrupt, more trustworthy, and more concerned with SGBV and second, that they will be able to express these characteristics and influence their male colleagues.⁴² However, individuals entering an institution are likely to assimilate into the institution’s norms

³⁹ Yaliwe Clarke, 2008 ‘Security Sector Reform in Africa: A Lost Opportunity to Deconstruct Militarised Masculinities?’ *Feminist Africa* 10; Dharmapuri 2011; Eirin Mobekk, 2010, ‘Gender, Women and Security Sector Reform,’ *International Peacekeeping*, 17(2):278–91.

⁴⁰ See Laura Huber and Sabrina Karim, 2018, ‘The Internationalization of Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Countries.’ *Conflict Management and Peace Science* for a discussion of gender balancing policies within SSR in post-conflict states.

⁴¹ Karim and Beardsley 2017

⁴² Karim and Beardsley 2017; Dharmapuri 2011; Mobbek 2010; M.E. Baaz and M. Utas, 2012, ‘Beyond ‘Gender and Stir’: Reflections on gender and SSR in the aftermath of African conflicts, *Policy Dialogue* (9): The Nordic Africa Institute.

rather than challenge them.⁴³ For example, female peacekeepers are not more likely to report sexual misconduct and female police officers continue to face discrimination even with gender balancing reforms.⁴⁴ Similarly, in regards to ethnic balancing, which relies on similar assumptions, Blair et al (N.d.) found that police units with ethnic minority officers discriminated against minority civilians at a higher rate to prove their loyalty to the police, which may suggest a similar dynamic occurs with gender balancing.⁴⁵

Therefore, while gender balancing is an attractive option to implement gender reform, it is not sufficient. Most feminist scholars call for reforms that not only challenge women's underrepresentation, but alter the institutionalized gendered norms, perspectives, and hierarchies. These gender mainstreaming reforms seek to consider the differing implications for women and men of any policy at all levels to promote gender equality.⁴⁶ While gender balancing reforms are one component of gender mainstreaming, they are not sufficient unless the larger culture gendered discrimination are addressed.

One implementation challenge shared by police and feminist scholars is the tense relationship between Western-driven reform and the attitudes and desires of the local population.⁴⁷ By adding questions about gender's impact on security, we have a richer and deeper understanding of this gap and how to address it. To address this tension, police reform has shifted to focus on community police. One community policing model assumes that a better understanding of crime from the local population can reduce crime; here the police are central

⁴³ Dharmapuri, 2011; Mobbek 2010; Karim and Beardsley 2017; Heineken, Lindy, 2016, 'Conceptualizing the Tensions Evoked by Gender Integration in the Military: The South African Case' *Armed Forces & Society* 43(2)

⁴⁴ Kathleen Jennings, 2011, 'Women's participation in UN peacekeeping operations: agents of change or stranded symbols?' NOREF Report.; Beardsley, Kyle, et al. 2018, "Gender Balancing in the Security Sector: Lab-in-the-Field Evidence from the Liberian National Police," *International Studies Quarterly*

⁴⁵ Blair et al. (n.d.)

⁴⁶ UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) *UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 1997/2: Agreed Conclusions*, 18 July 1997, 1997/2

⁴⁷ Otwin 2010

and ‘the community’ is engaged to serve the police.⁴⁸ This approach is Western in its assumptions and emphasis for locating spaces of power and the legitimate use of force and thus, faces a number of challenges, including sustaining volunteer enthusiasm, threats from local criminals, and police devaluation of community assistance.⁴⁹ In short, these programs function more for the police to carry their message to the community than as vehicles for the meaningful community participation.

Alternative approaches, what Baker calls the African model, view national and international police efforts as supporting local approaches and understandings of security.⁵⁰ By leveraging dense networks of pre-existing conflict resolution and law enforcement mechanisms, this model can be the ‘optimal way for putting in place the best performing delivery system.’⁵¹ Similarly, Autesserre argues that successful peacebuilding requires a thorough understanding of local political, religious, and cultural history as opposed to an over-reliance on technical expertise.⁵² While such ‘global-national-local’ partnerships are seen as good practice, international policing advisors often fall back on state-centric approaches as they generally ensure political support.⁵³ These state-centric policies also lead to urban bias policing, further marginalizing rural populations.⁵⁴ This holds strong implications for rural women who often face

⁴⁸ Helene Maria Kyed, ‘Community policing in post-war Mozambique,’ *Policing and Society* 19(4): 354-371.

⁴⁹ Bruce Baker, 2009, ‘A Policing Partnership for Post-War Africa? Lessons from Liberia and South Sudan,’ *Policing and Society* 19(4): 372-289.

⁵⁰ Baker 2009

⁵¹ Baker 2009, 381. Also, J. Mullen, 2005, *Traditional authorities and local governance in post CPA Southern Sudan*, New York: UNDP., 2 (as cited in Baker).

⁵² Severine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press

⁵³ Hughes and Hunt 2009, Peter Albrecht and Lars Buur, 2009, ‘An Uneasy Marriage: Non-state actors and police reform,’ *Policing and Society* 19(4): 390-405.

⁵⁴ Abraham Sewonet Abatneh and Simon Monoja Lubang, 2011, ‘Police Reform and state formation in Southern Sudan,’ *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 32(1):94-108.

different obstacles than urban women, specifically over land rights, marital violence, and lack of access to justice systems.

