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# U.N. Peacekeeping Forces and the Demand for Sex Trafficking

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## Abstract

U.N. peacekeeping missions succeed in preventing the resumption of conflict and saving lives. At the same time, a series of sexual exploitation and abuse scandals since the early 2000s has raised concerns about the conduct of peacekeepers. We examine a related, but generally overlooked, potential negative externality of peacekeeping missions: the forced trafficking of sex workers. We argue that U.N. peacekeepers increase demand for sex work and that this demand may be met through human trafficking for forced prostitution. Using data on U.N. peacekeeping missions between 2001 and 2011, we evaluate the effect of a peacekeeper presence on human sex trafficking in and around the host state. We find that the presence of U.N. peacekeeping forces correlates positively with a state being cited as a destination for forced prostitution. This has important implications for the future deployment of peacekeeping forces around the world.

**Issue Section:** [Original Article](#)

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In 1999, an American contractor working for Dyncorp, a company contracted by the United Nations (U.N) to conduct police work during the Bosnia peacekeeping mission, attempted to expose the trafficking of women and girls into Bosnia to serve as sex slaves. The contractor, Kathryn Bolkovac, argued that women were being taken to brothels to service U.N. peacekeeping personnel. She alleged that some peacekeepers were themselves implicated in sex trafficking. Bolkovac's whistleblowing attempt earned her threats from, among others, U.N. personnel. She lost her job with Dyncorp and eventually won a wrongful dismissal lawsuit against her former employer. Her allegations brought worldwide attention to the case of Bosnia and to the potential general connection between U.N. peacekeeping and sex trafficking ([Bolkovac and Lynn 2011](#); [Vulliamy 2012](#)).

Peacekeeping is one of the U.N.'s most visible activities. Unfortunately, along with its success stories of preventing the re-initiation of conflict have come reports alleging that peacekeepers have abused the very people that they are supposed to protect. Beyond widely reported accusations of rape and sexual abuse,<sup>1</sup> the presence of U.N. peacekeepers also creates demand for sex workers—a demand that we argue is met through human trafficking.

We investigate the general relationship between the presence of U.N. peacekeeping forces within a state and the occurrence of human trafficking for the purposes of forced prostitution. Several studies find that the presence of peacekeeping forces reduces violence and helps to prevent the reemergence of conflict in the host state ([Fortna, 2004, 2008](#); [Doyle and Sambanis 2006](#)). We do not dispute these findings. However, others argue that peacekeeping deployments have “served to increase some local people's insecurity rather than alleviate it,” ([Whitworth 2004](#), 12). We argue that some of these negative effects also extend beyond the boundaries of peacekeeping operations (PKOs).

[Mendelson \(2005, 1\)](#) notes that human rights organizations and U.N. agencies have cited “a dramatic rise in the number of trafficked females” following large, long-term, military deployments. While human trafficking has long generated concern, few systematic analyses examine the subject. [Smith and Smith \(2011\)](#) provide case study evidence showing that U.N. peacekeepers' presence led to greater human trafficking flows into Kosovo, Haiti, and Sierra Leone. Recent reports highlight numerous cases of abuse, but these cases may not accurately characterize the more general effects of peacekeeping missions ([Fortna 2015](#)).<sup>2</sup> Thus, rigorous analysis of the relationship between peacekeeping forces and sex trafficking will help us to understand if the instances highlighted by news reports and case studies are isolated ones, or if they represent generalizable patterns of abuse across U.N. peacekeeping missions.

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We argue that peacekeeping forces increase the market demand for sex workers, thereby creating incentives for individuals to engage in human trafficking to meet this demand.

Drawing from principal–agency theory, we argue that U.N. peacekeeping missions are particularly susceptible to attracting sex trafficking.

We consider the different compositions of PKOs and whether some might be more prone to create demand and opportunities for sex trafficking problems than others. Specifically, we examine whether the number of troop–contributing countries conditions the effect of deployment size on trafficking. Lastly, given that human trafficking necessarily involves geographic movement, our analysis utilizes spatial measurement techniques to better understand the influence of the broader conflict environment in the surrounding region on sex trafficking.

We find that the size of peacekeeping deployments has a statistically significant and positive effect on the probability that a state is a destination for sex trafficking. We also find evidence of a conditional relationship: this effect increases with more troop–contributing countries involved and with longer peacekeeping operation durations. These results have important implications for policymakers looking to improve upon these areas of peacekeeping deployments.

## Background

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Many scholars demonstrate the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions in reducing the risk of conflict recurrence (Fortna, 2004, 2008; Doyle and Sambanis 2006; Gilligan and Sergenti 2008) and decreasing both combatant (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2014) and civilian (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013) casualties. However, since the early 2000s there have been frequent reports of misconduct by peacekeeping personnel, often involving sexual abuse and exploitation.<sup>3</sup> Recent work by Nordås and Rustad (2013) explores the factors that may exacerbate the problem. Still, no cross–national studies (that we know of) explore the relationship between peacekeeping and sex work. Recent scholarship by Beber et al. (2016) finds that in the case of U.N. Mission in Liberia, the presence of peacekeepers is associated with an expansion in sex work presence—though the authors are careful to note the tentativeness of this attribution in light of a large number of confounding factors involved in this case.

Karim and Beardsley (2016) and Nordås and Rustad (2013) show that factors related to gender can lead to fewer accusations of sexual exploitation and abuse directed toward a U.N. peacekeeping force. Karim and Beardsley (2016) find some evidence that more women in peacekeeping forces lead to fewer allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. They also find that peacekeeping forces from countries with, first, more women in the labor force and, second, more girls in primary school are less likely to face allegations of sexual exploitation

and abuse. They argue that simply having women peacekeepers, while reducing male-dominance in peacekeeping, is not enough to eliminate such allegations. Rather, both men and women in peacekeeping missions need to hold stronger norms of gender equality ([Karim and Beardsley 2016](#)).<sup>4</sup>

Largely as a reaction to allegations of abuse by U.N. peacekeepers, the U.N. Secretary General's Bulletin of 2003 outlined a zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse. It prohibits peacekeepers on missions from paying for sex with any locals and bans sex with minors.<sup>5</sup> It also strongly discourages any sexual encounters with locals on the grounds that the power and authority enjoyed by peacekeepers creates a high risk of exploitative relationships ([Secretariat 2003](#); [Jennings 2014](#)).

However well intentioned, these restrictions are likely of limited effectiveness. Peacekeeping personnel are provided voluntarily by U.N. member states in exchange for compensation from the U.N. While the U.N. can repatriate and ban civilians and military peacekeepers who violate the rules from future peacekeeping missions, it does not have criminal or disciplinary jurisdiction over military members of peacekeeping operations ([General Assembly 2005](#)).<sup>6</sup> Disciplinary action against military peacekeepers can only be taken by home country militaries, which have varied rules governing punishments. Further, there is considerable variation in the willingness of these militaries to take disciplinary action against peacekeepers who pay for sex with locals ([Jennings 2014](#)).

The U.N. Secretary General's Bulletin of 2003 specifically states that heads of a mission are expected to enforce sexual exploitation and abuse regulations and that peacekeepers are required to report any suspected violation of abuse guidelines. Yet in practice few cases are reported ([Secretariat 2003](#)). When they are, it is relatively rare that actions are taken against peacekeeping personnel.<sup>7</sup> In some cases investigators have been threatened by the very peacekeepers they are investigating ([Lynch 2004](#)). The most egregious cases of sexual misconduct—those involving rape and children—are the ones prioritized by U.N. investigations ([OIOS 2015](#)). The same has been true of media attention. While the increased demand for sex workers by peacekeepers has received much less attention, it can have widespread negative effects on host states.

Evidence suggests a strong link between the presence of peacekeeping forces and sex work. A U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services report published in May of 2015, which draws on research by [Beber et al. \(2016\)](#), finds that in Monrovia, Liberia, where the U.N. has kept a peacekeeping presence since 2003 through the U.N. Mission in Liberia, approximately fifty percent of women surveyed between the ages of 18 and 30 engaged in transactional sex. Of those, seventy-five percent reported having done so with U.N. personnel. A significant

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proportion reported engaging in underage transactional sex with U.N. personnel ([OIOS 2015](#); [Beber et al. 2016](#)).<sup>8</sup>

During the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia mission, the number of sex workers increased from around 6,000 in 1992 to 25,000 at the height of the mission ([Whitworth 2004](#), 67). During the U.N. operation in Mozambique, from 1992 to 1994, peacekeepers were reported to have condoned the establishment of brothels and were reported to have participated in the trafficking of individuals to work in those brothels, similar to the case of peacekeepers in Bosnia ([Whitworth 2004](#), 143). [Smith and Smith \(2011\)](#) provide case study evidence of peacekeeping presence leading to increases in trafficking in both Haiti and Sierra Leone. These case studies provide some micro-level evidence that peacekeeping forces increase demand for transactional sex work. In the following sections, we discuss how peacekeeping forces contribute to a more general rise in the demand for sex work and how such demand translates into human trafficking.<sup>9</sup>

## The Demand for Trafficked Persons

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There is a growing body of literature on the causes of human trafficking, which the U.S. State Department defines as “the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion” ([U.S. Department of State 2015](#), 7). We focus on transnational sex trafficking (i.e., trafficking across state lines). However, this literature lags behind the study of other human rights violations, as there are few cross-sectional and cross-temporal measures of trafficking. [Cho \(2015\)](#) identifies four factors that cause trafficking: (1) existing migration patterns; (2) vulnerability; (3) crime; and (4) policy and institutions. What is most important for the question we ask here is the research that examines why countries are more or less likely to be destinations of trafficking.

[Wheaton, Schauer, and Galli \(2010\)](#) developed a game theoretic model to highlight the economic incentives of the actors involved. This suggests that it is necessary to consider the effect of demand for trafficked persons on where these individuals flow. [Jac-Kucharski \(2012\)](#) similarly argues that research on trafficking focuses too much on the pool of potential trafficked persons and, as a result, studies mainly on the source states. She argues that we need to pay more attention to the state characteristics that affect the cost-benefit calculation of the trafficker. This is especially true for understanding which states become destinations for trafficking. So something that cuts across the research on trafficking is a focus on the economic conditions within the source and destination states. Low incomes make individuals eager to migrate out of states while also making them more vulnerable to traffickers. A



stronger economy in a state makes it a more attractive destination market for trafficking. [Jac-Kucharski \(2012\)](#) argues and finds evidence in the US that both the potential economic gain and the potential costs through punishment go into the decision calculus of the trafficker.

Additional research provides broader cross-sectional and temporal analyses of the pull factors of trafficking. [Cho, Dreher, and Neumayer \(2013\)](#) provide evidence that when sex work is illegal in a state, thereby making trafficking costlier, trafficking decreases. This provides some empirical support for the argument that higher costs of operating in a state deter trafficking. [Akee et al. \(2014\)](#) further examine the decision calculus of the trafficker and, contrary to [Cho et al. \(2013\)](#), argue that given the relatively inelastic demand for trafficked persons, laws that make trafficking more costly might actually increase the value of trafficked persons and increase the likelihood of trafficking into a state. Regardless of the effect that laws and institutions have on whether a state is an attractive host for trafficked persons, much of the literature suggests that the market for trafficked persons in a state determines where people are trafficked to. Traffickers are motivated by the economic gains from trafficking. As a result, they have an incentive to traffic into states where there is higher demand and more of a market.

## Linking Peacekeeping Forces and Trafficking

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In developing our theory, we focus first on how U.N. peacekeepers lead to an increased demand for sex work, which is often met through trafficking for the purposes of forced prostitution. Additionally, we argue that some of the specific characteristics of peacekeeping operations open a greater opportunity for agency loss and can exacerbate this effect.

We follow [Allen and Flynn \(2013, 267–68\)](#) in making some basic assumptions about military personnel deployed as a part of peacekeeping operations. First, individual soldiers seek to maximize personal utility. Second, the ability of individual soldiers to accomplish this goal through exclusively legitimate means varies across individual peacekeepers. Third, we assume that soldiers who are unable to maximize their personal utility through legal channels will resort to illegal activities, even at the risk of being caught while doing so. Lastly, we assume that the risk aversion of individual peacekeepers is normally distributed. The first implication of these assumptions is that some portion of any given deployment will be unable to maximize its personal utility through legitimate means alone and will engage in some form of illicit activity to fill the gap. This is further bolstered by work on gender within peacekeeping operations, which states that there is often an expectation among peacekeepers that sex workers will be accessible ([Whitworth 2004](#)). The second implication

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is that as the size of a deployment increases, so too does the population of potential offenders (Nordås and Rustad 2013). Below we detail the relationship between a large deployment and human trafficking, highlighting two possible causal processes at play: (1) peacekeepers as consumers of sex work, and (2) peacekeepers as direct participants in the trafficking process.

First, paying for sex represents one form of illicit activity. Thus, the presence of peacekeepers increases the demand for sex work (Ndulo 2009). By extension, it can increase the opportunity for trafficking. Troops deployed to a foreign state often come with much higher pay than the locals. Besides leading to problems such as inflation, the influx of military personnel can create a market for a variety of goods and services—what Jennings and Bøås (2015) refer to as the “peacekeeping economy” (Higate and Henry 2004; Lutz and Enloe 2009; Ndulo 2009; Jennings 2010; Jennings and Bøås 2015).<sup>10</sup> Sex work is one of the services for which there can be a particularly high demand (Ndulo 2009; Jennings 2010). While some of this sex work is voluntary, the increased demand can also lead to increased sex trafficking for forced prostitution (Lutz and Enloe 2009; Höhn and Moon 2010; Jennings 2010; Yeo 2011; Jennings and Bøås 2015).<sup>11</sup> Given these assumptions, as the number of peacekeepers increases in a country, so does the number of potential clients—the size of the market or consumer pool. By extension, as the number of potential clients increases, so does the demand for sex work and the potential profits from sex trafficking.