Additionally, the ‘African model’ raises concerns regarding gender issues as local approaches to crime may threaten women’s rights or deny their access.⁵⁵ For example, local perceptions may not view SGBV as a crime, especially where local justice mechanisms largely consist of men.⁵⁶ Baker finds that women disagreed on the fairness of local chiefs and male-dominated customary courts, especially in cases of adultery.⁵⁷ Further, in Liberia, rural women under the jurisdiction of customary courts felt they were excluded from court decision-making and argued that it was difficult for them to present their cases and access justice.⁵⁸

Further, policing literature reminds practitioners to distinguish between international mandates focusing narrowly on training police forces and multifaceted mandates focusing on capacity development.⁵⁹ For example, the OECD has developed a Capacity-Integrity Framework to assess institutional reform needs in post-conflict countries.⁶⁰ The framework focuses on the individual and the organizational as the two essential dimensions of public institutions and on capacity and integrity as the critical areas for reform. Capacity refers to the resources needed to sustain reform and integrity refers to the means employed in utilizing those resources and how those ends meet good governance and human rights standards. Thus, reform efforts must address individual capacity, institutional capacity, individual integrity and institutional integrity.

⁵⁵ Morten Bøås & Karianne Stig, 2010, ‘Security Sector Reform in Liberia: An Uneven Partnership without Local Ownership,’ *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 4:3; Sharon Abramowitz and Mary H. Moran, 2012, ‘International Human Rights, Gender-Based Violence, and Local Discourses of Abuse in Postconflict Liberia: A Problem of ‘Culture’?’ *African Studies Review* 55(2):119-46

⁵⁶ 2013 Interview with Social Worker and UNMIL Representative

⁵⁷ Baker 2009

⁵⁸ 2013 Interviews with representatives of UN Women, religious women’s organization and UNPOL

⁵⁹ den Heyer 2013

⁶⁰ OECD, 2007, 60. <http://www.oecd.org/development/incaf/38406485.pdf>

Analyzing this capacity and integrity framework through a gender lens raises important questions about how men and women experience capacity and integrity, individually and institutionally, differently. For instance, capacity is often assumed to precede integrity, but the recruitment of women demonstrates how institutional integrity is essential for female officers to succeed. Similarly, capacity challenges emerge differently for men and women, particularly regarding education. This blurs the line between institutional and individual capacity.⁶¹

International policing has been weakest in institutional integrity, the most essential element for long-term impact. Durch et. al. argue that without institutional integrity, individuals with high integrity and capacity will leave in favor of other, better opportunities.⁶² Poor institutional reforms stem from national and international decision-making that misjudges local capacity, underestimates the need for honest senior management, supports urban-bias policing, relies upon short-sighted funding from donors and reproduces narrow SSR.⁶³

Monitoring and Evaluation of Police Reform

Police scholars and practitioners increasingly emphasize the importance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), which have become critical reporting requirements of donors who desire quick, quantitative results to evaluate their investment.⁶⁴

While several M&E models have emerged, police reform often favors more quantitative and observable frameworks, such as the Results Based Management (RBM) approach. RBM emphasizes accountability in resource allocation, funding, implementation, and reporting to

⁶¹ See Appendix A for an illustration of the OECD framework.

⁶² Durch et al. 2012, 4.

⁶³ Bruce Baker, 2010, 'Resource Constraint and Policy in Liberia's Post-Conflict Policing,' *Police Practice and Research* 11(3):184-196.

⁶⁴ Garth den Heyer, 2010

decrease corruption.⁶⁵ It creates channels of communication with donors, informing them of their investment and creating opportunities for continued funding. In this way, RBM is useful to ensure the proper implementation of gender reforms since it helps prevent defection and ensures that donors remain engaged and committed. Additionally, other evaluation techniques, especially those which employ randomized and controlled trials, allow for a clear understanding of the effects of gender reforms.⁶⁶

These evaluations are critical to improve reform design and implementation, but they also hold several imbedded assumptions and shortcomings. First, these frameworks prioritize measurable, quantifiable outcomes. While this helps ensure accountability, it is particularly problematic for gender reforms, which are not amenable to quantitative measurement. For example, there few cheap, easy ways to quantify the individual attitudes towards gender reform without a costly and possibly misleading (due to social acceptability bias) survey.⁶⁷ While costly evaluation designs are not necessarily problematic and can lead to highly valid and reliable results, the costs can be prohibitively high for some evaluators, especially if the reform is considered to be of secondary concern, such as gender reforms. In other words, if the costs required to adequately gauge changing gender relations are considered an unnecessary burden, shortcuts or less valid quantitative measures may be used, which may result in several smaller, fragmented evaluations rather than a comprehensive program of measurement and evaluation.

⁶⁵ UNDP, 2009, 'Handbook on Planning Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results.'

⁶⁶ For example, see Eric Mvukiyehe and Cyrus Samii, 2017, 'Promoting Democracy in Fragile States: Insights from a Field Experiment in Liberia' *Police Research Working Paper 7370* and Blair et al. (n.d.) and Karim et al (n.d)

⁶⁷ Several studies use experiments and surveys to evaluate attitudes towards female security officers. We applaud these efforts, but acknowledge their relatively small scale and the large amount of resources necessary to conduct them that may not be available to all scholars or implementers. This begs the question of which types of scholars, programs, and countries have the privilege to conduct these studies and are there other questions or scholars which are disadvantaged. For example, see Karim 2016a,b; Karim et al (n.d) Beber et al. Forthcoming.

Additionally, a reliance on quantitative measures can unintentionally silence or blend together of the unique experiences of women within security institutions. In contrast, qualitative methods can capture these daily lived experiences and provide vital context to illuminate the reform's strengths and weaknesses.⁶⁸ Further, qualitative analysis may also incur less social desirability bias by providing a more welcoming format for the respondent to elaborate on their attitudes and by remaining aware of the political, social, historical, and economic context. Thus, while a well-designed, quantitative evaluation can provide vital insights, it is important to remain mindful of their assumptions and shortcomings.