The transient nature of deployed security personnel and the high rate of turnover exacerbate the environment in which there is a demand for sex work (Amnesty International 2004). For example, most U.N. peacekeepers are away from their families for extended periods of time (Jennings and Bøås 2015). The lack of companionship, as well as being in an environment far away from home in which norms are perceived to be different, can lead to a demand for transactional sex or sex work (Higate and Henry 2004). Indeed, previous work has found that sex work in the host state often increases with the presence of foreign troop deployments (Jennings 2010).<sup>12</sup>

While not all sex work is forced, a high demand for sex work can create the demand for human trafficking for the purposes of forced prostitution (Amnesty International 2004; Jennings and Bøås 2015).<sup>13</sup> Mendelson (2005, 1) states that “[t]rafficking—especially the enslavement of women and girls for forced prostitution—follows market demand and, in post-conflict situations, that demand is often created by international peacekeepers.” Although some of the demand for sex work can be met by local labor, there remains an incentive to traffic in individuals that can be forced into prostitution, thereby lowering the relative cost of the labor. That is, individuals looking to profit from the presence of peacekeeping personnel have an incentive to traffic in individuals whom they can force into prostitution and who have no claim to the profits from their labor (Jennings 2010).

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A 2004 Amnesty International report provides evidence that United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR troops increased the demand for sex work and drove the demand for human trafficking. Before the end of 1999, there were already reports of heavy inflows of trafficked persons into Kosovo ([Amnesty International 2004](#)). In fact, shortly after the start of the peacekeeping mission, brothels appeared near the peacekeeping bases. In early 2000, the International Organization for Migration identified the UNMIK and peacekeeping force in Kosovo (KFOR) “as a factor in the increase in trafficking for prostitution” ([Amnesty International 2004](#), 7). Amnesty International also reported that “internationals were estimated to comprise 80 percent of clients of trafficked women” ([Amnesty International 2004](#), 2).

Peacekeepers might also be directly involved in sex trafficking to supplement their own incomes. The Amnesty report describes instances between 2000 and 2003 where Romanian and US troops were involved in trafficking, reportedly picking up women at the border between Kosovo and Serbia and delivering them to a brothel. The officers were reprimanded, but no criminal charges were brought against them. In summary, Amnesty International characterizes the role of the peacekeepers as such: “Given low levels of prostitution and trafficking of women prior to July 1999, all the available evidence suggests that without the presence of the international community and influx of ready-made western consumers, Kosovo would have remained a relative backwater in the Balkan trafficking industry” ([Amnesty International 2004](#), 8).

Taken together, this produces our first hypothesis:

**H1:** *There is a positive correlation between the size of a U.N. peacekeeping deployment and the probability that a state is a destination for sex trafficking.*

Why are U.N. peacekeepers especially likely to increase this demand? Principal agent theory can help us understand the challenges associated with U.N. peacekeeping missions ([Jensen and Meckling 1976](#)). This theoretical approach has been applied in considering the state's ability to control agents who violate citizens' physical integrity rights ([Mitchell 2009](#)). [Butler, Gluch, and Mitchell \(2007\)](#) also apply principal agency theory to understand where the presence of security forces will increase sexual violence.<sup>14</sup> In an analysis of data from 2003, they find that in places where agents are more accountable, security forces are less likely to engage in sexual violence. Lastly, [Auerswald and Saideman \(2014\)](#) show how principal agent theory can help to understand the difficulties associated with multilateral military operations. Specifically, missions with multiple principals and competing delegation chains create increased opportunity for agents to shirk.



In examining U.N. peacekeepers and human trafficking, we conceive of the organization that deploys troops as the principal and the troop-contributing countries as the agents. By extension, the troops themselves are the agents of both the troop-contributing country and the U.N. In the following discussion, we illustrate how this delegation chain leads to U.N. agency loss. The combination of a long chain of delegation, where the peacekeepers are responsible to both their states and the U.N., and the lesser capacity of the U.N. to monitor, diminishes the ability to avoid shirking and activities that are outside of U.N. leadership preferences.

Instances of sexual misconduct are not unique to U.N. peacekeepers,<sup>15</sup> but we argue that the particular characteristics of U.N. peacekeeping missions and the greater opportunity for agency loss may exacerbate these effects. Much like the U.N. has banned paying for sex for its peacekeeping missions, most militaries either formally ban their members from paying for sex with locals or actively discourage it. However, there is variation in how often or how stringently these rules are enforced.<sup>16</sup> This becomes a problem in the case of U.N. peacekeepers who have longer or more complicated chains of delegation. U.N. peacekeepers are not under the direct control of the U.N. and are also not on a mission directly sponsored by their home country. For example, allegations of sexual misconduct by peacekeepers are usually investigated by the home country's military.<sup>17</sup> The punishment can vary significantly across states. Sanctions can include pay cuts, criminal charges, and separation from service, but many cases go unsanctioned, and the consistency with which countries apply sanctions varies widely (Kanetake 2010; OIOS 2015). This leads to a situation in which it can be difficult for the U.N. to effectively enforce its rules over peacekeeping personnel.

The process by which allegations against U.N. peacekeeping personnel are investigated is lengthy and involves many actors, including the head of the peacekeeping mission, the U.N.'s internal investigation units, military police personnel, and national investigation officers of the states contributing the peacekeeping troops, among many others. This means that even in cases in which the home country of the accused peacekeepers wishes to cooperate with the U.N. in its investigation, the process can be confusing and involve delays.<sup>18</sup> In addition, blame over delayed investigations is often passed between the different actors involved (OIOS 2015). There can also be a conflict of interest when the troop-contributing countries are asked to investigate allegations against their own personnel. States contributing peacekeeping troops have an incentive to not prove accusations against them, as this would lead to the stigma of sexual misconduct being applied to them. This could in turn lead to the loss of lucrative peacekeeping contracts (OIOS 2015).

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A prominent illustration of the principal agency problem arising in multilateral peacekeeping interventions is that of the UNMIK. This U.N. peacekeeping mission was unprecedented in

that it was granted authority over the people and territory of Kosovo.<sup>19</sup> One of the primary goals of the mission was to promote human rights. The UNMIK was also accompanied by KFOR NATO peacekeeping troops. This complex intervention involved the U.N., NATO, and the states that allocated troops to the mission. While this peacekeeping mission contributed to the suppression of conflict, it also contributed to increases in human trafficking ([Amnesty International 2004](#)). It serves as a good example of how cross-cutting chains of delegation can help in understanding the large volume of human trafficking connected to the mission.

There are a few factors that suggest there was an opportunity for agency loss during this mission. First, UNMIK and KFOR police and personnel had immunity from prosecution. This would make it much more difficult to control the actors who were delegated authority in this mission. Second, the delegation chain involved both the U.N. and NATO. Cross-cutting authorities make it even more difficult to monitor and control the peacekeepers. Third, while there were many raids on trafficking operations and some troops were repatriated, there were very few prosecutions. Indeed, these patterns appear to extend beyond these particular operations. In 2000, the U.N. Secretary General stated that “too often contributing states fail to prosecute their nationals accused of serious wrong-doing while on services for the [U.N.]” ([Amnesty International 2004](#), 41). A more recent report concerning sexual exploitation and abuse reports involved attempts to contact 23 troop-contributing countries, concluding that “with rare exceptions, few nations responded to repeated requests, while the names of those found guilty are kept confidential, making accountability impossible to determine” ([Dodds 2017](#)). The same report also found that of 134 Sri Lankan soldiers who were accused of sexual exploitation and abuse in Haiti, 114 were sent home and none of them faced any prison time for their crimes ([Dodds 2017](#)).