Further, quantitative measures of gender reform may provide a shallow indication of larger structural and cultural gendered power hierarchies, which at best may not tell the full story of gender reform and at worst, may present a false illusion of positive change, while hiding harmful, entrenched gendered hierarchies.⁶⁹ For example, one common indicator of gender reform is the number of women within an institution. However, as explained above, the number of women alone does not necessarily demonstrate whether gender relations have improved. This can lead to a false sense of achievement – if women's representation increased significantly, leaders and donors may perceive significant progress in gender reform even when troubling gender hierarchies remain. Similarly, these measures may over-rely on indicators of male versus female equality and overlook equality within masculinities or femininities. Feminist scholars point to 'the need for evaluative tools that attend to the complexity and fluidity of gender norms and focus on context-specific agency to confront gender hierarchies.'⁷⁰ Gender reform is

⁶⁸ For more on feminist challenges to positivism and quantitative methods, see J. Ann Tickner, 2005, 'What is Your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions' *International Studies Quarterly* 49(1): 1-21

⁶⁹ Curth and Evans 2011, p 497

⁷⁰ Debra J. Liebowitz and Susanne Zwingel, 2014, 'Gender Equality Oversimplified: Using CEDAW to Counter the Measurement Obsession,' *International Studies Review* 14(3):362-389.

inherently a complex process, which cannot be easily reduced to procedural, legal, or numerical changes, but must address larger cultural, institutional, structural, and normative institutions. Without a proper appreciation for the complexity of gender reform, M&E frameworks may misjudge its success.⁷¹ That said and in light of the benefits of several M&E designs, feminist scholars must innovate ways to combine the clear and standardized strengths of quantitative M&E with the more flexible, contextually grounded, and fluid nature of feminist analysis to robustly and comprehensively assess changes in gender relations. Additionally, feminist scholars must take care to make those tools understandable to broader audiences, including politicians, practitioners, and security personnel.

Therefore, both police and gender scholars would benefit from increased dialogue and engagement with M&E frameworks to develop a more flexible and comprehensive measures of gender reform. Such a framework would not only improve the implementation of gender reforms, but other institutional cultural reforms as well.

Liberian Police Reform: Success and Missed Opportunities

Although police and feminist scholars recognize the importance of gender reform in SSR, they tend to hold differing conceptualizations, prioritizations, and recommendations in its design, implementation, and monitoring. These intersects, oversights, and gaps in scholarship translate to similar advancements and shortcomings during post-conflict police reform. The following section traces the gendered reform of the Liberian National Police (LNP). As one of the first large-scale, post-conflict police reforms to prioritize gender, it demonstrates how engagement

⁷¹ The call for increased use of qualitative measures is not restricted to feminist scholars. See Martin Fielding and Martin Innes, 2006, 'Reassurance Policing, Community Policing and Measuring Police Performance' *Policing and Society* 16(2):127-145.

between feminist and police scholars resulted in positive advancements in police reform. However, it also faced severe challenges due to the tensions highlighted above.

We draw primarily from interview evidence gathered in June and July 2013 in Monrovia, Liberia with stakeholders in women's empowerment in SSR, including representatives from UNMIL, UN agencies, the government, the LNP, NGOs, IGOs, and local women's organizations. Interview participants (42 total) were selected based on their participation in gendered SSR and women's empowerment.⁷² Throughout this section, we will refer to several claims made about female officers, including that they decrease corruption, improve SGBV response, and increase trust in the LNP. While we recognize the problematic nature of these claims – which rely on essentialized assumptions and reinforce gender dichotomies – they played an important role in the design, implementation and evaluation of Liberia's gendered SSR and therefore, we, at times, echo and repeat them, while also problematizing their use.

Design of the Gender Police Reform

After fourteen years of civil war, Liberia suffered extensive damage to its infrastructure, governance capacity and legitimacy.⁷³ In 2003, the UN Security Council established the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), a multidimensional peacekeeping operation mandated to, among other tasks, reform Liberia's security institutions.⁷⁴ Importantly, UNMIL was the first UN

⁷² Not all participants were directly engaged in women's rights – some worked in human rights advocacy, religion, education, politics, and the security sector and in these roles had exposure to gendered SSR and women's rights.

⁷³ Mary M. Moran, 2008, *Liberia: The Violence of Democracy*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Festus B. Aboagye and Alhaji M. S. Bah, 2004, 'Liberia at a Crossroads: A preliminary look at the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the protection of civilians' *ISS Paper 95*.

⁷⁴ Margarete Jacob, Daniel Bendix, Ruth Stanley, eds, 2008, *Engendering SSR: A Workshop Report*, Berlin; Laura Bacon, 2013, 'Liberia's gender-sensitive police reform Starting from scratch? Improving representation and responsiveness' WIDER Working Paper No. 2013/114; Ruthie Ackerman, 2009, 'Rebuilding Liberia, One Brick at a Time' *World Policy Journal* 26(2):83-92, Abu Sherif and Grace Maina, 2013, 'Enhancing Security and Justice in Liberia: The Regional Hub Model,' *Accord*, 23.

peacekeeping mission to include gender mainstreaming in its mandate, creating a unique opportunity to include gender in police reform.⁷⁵