Further, previous work by [Nordås and Rustad \(2013\)](#) found that larger PKOs are more likely to lead to sexual exploitation and abuse allegations, as commanders find it more difficult to engage in effective oversight of the troops. [Ndulo \(2009\)](#) also suggests that having troops from different countries involved in a peacekeeping mission can make it more difficult to deter misconduct with the threat of serious consequences. We argue that peacekeeping operations that involve multiple troop-contributing countries, and thus have chains of delegation involving several countries and cross-cutting authorities, make it even more difficult to monitor and control the peacekeepers (as was the case with the KFOR and UNMIK missions). Further, a higher number of troop-contributing countries may also correlate with increased variation in cultural and individual attitudes towards women, sex, and violence, thereby increasing the probability that some contingent of peacekeepers will be likely to pay for sex and thus promote trafficking ([Beber et al. 2016](#); [Karim and Beardsley 2016](#)). Even if cases of misconduct are reported to U.N. authorities, it may be more difficult to identify guilty parties where forces from multiple countries are present.<sup>20</sup>

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In the context of multilateral military operations, individual soldiers know their home states do not have an incentive to pursue allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Even if soldiers are caught engaging in sexual misconduct, they know penalties will likely be trivial. All else being equal, we expect more individuals to pay for sex when the likelihood of detection and the costs of punishment are relatively low. The increased willingness of soldiers to pay for sex drives up demand for sex work. This can create incentives for third parties to engage in human trafficking to meet the demand for sex work. In extreme cases, soldiers themselves may directly participate in the trafficking process to increase their personal profits. If we assume that some fraction of a deployment will engage in illicit activities to maximize personal utility, then increasing the overall pool of potential offenders increases the frequency of violations. We further expect this effect to be larger where there are more troop-contributing countries, since monitoring becomes more difficult and the individual soldier's estimation of being caught decreases accordingly:

**H2:** *We expect the positive effect of peacekeepers to increase as the number of troop-contributing countries increases.*

We also consider the possibility that the effect of peacekeeping operations on trafficking will not be immediate. Previous work has found that the effect of military personnel on the host state can take time to develop (Bell et al. 2017). Troops have to be present for some time to establish a demand for sex work and allow potential traffickers to establish channels into the country. Given the illegal nature of human trafficking, routes cannot be established as easily as for other forms of trade. In addition, if traffickers are willing to invest both the time and resources into establishing (or expanding) a trafficking route into the country, they likely require assurance that the demand will last. Lastly, individual soldiers' estimation of being detected while engaging in illicit activities should decrease with longer deployments, which should correlate with an overall higher volume of troops moving through a given country. For example, one soldier in one brigade in one year is easier to detect and punish than one soldier out of 20 brigades over a five-year period. Further, longer deployments only amplify the amount of money that countries can gain from peacekeeping operations, thereby increasing the costs of publicizing violations. We thus expect that the effect of peacekeepers on trafficking will become stronger the longer those troops are present in the host country.

**H3:** *We expect the positive effect of peacekeepers to increase as the duration of peacekeeping operations in a state increases.*

In the next section we evaluate our hypotheses.

## Research Design

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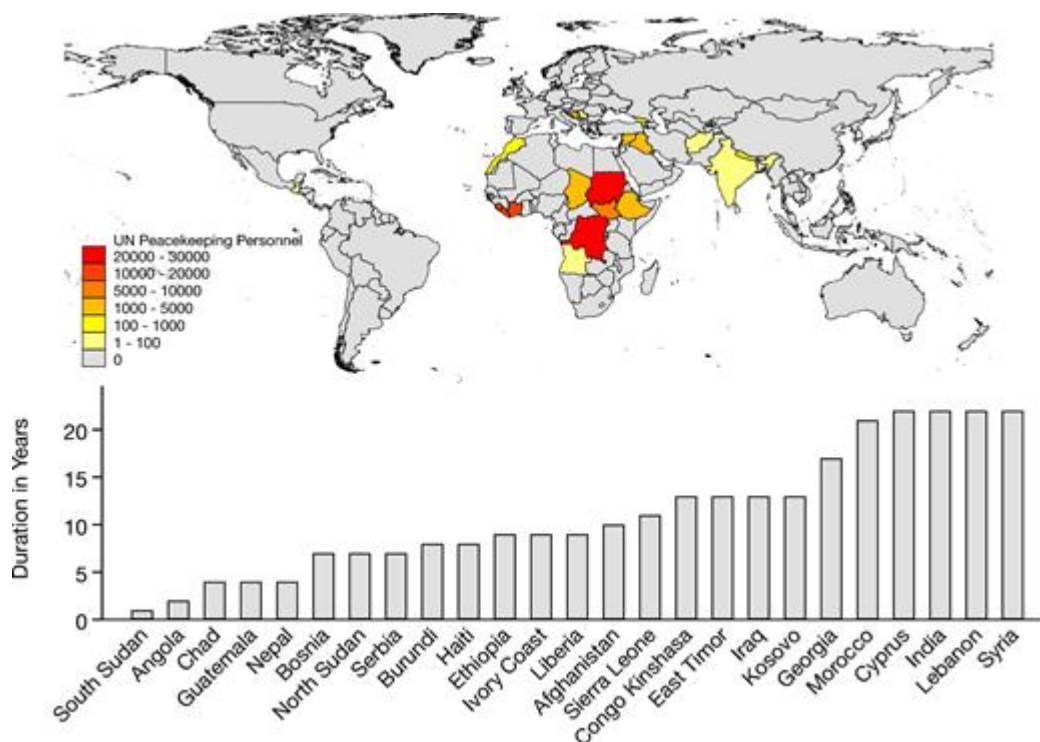
Our goal is to evaluate the effects of U.N. peacekeeping missions on human trafficking. To evaluate our hypotheses, we use data from the Human Trafficking Indicators (HTI) project (Frank 2013). These data utilize the U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons reports to generate a range of variables (available from 2000 to 2011) that indicate (among other things) whether a state is a source or a destination for transnational human trafficking. These data offer both general indicators of trafficking and more specific indicators that identify the specific type of trafficking activities a state is involved in (e.g., child labor, sex trafficking, etc.). Each indicator is dichotomous, and we code each state as “1” if the State Department reports indicate that a country is a destination for sex trafficking, and “0” otherwise. Frank (2013) codes destination states separately from transit countries. For our purposes, a destination country refers to a final destination and not just a transit location. These are measures of *transnational* trafficking.

Although these data were gathered independent of earlier data collection efforts that utilize the State Department reports, they share some similarities. Both Cho (2015) and Akee et al. (2014) use the State Department reports to generate general measures of trafficking flows. Similar to the HTI data, they use the reports to identify whether a state is described as a source or destination for trafficking.<sup>21</sup> However, one advantage of the HTI data is that they are broken out into different types of trafficking, allowing us to look specifically at trafficking for forced prostitution. Given the focus of our theoretical argument, these data are the most appropriate for our purposes.

We test our hypotheses using data on the number of U.N. peacekeeping personnel deployed to a country in a given year between 2001 and 2011. To generate this measure, we use data from Kathman (2013). We include only U.N. missions to state hosts. Kathman (2013) includes in his dataset an observation for the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, which supervises the observance of the truce in Palestine (this mission has been present since 1948) (Security Council 1948). Because this mission is not associated with a state host, we drop it from our sample.<sup>22</sup> For missions that occurred in states that changed name or gained independence while peacekeepers were present, we follow the country coding used by Kathman (2013). The original data are tabulated monthly. Since our unit of analysis is the country–year, we use the maximum monthly value observed in a given country in a given year. We include the total number of troop, police, and observer peacekeepers in a given year.<sup>23</sup> Due to the skewness of these data we use the natural log in our models.<sup>24</sup> Figure 1 shows a map of the countries

where U.N. peacekeepers are deployed and the duration of the peacekeeping operations presence within each country.