The LNP and UNMIL attempted to mainstream gender within the security sector, especially in the LNP, in several ways. Specifically, the LNP set a 15% quota for women in 2005, which was later expanded to 20% and then 30% in 2012.⁷⁶ The push for gender balancing largely relied on instrumentalist arguments that female police officers would increase the LNP's effectiveness and legitimacy.⁷⁷ Further, in 2004, the LNP adopted a gender policy, which called for increased women's representation, improved response to SGBV and the creation of gendered units.⁷⁸ Soon after, the LNP created the Women's and Children's Protection Unit (WCPU or WACPS) in 2006 and established a Gender Affairs Office.⁷⁹ WCPU is charged with responding to SGBV and crimes against children and sought to change the cultural norms surrounding SGBV.⁸⁰ Further, in 2009, a new criminal court and a new crime unit were established to handle SGBV cases.⁸¹ Moreover, the LNP's Gender Unit works to implement the gender policy through awareness campaigns, incorporating women in decision-making and monitoring cases of sexual harassment.⁸² Furthermore, it trained focal persons for gender in all counties and worked to

⁷⁵ Aboagye and Bah 2004; Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardseley, 2013, 'Female peacekeepers and gender balancing: Token gestures or informed policymaking,' *International Interactions* 39(4):461-488; Sabrina Karim, 2016a, 'Reevaluating Peacekeeping Effectiveness: Does Gender Neutrality Inhibit Progress?' *International Interactions* 1-26; Laura Bacon, 2013. 'Liberia Leans In,' *Foreign Policy*.

⁷⁶ Sabrina Karim & Ryan Gorman, 2016, 'Building a more competent security sector: The case of UNMIL and the Liberian National Police', *International Peacekeeping* 23:1:158-191

⁷⁷ 2013 Interview with UNPOL Representative. Many interviews corroborate interview evidence also found by Karim 2016a.

⁷⁸ Sabrina Karim & Ryan Gorman, 2016, 'Building a more competent security sector: The case of UNMIL and the Liberian National Police', *International Peacekeeping* 23:1:158-191

⁷⁹ Karim and Gorman 2016; Bacon 2013; Laura Bacon, 2015, 'Liberia's Gender-Sensitive Police Reform: Improving Representation and Responsiveness in a Post-Conflict Setting,' *International Peacekeeping* 22(4); Abogaye and Bah 2004; Ackerman 2009

⁸⁰ Bacon 2015

⁸¹ Karim and Gorman 2016; Bacon 2013, 2015; Abogaye and Bah 2004; Ackerman 2009

⁸² 2013, 'Gender Equality in the Police Service: 'No Sex Should be Favored Over the Other' *UN Liberia*, United Nations Liberia.

integrate gender into police training programs.⁸³ Further, the LNP appointed the first female Inspector General, Beatrice Munah Seah, and Deputy Inspector General, Asatu Bah Kenneth by 2007.⁸⁴ Finally, in 2011, regional justice and security hubs were created and in 2013 a new recruitment campaign targeted women from rural countries.⁸⁵

The LNP reform shows a higher than average inclusion of gender mainstreaming within its design.⁸⁶ The combination of UNMIL's gender focus, the influx of NGOs and political will expressed by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf resulted in a more comprehensive gendered reform than most post-conflict and non-post-conflict police reforms.⁸⁷ However, there are several important limitations. First, although gender reforms were considered from the beginning, many of the initial programs focused largely on increasing women's representation, without accompanying reforms to address the institutional gender culture.⁸⁸ Therefore, gender mainstreaming was not incorporated when a new police culture was formed, allowing the institution to fall back on traditional gendered hierarchies. It did not address other important gendered issues, such as access to police services and gendered cultures within the police. For example, most of the early reforms were targeted at the capital city of Monrovia, excluding rural areas.⁸⁹ Moreover, while the LNP included extensive gender reforms, the Armed Forces of Liberia noticeably lacked robust gendered reform.⁹⁰ Overall, while the LNP's gender reform

⁸³ Cecil Griffiths, 2011, 'Mapping Study on Gender and Security Sector Reform Actors and Activities in Liberia,' ed. Anike Doherty and Aiko Holvikivi, Geneva: DCAF.

⁸⁴ Bacon 2013

⁸⁵ *ibid*

⁸⁶ *ibid*.

⁸⁷ Bacon 2013, 2015

⁸⁸ Bacon 2015; Brogden and Nijhar 2005; Koci and Gjuraj 2016; Osse 2014

⁸⁹ We appreciate the great challenges of implementing reforms in rural areas in the immediate post-conflict years in Liberia. However, by focusing the reforms in Monrovia, the effects of gender reform have disproportionately benefited the urban area, limiting both its effectiveness. This highlights how the calls by feminist security scholars for holistic, comprehensive reform can be challenged by obstacles on the ground. Abogaye and Bah 2004; Bacon 2013, 2015

⁹⁰ Abogaye and Bah 2004

design marked a major advancement, it lacked a comprehensive strategy for implementation, did not challenge dominant gendered norms and hierarchies, and was relatively limited in scope.

Implementation of Gender Police Reform

To efficiently implement gender reforms, UNMIL sponsored a recruitment program. During the first pilot program, the LNP successfully trained 150 female officers. Similar successes were achieved in 2007 with two classes of 110 and 87 female recruits.⁹¹ Interview participants recalled the overwhelming positive response to the recruitment push. One interviewee recalled that by 7:00 am on the first day of the 2007 recruitment campaign, women gathered in a line that crossed several blocks to join the police force.⁹²

The program was hailed by UNMIL, the government, NGOs and media sources as an innovative technique to increase women's participation;⁹³ the LNP achieved unprecedented success, increasing the number of female recruits 100 times over from four in 2004 to 105 in 2008.⁹⁴ Women's representation in the LNP increased from 2% to 19%.⁹⁵ As a result, the government raised the LNP's female representation goal to 30%, which would outperform many developed Western nations.⁹⁶ A closer look, however, uncovers a complicated story about how an expedited recruitment process led to the inundation of improperly trained female police officers, which resulted in unintended consequences within the LNP and society.⁹⁷

⁹¹ UNMIL OGA, 2010, 'Best Practices Report Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Operations Liberia 2003-2009.'

⁹² 2013 Interview with Liberian WPS Advocate

⁹³ Bacon 2013, 2015

⁹⁴ UNMIL 2010

⁹⁵ 2013 Interview with UNPOL Representative; Karim and Gorman 2016; Liberia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – Second Annual Progress Report, 2009-10, *International Monetary Fund*, Washington, D.C. 2011.

⁹⁶ Karim and Gorman 2016

The successful female-focused recruitment reflects changes in local perspectives, including a growing trust in the police and transforming attitudes towards gender roles. For example, several interviewees identified a growing local acceptance of female security officers and greater encouragement of young women to view the police force as a commendable career. This is a notable change as after the war, the population was distrustful of the police and army, especially women.⁹⁸ Several interview participants cited common views of security personnel as ‘killers’ and ‘corrupt.’⁹⁹ Further degrading the public’s trust was the LNP’s poor track record with investigating and prosecuting crimes, especially SGBV. One interview participant explained how the LNP often refused to handle SGBV cases:

‘In a typical Liberian sense, it is really difficult to just go to a group of men and say my husband forced me last night to have sex. They will send you back to him, without even listening to the rest of the story, they will send you back to him.’¹⁰⁰

This lack of police responsiveness to SGBV sharply contrasts the new expansive SGBV infrastructure, including the creation of the specialized Criminal Court E and a SGBV crime unit.¹⁰¹ This highlights that while altering the structures and composition of a security force is imperative, it must be accompanied by a shift in the institutional culture. The LNP’s perceived lackluster response to SGBV exacerbated public resentment, especially as SGBV remains the most common, yet underreported, crime in the nation.¹⁰² For example, although SGBV accounts for around one third of crime reports, a 2008 study estimates that only 12.5% of female rape

⁹⁸ Abogaye and Bah 2004, Ackerman 2009, Jacob 2008

⁹⁹ 2013 Interview with WPS Advocate and Women’s Organization Executive Director

¹⁰⁰ 2013 Interview with Women’s Advocate for a Religious Organization

¹⁰¹ Karim and Gorman 2016; Bacon 2013,2015; Abogaye and Bah 2004; Ackerman 2009

¹⁰² Liberia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – Second Annual Progress Report, 2009-10

victims reported it to police.¹⁰³ Both gender and class lines intensify this disconnect and women were increasingly left feeling as though there was no purpose in seeking justice through security institutions.¹⁰⁴ These cultural understandings of SGBV and police treatment demonstrate the tense relationship between ‘local ownership’ of police reform, which may deny their access to security, and state-centric, Western-drive reform.¹⁰⁵ In this way, feminist analysis demands that we ask questions about the inherent value of ‘the local.’

There is evidence that women’s increased participation in the LNP enhanced security, capacity and relations with civilians, or, at the very least, did not harm institutional capacity and integrity. For example, Karim found that contact with female police officers increased perceptions of the LNP’s legitimacy.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, several interview respondents claimed that the increased representation empowered women and girls by acting as role models. Further, Mvukiyeye found UNMIL to have a positive effect on the probability of joining women’s groups, promoting political participation of women.¹⁰⁷

However, simply increasing female representation in the police may not lead to ‘successful’ gender balancing, let alone gender mainstreaming. Contrastingly, many anecdotes indicate that the rapid and expedited recruitment of women into the LNP had unintended negative results. These complications and negative side effects predominately arose from the dearth of qualified women and the subsequent lowering of standards for female applicants. According to LNP guidelines, all police officers must be high school graduates. However, the

¹⁰³ Laura Bacon, 2012, ‘Building an Inclusive, Responsive National Police Service: Gender-Sensitive Reform in Liberia, 2005-2011,’ *Innovations for Successful Societies*, Trustees of Princeton University.

¹⁰⁴ Abramowitz and Moran 2012; Bøås and Stig 2010

¹⁰⁵ Abramowitz and Moran 2012

¹⁰⁶ Sabrina Karim, 2017, ‘Restoring Confidence in Post-Conflict Security Sectors: Survey Evidence from Liberia on Female Ratio Balancing Reforms’ 2017 *British Journal of Political Science*

¹⁰⁷ Eric Mvukiyeye, 2017, ‘Promoting Political Participation in War-torn Countries: Micro-Level Evidence from Postwar Liberia,’ Working Paper, available at author’s request.

majority of Liberian women are not high school educated.¹⁰⁸ Further, high school educated women are often reluctant to apply due to low or unpredictable salaries,¹⁰⁹ low incentives, perceptions of the police force, demands of their families and a fear of being assigned to rural counties.¹¹⁰ Unable to quickly address these larger structural issues, the LNP reduced the educational requirement for women.