**Figure 1.**



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Map of UNPKO deployments. Bottom graph displays the maximum deployment duration by country

We initially evaluate the independent effects of the peacekeeping variable. It is also possible that the effect of peacekeepers is conditional upon other factors. First, per hypothesis 2, we expect the positive effect of peacekeepers to be conditional on the number of troop-contributing countries involved in the operation. We include an interaction term between the peacekeeping variable and the number of troop-contributing countries participating in the operation (U.N. troops  $\times$  # contributing countries). We expect the effect of peacekeeping operations to increase as the number of contributing countries increases.

Second, per hypothesis 3, we include a variable that measures the number of years that peacekeeping troops have been present in the referent state. We also include an interaction term between the U.N. peacekeeping variable and the duration variable (U.N. troops  $\times$  U.N. duration). This variable allows us to evaluate the effects of peacekeeping operations as conditioned by the length of time those troops have been in a country. We expect the marginal effect of a peacekeeping presence to increase over time.<sup>25</sup>

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We estimate several models using different indicators of civil conflict to ensure that any observed relationship between trafficking and the presence of foreign military personnel is not spurious. Human trafficking may thrive in the absence of centralized state authority, control, and oversight. States experiencing civil conflict may thus be especially prone to rights violations like trafficking. Second, the presence of U.N. peacekeepers is necessarily correlated with the recent occurrence of civil conflict. We provide details of these variables and our measurement approach in the [Supplementary Online Appendix](#).

We include additional control variables that may be correlated with a state being a destination for human trafficking for forced prostitution. We discuss these variables in the [Supplementary Online Appendix](#) and only include the citations for them here ([Weidmann, Kuse, and Gleditsch 2010](#); [Gleditsch 2002](#); [Stinnett et al. 2002](#); [Neumayer and Plümper 2010](#); [Marshall, Jagers, and Gurr 2011](#); [Correlates of War 2012](#)). Summary statistics for the variables in our primary model can be found in [Appendix Table A1](#). In the following section, we estimate a series of probit models with robust standard errors. Our primary dependent variable is the dichotomous variable indicating whether a state is a destination for forced prostitution.

## Models and Estimation

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Table 1 shows the results from our first set of models. These six models show the results for the forced prostitution destination state dependent variable. Models 1 to 3 include our sample of all states, while Models 4 to 6 include only those states that have non-zero observations for the peacekeeping variable (this reduces our number of observations to 121 or 131 country-years, depending on the model). The full sample models include all countries, but the peacekeeping variable is not randomly distributed; some countries are not eligible for peacekeeping deployments because they never see conflict. One possible concern is that peacekeeping operations are acting as a proxy for particularly severe civil conflicts. To address this issue, Models 4 to 6 include only cases where we observe positive PKO values. Because all these countries have experienced recent or ongoing civil conflict, any effect we find on the peacekeeping variable is the result of variation within the peacekeeping and conditioning variables, not a result of peacekeeping proxying conflict environments more broadly.<sup>26</sup> Each set of models examines the independent effect of peacekeeping operations using different indicators of conflict. The first contains the Banks conflict index ([Banks and Wilson 2012](#)), the second contains the PRIO low-intensity conflict dummy variable, and the third includes the PRIO high-intensity dummy variable ([Gleditsch et al. 2002](#); [Pettersson and Wallensteen 2015](#)).

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**Table 1.**

Human trafficking and peacekeeping operations: dependent variable indicates the observed state is a destination for forced prostitution

	<i>All states (1–3)</i>			<i>PKO &gt; 0 (4–6)</i>		
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>
Forced prostitution destination						
ln (total peacekeepers)	0.039* (0.017)	0.040* (0.017)	0.041** (0.017)	0.187** (0.072)	0.214** (0.070)	0.148** (0.062)
ln (Banks Domestic Conflict Index)	–0.003 (0.012)			–0.106* (0.053)		
Spatial conflict (Banks)	–0.004 (0.017)			–0.122* (0.072)		
PRIO low intensity threshold		–0.026 (0.118)			0.789* (0.440)	
Spatial conflict (PRIO, low threshold)		0.053 (0.048)			–0.802** (0.174)	
PRIO high intensity threshold			0.024 (0.255)			0.126 (0.641)
Spatial conflict (PRIO, high threshold)			0.165 (0.124)			0.202 (0.405)
Regional source states (prostitution)	0.226 (0.140)	0.158 (0.138)	0.166 (0.137)	1.347 (0.856)	1.192 (0.941)	1.239 (0.775)
Regional destination states (prostitution)	1.000** (0.133)	1.008** (0.132)	1.004** (0.132)	2.433** (0.910)	2.577** (0.866)	2.040** (0.785)
Polity	0.014* (0.007)	0.017** (0.007)	0.016** (0.007)	0.026 (0.032)	0.020 (0.041)	0.025 (0.034)
ln (population)	–0.194** (0.043)	–0.203** (0.043)	–0.202** (0.041)	–0.278 (0.236)	–0.361 (0.227)	–0.449* (0.203)
ln (GDP)	0.342** (0.032)	0.334** (0.031)	0.334** (0.031)	0.759** (0.211)	0.857** (0.216)	0.688** (0.162)
Border states	–0.030* (0.016)	–0.035* (0.015)	–0.038** (0.015)	0.088 (0.070)	0.056 (0.066)	0.018 (0.064)

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	<i>All states (1–3)</i>			<i>PKO &gt; 0 (4–6)</i>		
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>
Constant	–6.676** (0.599)	–6.405** (0.584)	–6.384** (0.585)	–17.178** (4.051)	–19.275** (3.640)	–14.542** (2.586)
Observations	1357	1385	1385	121	131	131
log-likelihood	–682.944	–696.285	–696.047	–43.558	–44.622	–53.356
$\chi^2$	283.020	284.560	282.629	36.277	48.519	57.319

Notes: Models include all states (1–3) and states with a peacekeeping presence (4–6), 2001–2011. Robust standard errors in parentheses. One-tailed significance tests used: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

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The peacekeeper variable correlates positively and significantly with a state being a destination for forced prostitution trafficking in all six models. Even in Models 4 to 6, where we limit our sample to those cases where we observe peacekeeping operations, the size of the peacekeeping deployment correlates positively with the probability that the state is a destination for persons trafficked for forced prostitution. These results generally support our first hypothesis. Hypothesis 1 suggests we should observe a positive relationship between the size of peacekeeping forces and the probability that a state is a destination for sex trafficking. These results maintain significance across several model specifications. Using the Banks conflict index, the low-intensity conflict variable, or the high-intensity conflict variable does not lead to any meaningful changes in our primary results.<sup>27</sup>

The results in Table 1 provide some support for hypothesis 1. However, hypotheses 2 and 3 suggest that this effect may be conditional on other factors. To evaluate our second hypothesis, we include a measure of the number of troop-contributing countries involved in a peacekeeping operation, using the data from [Kathman \(2013\)](#).<sup>28</sup> To evaluate the third hypothesis, we also include the interaction term between the peacekeeping and duration variables. These results are shown in Table 2.