The LNP and UNMIL set up an expedited schooling program called the Educational Support Programme (ESP) to quickly educate women during a three-month period in exchange for a certificate that replaced the high school diploma requirement, which was widely celebrated as a ‘best practice’ to mainstream gender in security institutions.¹¹¹ With no predecessor program, ESP was a unique, pilot project originally developed by UNMIL and UNPOL and later supported by the LNP.¹¹² However, while the program taught basic education that supposedly equaled a GED certificate, it lacked a comprehensive nature. An UNPOL representative maintained, ‘Three months of school doesn’t mean that you are able to read or write. That doesn’t make you literate. So when they entered the police, there was a huge difference between the female who had high school certification and those women.’¹¹³ For example, many of the female recruits could not read or write outside of the specific words taught in the academy. As a result, when they encountered an unusual situation, they struggled to properly handle it or write the report.¹¹⁴ This led to a perception that these women were unprepared and under-trained.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ UNMIL OGA, 2010, Best Practices Report Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Operations Liberia 2003-2009. Available at http://www.resdal.org/facebook/UNMIL_Gender_Mainstreaming_in_PKO_in_Liberia-Best.pdf.

¹¹⁰ 2013 Interview with LNP Gender Office, Liberian WPS Advocate, Women’s Organization Representative

¹¹¹ Bacon 2013, 2015

¹¹² Bacon 2012

¹¹³ 2013 Interview is UNPOL Representative

¹¹⁴ 2013 Interview with Liberian WPS Advocate

¹¹⁵ Bacon 2013

The perceived gap in skills led to the development of a ‘caste system’ between male and female officers and the ESP female recruits.¹¹⁶ UNMIL’s Commissioner of Police, John Nielson, reported that the caste system developed as women with high school degrees ‘looked down’ on the ESP officers and the ESP officers were ‘condemned’ to remain in bottom positions, unable to compete for promotions.¹¹⁷ Moreover, many of the qualified men and women resented that the new candidates were allowed to circumvent the qualifications, arguing that they had been subjected to the same circumstances and faced the same educational obstacles; however, they were held to higher standards and were not offered additional education.¹¹⁸ This tension not only degraded women’s status, but also reinforced stereotypes that women are less capable in security as the number of unqualified women surpassed that of qualified women. However, there is no consistent evidence that ‘quota-women’ are less qualified. In fact, Karim et al. found that female and male LNP officers had similar levels of job knowledge and skills and that mixed gender units did not suffer from decreased collegiality.¹¹⁹ If anything, they found that unit cohesion improves with more women. Crucially, these studies find that job competency and training are key predictors of performance, two factors sacrificed in ESP training.¹²⁰

The focus on quantity rather than quality led to public disillusionment with female officers as they either proved less effective than their male counterparts or failed to live up to expectations that they would be more responsible, trustworthy or concerned about SGBV. Many

¹¹⁶ 2013 Interview with UNPOL Representative

¹¹⁷ Bacon 2012,16

¹¹⁸ 2013 Interview with UNPOL Representative; Bacon 2013

¹¹⁹ However, these results are from 2013, several years after the ESP program and therefore, it is possible that skill development on the force decreased the gap. Additionally, it is unclear whether their results account for women recruited under the ESP program.

¹²⁰ While the ESP Program improved women’s competency compared to their competency without the ESP program, compared to the normal requirements of a secondary school diploma, author interviews emphasize that the ESP graduates had lower levels of competency.

women flocked to the recruitment to obtain the expedited secondary education certificate, not out of a desire to enter the security force.¹²¹ Once educated through ESP, female officers were tempted to leave the LNP for a more stable private sector job.¹²² Of those women who did join the LNP, they often did not live up to the lofty expectations imposed on them.¹²³ For example, one member of civil society admitted that while she had believed that women were less corrupt,¹²⁴ her belief weakened after witnessing female police officers as willing to accept bribes as men.¹²⁵ However, she believed the root of this problem lay in improper training and insufficient pay and argued that if female police, and police in general, were better trained and educated, corruption would decrease.

Moreover, female police officers have not necessarily proved to be more perceptive to SGBV. For example, Karim et al. found that women were no more likely to detect gendered crimes and that instead job competency, age and participation levels were more important. Although female presence in the LNP has increased, the culture of normalized sexual violence continues and the LNP struggles to adequately address and investigate SGBV.¹²⁶ This aligns with arguments made by scholars that the institutional police culture shapes individual behavior.¹²⁷ The LNP's indifference to SGBV was highlighted by an UNMIL personnel:

‘When you advocate against violence against women, everyone will say ‘yes, yes, yes,’ but as soon as a woman brings a case to LNP, they will send you away saying this is a

¹²¹ 2013 Interview with LNP Gender Officer

¹²² 2013 Interview with USAID Representative

¹²³ 2013 Interview with LNP Gender Officer

¹²⁴ This is a common argument made by gender balancing advocates, however, many feminist scholars warn against assumptions of women's increased integrity. For example, Liberia's first female inspector general was later investigated for corruption.

¹²⁵ 2013 Interview with Liberian WPS Advocate

¹²⁶ Bacon 2013

¹²⁷ Karim et al. N.d; Karim and Gorman 2016; Blair et al. N.d.; Dharmapuri 2011; Jennings 2011; Karim and Beardsley 2017

boyfriend, girlfriend issue... In general, violence in a relationship, such as low scale violence, like breaking the hand or beating the head or beating with a stick is still considered a social norm part of the male/female relationship.’¹²⁸

Furthermore, a participant explained the social and financial challenges faced by SGBV victims:

‘The second [problem] being the system that are already in place ...you have to pay, which also leads to difficulty of access to any kind of justice because I am just a housewife. My husband beats me and he has taken away my jewelry and so then if I take it to the court and they charge me \$500 just to hear the case, then I don’t have it so I might as well just go back home and stay.’¹²⁹