## Table 2.

Human trafficking and peacekeeping operations with conditional effects: dependent variable indicates the observed State is a destination for forced prostitution

*All states (1–2)*

*PKO > 0 (3–4)*

	<i>All states (1-2/2)</i>		<i>PRIO &gt; 0 (3-4) (4)</i>	
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>
Forced prostitution destination				
ln (total peacekeepers)	0.167* (0.081)	0.011 (0.031)	0.380* (0.175)	0.056 (0.117)
PKO contributor count	-0.062** (0.025)		-0.078* (0.042)	
ln (total peacekeepers) × PKO contributor count	0.005** (0.002)		0.004 (0.004)	
Duration of peacekeeping presence (total)		-0.056 (0.035)		-0.061 (0.088)
ln (total peacekeepers) × duration of peacekeeping presence (total)		0.012* (0.007)		0.013 (0.013)
PRIO high intensity threshold	0.022 (0.255)	0.051 (0.258)	0.298 (0.597)	0.162 (0.667)
Spatial conflict (PRIO, high threshold)	0.153 (0.125)	0.167 (0.124)	0.129 (0.435)	0.190 (0.427)
Regional source states (prostitution)	0.187 (0.138)	0.175 (0.137)	2.547** (0.844)	1.650* (0.857)
Regional destination states (prostitution)	1.003** (0.132)	0.990** (0.132)	1.476* (0.773)	1.936** (0.794)
Polity	0.016** (0.007)	0.017** (0.007)	-0.017 (0.037)	0.015 (0.036)
ln (population)	-0.202** (0.041)	-0.195** (0.042)	-0.598** (0.218)	-0.436* (0.205)
ln (GDP)	0.332** (0.032)	0.331** (0.032)	0.735** (0.174)	0.679** (0.177)
Border states	-0.037** (0.015)	-0.037** (0.015)	0.042 (0.071)	0.039 (0.070)
Constant	-6.361** (0.585)	-6.369** (0.588)	-14.408** (2.762)	-14.274** (2.761)
Observations	1385	1385	131	131

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	<i>All states (1-2)</i>		<i>PKO &gt; 0 (3-4)</i>	
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>
log-likelihood	-692.143	-694.855	-48.283	-52.887
$\chi^2$	282.971	284.565	57.939	62.194

Notes: Models include all states, 2001–2011. Robust standard errors in parentheses. One-tailed significance tests used: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

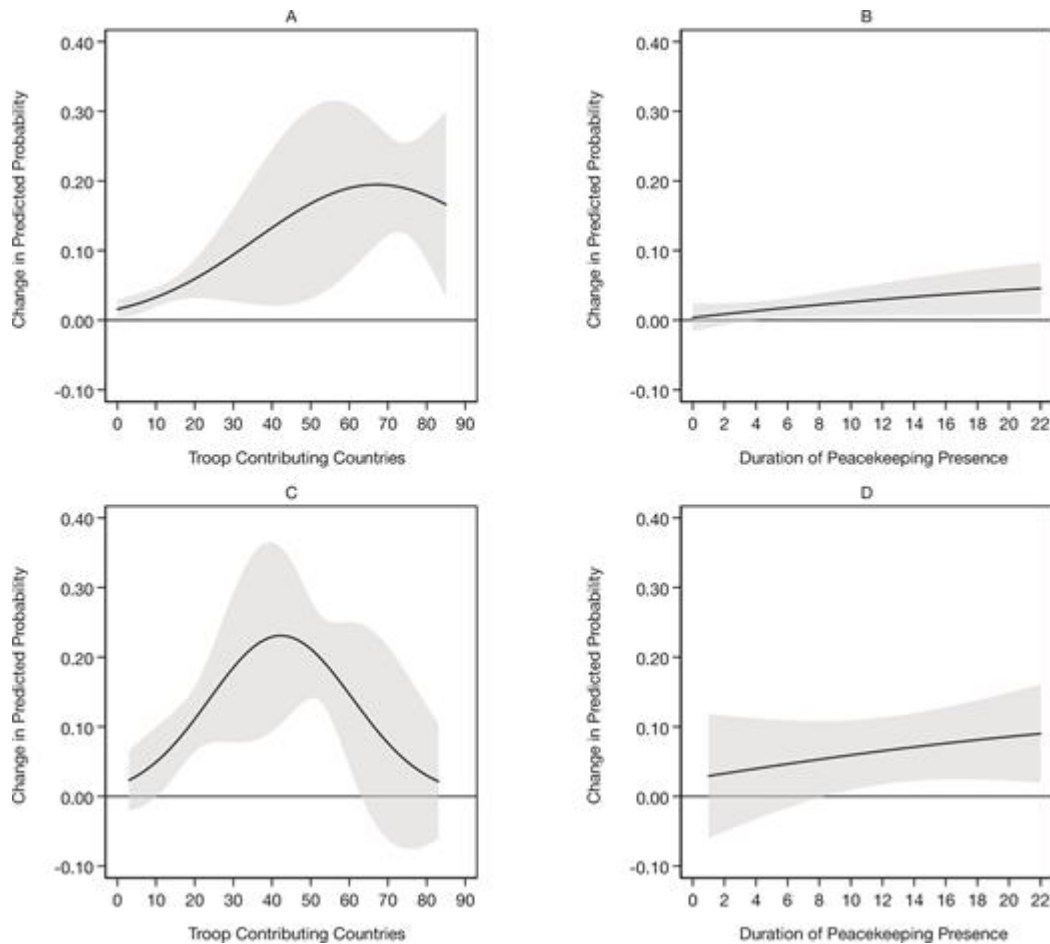
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To evaluate the conditional effects, we take two additional steps. First, we include models estimated on the full sample and models estimated on the more limited sample where we observe positive values for the peacekeeping variables. The full sample contains a disproportionate number of observations that are coded as 0 on the conditional variables (i.e., number of troop-contributing countries and deployment duration.). Second, we plot the marginal effects of an increase in the peacekeeping troops variable in Figure 2 based on the estimates in Table 2 Models 1 to 4. These figures show the effect of an increase from approximately 500 troops to 1,500 troops, representing a change from 500 below the median non-zero deployment (i.e., ~1,000) to 500 above the median non-zero deployment. Substantively, this translates into an increase from approximately one to three battalions, giving us the added advantage of being able to speak in terms of deployable military units (Allen and Flynn 2013; Congressional Budget Office 2016; Bell, Clay, and Martinez Machain 2017). Panels A and B show the marginal effects from the sample of all states across the range of the number of troop-contributing countries and the duration of the peacekeeping operation (Models 1 and 2, respectively). Panels C and D show the same but use the limited samples shown in Models 3 and 4.