The practice by of requesting unlawful fees from SGBV victims further restricts women’s access to the justice system. Despite the establishment of Criminal Court E and a specialized SGBV crime unit, the investigation and prosecution of SGBV crimes continues to be slow with only 34 cases tried in Criminal Court E between 2009 and 2013.¹³⁰ This inefficiency further undermined the presumed positive impacts of increasing women’s representation. Recruiting large numbers of women alone will not automatically improve police handling of SGBV. More specialized training in SGBV response is needed – proving, once again, that just being female does not make a person a gender expert.¹³¹

In this way, the Liberian case study presents an interesting examination of the importance of individual and institutional capacity and integrity. To recruit women, the LNP sacrificed individual capacity by recruiting less qualified women, assuming that just having women would

¹²⁸ 2013 Interview with UNMIL Human Rights Protection Section Officer

¹²⁹ 2013 Interview with Women’s Advocate for a Religious Organization

¹³⁰ Bacon 2013

¹³¹ Karim and Gorman 2016; Karim et al. N.d.

contribute to individual capacity.¹³² Moreover, the perceived gap between more qualified officers and ESP female officers damaged institutional capacity and integrity by creating divisions, tensions and resentment, which prevented collaboration among and support between officers. Although the female-focused recruitment programs and additional gender mainstreaming reforms appear to have enhanced the LNP's institutional integrity through improved gender representation, ethical guidelines and codes of conduct, the inability of the LNP to effectively integrate female police equally, the unchallenged masculine hierarchies and persistent masculine institutional norms, questions whether effective institutional integrity has been achieved.¹³³

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Gender Police Reform

One of the main issues in the evaluation of the LNP gender reform is the reliance on quantitative indicators of success. For example, the number of women in the police and the number of reported SGBV cases are two commonly cited indicators of 'successful' gender mainstreaming. However, as highlighted by the complications of the LNP gender quota, quantitative indicators do not accurately portray success. More troubling, they may overemphasize the success of the gender quota, acting as an illusion of success, preventing further reform and reinforcing discriminatory stereotypes about female officers.

For example, the LNP is continuing to increase its gender quota. While an admirable goal, issues from women's limited education to traditional gender roles to LNP infrastructure which is not yet capable of providing a professional, safe and advantageous career for women are rampant. Without additional gender mainstreaming, the LNP is in danger of reinforcing

¹³² OECD, 2007, 61, <http://www.oecd.org/development/incaf/38406485.pdf>

¹³³ It worth noting several studies, including Baker 2009 and Durch et. al. 2012, mention (in a footnote) that the ESP program's negative impacts, however, neither discussed this finding further nor its implications for effective SSR.

traditional gendered hierarchies, while simultaneously being lauded as a successful example of gender reform.

Several important gender mainstreaming initiatives have been launched to address these concerns. For example, entrance tests and requirements for men and women have been equalized and standardized. While this disadvantages the average Liberian women, especially rural women, who often lack a secondary education, it means that those women accepted will be as capable as their male counterparts. Although this may not quickly increase women's representation, it will eventually improve responses to SGBV and increase women's incorporation into decision-making. Furthermore, it may inspire more young women to join the force.

Similarly, UNMIL has emphasized the development of a merit-based system in the LNP, which reduces the influence of gender bias or 'old boy clubs.'¹³⁴ Furthermore, to combat the reluctance of female officers from Monrovia to be stationed in rural counties, the LNP has started to deploy female officers in their home area.¹³⁵ The LNP hopes that by placing female officers in their home community, they will be less likely to default to another job:

'The aim is to find some strong woman who maybe already have maybe family, husband, children and are really settled in the community and train them on a six month in Monrovia and then deploy them directly back to the region, their own region. We hope ... they will stay over there because that's their home. Then it will also help in the empowerment of women.'¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Interview with UNMIL Field Office Representative

¹³⁵ Interview with UNMIL OGA Representative

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Additionally, UNMIL and the LNP have sent female officers into rural areas in leadership positions to decrease prejudices against women in leadership.¹³⁷ As UNMIL successfully completed its mandate on March 2018, it worked with the LNP to ensure gender mainstreaming continues.¹³⁸ The LNP's ability to sustain the gender mainstreaming will be a crucial test of international police reform efforts to gender reform local police forces.

While the LNP reform displays high levels of gender programming compared to other post-conflict reforms, it crucially left unchallenged gendered power hierarchies, norms and assumptions that undermined its sustainability and effectiveness. Much of the gender reform was supported by beliefs that female officers would 'do gender' work and act differently. However, feminist scholars increasingly criticize this rhetoric as reinforcing gendered binaries, promoting gender stereotypes, undermining women's agency and ignoring institutional masculinity and gendered power structures.¹³⁹ Moving forward, scholars and practitioners should be careful to avoid rhetoric that supports women's inclusion as instrumental and instead focus on women's right to participate in and be adequately protected by the security sector. Additionally, the LNP should further question and dismantle its masculinized institutional structures and power hierarchies.¹⁴⁰

At the end of the Liberian civil war, domestic and international police reformers faced a daunting task: reconstruct the LNP while facing immense structural constraints and security threats. Fifteen years later, the LNP has undergone an impressive transformation. The LNP reform process exemplifies the need for greater engagement between international police reform

¹³⁷ 2013 Interview with UNMIL Human Rights Officer

¹³⁸ 2013 Interview with UNPOL Representative

¹³⁹ Karim and Beardsley 2017

¹⁴⁰ For example, as Beardsley et al (n.d.) demonstrate, female LNP officers continue to face discrimination.

and feminist scholars and practitioners by highlighting how successful gender reform and police reform are intertwined and face complex challenges. While the LNP reform demonstrates an important advancement in the incorporation of gender mainstreaming, it also highlights the shortcomings and missed opportunities that occur as a result of the tepid and shallow interaction between international police reformer and feminist scholars that not only undermines gender mainstreaming, but also harms larger police reform.