## Figure 2.

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Marginal effect of an increase in the PKO troop presence in a state. Panels A and C show the marginal effect across the range of the PKO contributor variable. Panels B and D show the marginal effect across the range of the logged peacekeeping mission duration variable. Ninety percent confidence intervals. Y-axes held constant across panels

Overall, the results provide support for hypotheses 2 and 3. Panel A shows a general positive relationship where the marginal effect of an increase in the peacekeeping troop presence variable increases as troop-contributing countries increase. When we compare the marginal effect of an increase in personnel for peacekeeping operations with the smallest number of troop-contributing countries (three in our estimation sample) to operations with more troop-contributing countries, we see a statistically significant increase in the size of the effect. A test of these differences indicates that the initial increases between low troop-contributing country values and troop-contributing country values ranging from 60 to 70 are statistically significantly different.<sup>29</sup>

[skip to main content](#) The conditioning effect of troop-contributing countries is substantively notable; an increase from 500 to 1,500 troops, or one to three battalions, produces an increase in the probability of the observed state being a destination for forced prostitution of only approximately 2

percentage points when the number of troop-contributing countries is very low. Once we reach 60 troop-contributing countries, the effect of increasing from one to three battalions increases to approximately 20 percentage points. Substantively, this suggests the probability that a state hosting peacekeeping is a destination for sex trafficking depends not only on the size of the deployment, but also on the number of troop-contributing countries that make up the deployment.

Similarly, we see a positive and statistically significant effect emerge in Panel B when we look at how the duration of peacekeeping operations conditions the effect of increasing the number of peacekeepers deployed to a state. For new deployments (duration  $\leq 3$ ), we see no statistically significant effect. However, for longer duration operations, we see a positive effect, suggesting that increasing the number of deployed peacekeepers to a state does increase the predicted probability that a state is a destination for human trafficking. The positive effect emerges for deployments that are approximately four years in length or more. Furthermore, we see a statistically significant increase in the magnitude of this effect when we compare very long operations with relatively new ones. The results indicate that for especially long deployments—those lasting approximately 22 years or more—the effect of increasing the number of peacekeepers deployed to the host state is slightly larger. Substantively, this translates into an increase in the predicted probability from approximately 0.015 to approximately 0.042 for the longest deployments. There are nineteen countries in our estimation sample with peacekeeping operations duration  $\geq$  three years, and four countries with duration  $\geq$  twenty years, and so these results do not appear to be driven purely by a single case.

When we look at Panels C and D we find similar results. Examining the conditioning effect of the number of troop-contributing countries, we see a positive and statistically significant effect. Furthermore, the magnitude of this effect increases consistently as the number of troop-contributing countries increases until it reaches approximately forty-five troop-contributing countries. As in Panel A, there is a statistically significant increase in the magnitude of this effect. Substantively, this indicates that deploying more peacekeepers to a country increases the probability that the host state is a destination for trafficking but also indicates that this effect becomes larger as the number of countries sending troops increases.

Panel D shows the marginal effect of an increase in the deployment size variable across the duration of the operations in a state. Again, we see a null result for the shortest deployments, but a positive effect emerges for longer duration deployments (specifically, those lasting longer than approximately five years). However, we do not see a statistically significant increase in the magnitude of this coefficient across the range of the duration variable as we do in Panel B.

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These results provide support for hypotheses 2 and 3. Substantively, they suggest that peacekeepers lead to an increase in the demand for sex workers and that this demand is met, in part, through sex trafficking. This effect is exacerbated in deployments that involve a larger number of troop-contributing countries where monitoring of troops is more difficult for both the U.N. and the countries involved. However, the size of this effect tapers off as the number of troop-contributing countries increases beyond the 40 to 60 range and becomes statistically insignificant. Conceptually, it is possible that peacekeeping operations with a large number of troop-contributing countries represent highly salient cases and are therefore monitored more closely than the typical peacekeeping operation.<sup>30</sup> However, it is worth noting that there are few observations with more than 55 troop-contributing countries involved, and only one case involving more than 80 troop-contributing countries, so our ability to draw inferences for these high troop-contributing country cases is currently limited. Figure A1 shows the distribution of observations for the troop-contributing country variable where troop-contributing countries  $>0$  in our main estimation samples. Given that most of the variation in our data is confined to troop-contributing country values ranging from 0 to 60, we are more confident in the estimated effects for this range.

The effect of peacekeeping on sex trafficking is also not immediate. The effect only becomes statistically significant once the duration of peacekeeping missions has exceeded approximately 3 to 5 years. When focusing on the full sample, very long deployments correlate with an increase in the marginal effect of the size of the deployment itself. Overall, these results provide support for our theoretical expectation that U.N. peacekeeping missions are especially susceptible to agency loss and monitoring problems. They also support the idea that trafficking networks can take time to form and that the demand created by peacekeepers is not met immediately.

Results for the conflict variables are mixed. Generally, we find no statistically significant results, but we do find some evidence that more regional conflict decreases the probability that a state is a destination for sex trafficking. The results for conflict within the referent state are mixed, yielding both positive and negative results in Table 1 Models 4 and 5.

## Robustness Checks

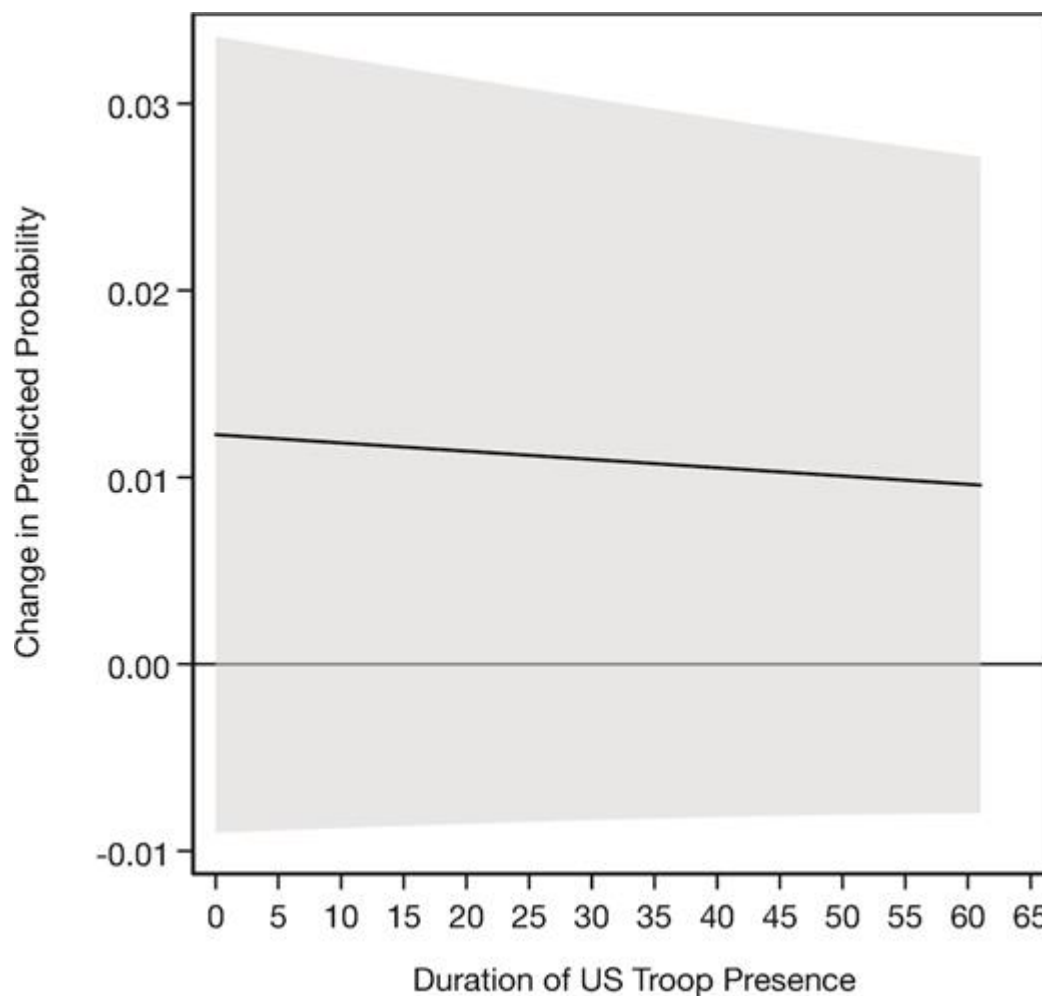
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As a check on our theoretical argument, we consider the possibility that other types of military deployments can create the conditions leading to an increase in the likelihood that a state is a destination for trafficked persons. We compare the effect of U.N. peacekeepers with that of US troop deployments. Hypothesis 1 suggests that as the potential market for forced prostitution increases, we should see an increase in the likelihood that a state is a destination