Connecting the Lessons: Paths Forward

Increased engagement between feminist and ‘mainstream’ research on post-conflict policing is critically needed. This engagement is not only important for addressing gender equality, but also for developing and implementing more comprehensive and transformative reform. This informs academic research, policy dialogues and international decisions about police reform.

This analysis highlights that as policy decisions regarding police reform are made, gender must be incorporated from the onset. By designing police reform programs with specific mechanisms to address the unique challenges faced by women, policymakers will secure a more holistic and sustainable police force. Police reform efforts provide a unique opportunity for women to negotiate their spaces of security, which supports local views and context.

Furthermore, policing literature’s analysis on community policing and the Capacity-Integrity framework provide valuable implications for feminist scholars by demonstrating the resource and institutional limitations, political pressures and donor demands that require trade-offs. While policing scholars and practitioners may recognize the importance of gendered concerns, they identify it as one of many structural challenges to address with limited time and resources. For example, while women may lack access to police services, so may ethnic or

religious minorities. Similarly, while female police may suffer disproportionate consequences from low pay or unstable schedules, all officers suffer the same problems. While feminist scholars acknowledge these resource limitations, many have not yet grappled with their implications for making ‘trade-offs’ in police reform. Further, feminist scholars should engage with police literature to gain a greater understanding of its technical language to facilitate communication.

Women have the potential to make important contributions to police reform, particularly through community policing. As women often represent mothers, caretakers, agriculture workers, and small-business owners, they introduce particular skills and concerns into policing activities. Moreover, female police and female community members may be more effective at communicating current needs. As Pruitt recently concluded, all female-formed police units in Liberia proved to be an ‘action-oriented approach, giving legitimacy to women’s needs and concerns’ in ‘potentially transformative’ ways.¹⁴¹ In addition, gender analysis highlights the fluidity of the capacity-integrity framework as the lowered individual capacity of female police decreases their individual integrity, which then harms institutional capacity and integrity. Similarly, poor institutional integrity, prevents female officers with high capacity and integrity from joining the police.

Overall, this analysis highlights that the differing structural obstacles and skills of female and male police should be considered during the design of police reform to develop a sustainable procedure to address individual and institutional problems. Additionally, both police and gender scholars must recognize the tensions between attempts to promote institutional cultural changes and the cultural changes necessary to support institutional ones. Ultimately, we hope this

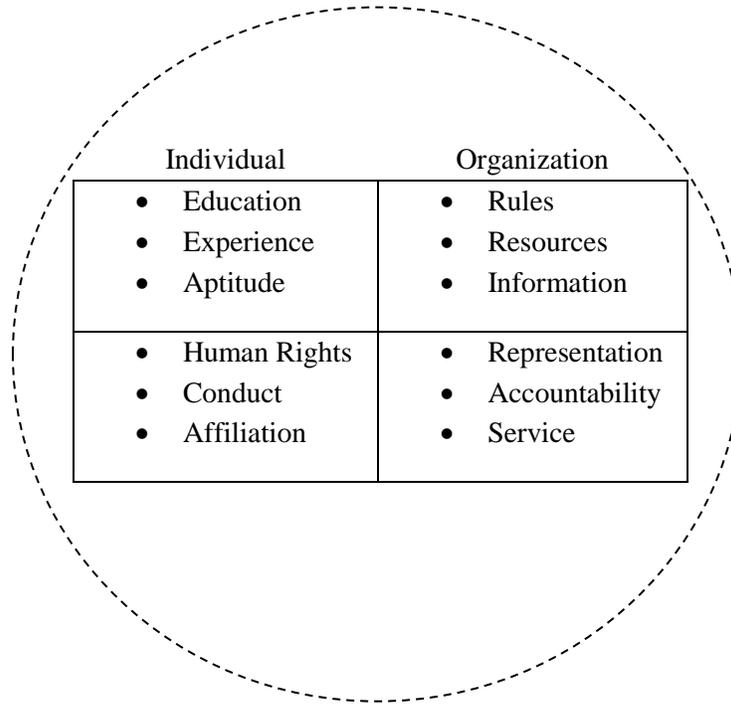
¹⁴¹ Lesley Pruitt. 2016. *The Women in Blue Helmets*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 119.

analysis creates points of engagement for mainstream policing and feminist scholars and creates new entry points for advocates of the WPS agenda in conflict-affected countries.

Appendix A:

Capacity and Integrity Framework: a simple tool to assess and plan

A PUBLIC INSTITUTION



The two vertical columns represent the individual and organizational dimensions. The horizontal rows correspond to the two basic qualities of capacity and integrity. The resulting four fields represent a basic framework to comprehensively assess the status of an institution in a post-conflict context:

-  Individual capacity relates to an employee’s education and professional training, professional experience and competence, as well as her or his physical and mental aptitude.
-  Individual integrity refers to an employee’s adherence to international standards of human rights and professional conduct, including a person’s financial propriety.
-  Organisational capacity refers to institutional qualities such as the number of staff, the organisational structure, resources, infrastructure and information systems.
-  Organisational integrity relates to procedure employed to establish the principles and values of an institution, including disciplinary and complaint procedures, oversight mechanisms, ethical guidelines, codes of conduct and representation (gender, ethnicity, geographic origin and religion).

Source: OECD DAC Handbook on Security Sector Reform: Supporting Security and Justice, 2007, p.60-61. Available at <http://www.oecd.org/development/incaf/38406485.pdf>.