for trafficked persons. Any large foreign military presence could potentially produce similar results. However, we argue that the U.N. and its peacekeeping operations may be especially prone to these sorts of outcomes given the potential agency loss and monitoring problems that come with using troops from multiple countries. These robustness checks help us evaluate the accuracy of this argument.<sup>31</sup>

We have replicated Models 1 to 3 from Table 1 using the U.S. troops variable and have added three additional models, including an interaction between the US troops variable and a variable measuring the duration of time that US troops have been deployed to the host state. We show the results from these models in the [Supplementary Online Appendix \(Table A4\)](#). Figure 3 shows the marginal effect of an increase in the size of the US deployment to the host state across the range of the duration variable. We estimate effects for a change from 500 to 1,500 troops.

**Figure 3.**



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Marginal effect of an increase in the number of US troops present in a state. Ninety percent confidence intervals

Models 1 to 3 of Table A4 do not produce any statistically significant coefficients for the US troops variable. Furthermore, there is no evidence of a conditioning effect associated with the deployment duration. We find no significant interaction coefficients, and Figure 3 yields a negative effect estimate that is not statistically significantly different from 0 at any point. While US troops are deployed under a wide range of settings that are different from those of U.N. peacekeepers, this analysis suggests that it is not simply the presence of a large military force that leads to increased trafficking.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusions

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Paid sex between peacekeepers and locals in the host country, though prohibited by U.N. regulations, has often been overshadowed by other, more egregious, cases of sexual misconduct. Noncoercive sex work is a consensual interaction occurring between two adults, even if it does break rules of conduct for peacekeepers. Yet, neglecting to thoroughly investigate allegations of paid sex may create an environment in which the demand for sex workers is being met through human trafficking.

We find that the presence of U.N. peacekeeping forces increases the probability that the host state is a destination for sex trafficking. This result remains robust to various model specifications, particularly regarding the conflict environment within the state. We also find a stronger positive effect for peacekeeping missions that, first, involve greater numbers of troop contributing countries and, second, operated for at least a few years. While peacekeeping might help to reduce violence associated with civil conflicts, our findings indicate it may introduce new problems into post-conflict environments.

The U.N. has concluded that the complete ban of sex with members of the local population will fail to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation (OIOS 2015). Similarly, more information on the nature of sex work might prove helpful in distinguishing consensual business transactions from those involving trafficked individuals forced into prostitution. Not all sex, paid or otherwise, between peacekeepers and members of a local population is exploitative (Simic 2009). Further research on the type of settings that lead to the demand for sex work being met with trafficked individuals could help to make the difference between exploitative and nonexploitative sexual relations clearer. It might therefore help to destigmatize professional sex work while creating awareness about the forced prostitution of trafficked individuals. We need more research to guide efforts to curb the effect of peacekeeping forces on trafficking. The U.N.'s OIOS argues that some troop-contributing states have a higher number of allegations against them (OIOS 2015).<sup>33</sup> If there is variation in the level of sexual misconduct of states, further research—such as the previously cited article by Karim and



Beardsley (2016)—could identify factors that make troops from some countries more or less likely to engage in sexual misconduct. This would help to increase accountability and to inform which countries the U.N. chooses to contribute to peacekeeping operations.

Our results suggest that longer duration peacekeeping operations are more likely to lead to increases in sex trafficking. This implies that more difficult, longer term missions may come with a wider range of negative externalities. Regardless of whether long-duration missions result from purposeful planning or mission creep, they require additional resources and closer monitoring by U.N. officials in order to reduce their negative effects.

Our work also raises the possibility that the influx of other actors into a state may have similar consequences for sexual exploitation and abuse. Although we focus on U.N. peacekeeping missions, an influx of civilian contractors and other aid workers could produce similar outcomes. The influx of outside actors into a state might, in turn, generate increased human trafficking.

Finally, the networks that engage in trafficking may undermine the success of peacekeeping operations. These networks may be used to smuggle arms into post-conflict states. Similarly, the profits from sex trafficking and forced prostitution may help to pay for soldiers and weapons, contributing to higher levels of violence. This can place additional demands on peacekeeping forces, making their jobs more dangerous and possibly requiring more personnel. In turn, more personnel may only exacerbate the underlying problems associated with the demand for sex trafficking, thereby creating a vicious cycle. If policymakers fail to address such underlying problems or to choose peacekeeping forces more carefully, the deployment of additional troops may only undermine the very peace and stability that these missions are intended to secure.

## Supplementary Information

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Online Appendix: Available on the *International Studies Quarterly* data archive. Replication

Materials: Available at the authors' websites

<https://sites.google.com/site/carlamartinezmachain/>, <http://www.samrbell.com>,  
<http://www.m-flynn.com/> and the *International Studies Quarterly* data archive

## Notes

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*Authors' note:* All authors contributed equally to the manuscript and are thus listed alphabetically. We would like to thank Colin Barry, Marijke Breuning, Jonathon Chu, Lisa

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## Footnotes

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- 1 In 2002, there were reports of children in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone being exploited by U.N. peacekeepers, and members of other aid agencies, who exchanged sexual favors for aid ([UNHCR 2002](#)). In 2004 there was controversy over not only alleged sexual abuse by peacekeepers from Morocco, Pakistan, and Nepal in Congo but also over reports that the peacekeepers threatened U.N. investigators who were in charge of investigating the allegations of sexual misconduct ([Lynch 2004](#)). More recently, in 2015 news outlets reported that French peacekeepers were extracting sexual favors from minors in the Central African Republic, often through the promise of food ([Sengupta 2015a](#)). A 2017 report by the Associated Press revealed over 2,000 sexual exploitation and abuse accusations in the last 12 years ([Dodds 2017](#)).
- 2 This issue is not unique to peacekeeping systematic analysis of US military personnel stationed abroad calls into question long-standing claims regarding the negative effects that US military personnel have on their host state ([Allen and Flynn 2013](#)).
- 3 Much of this research does not address sex trafficking in particular but sexual abuse and exploitation in general. We summarize it as a way to understand previous contributions on the negative externalities of peacekeeping operations.
- 4 [Whitworth \(2004\)](#) argues that including more female soldiers in peacekeeping missions does not necessarily solve the problem. She notes that militaries often rely on emphasizing male superiority through “militarized masculinity” as a way to recruit and motivate soldiers. There is a resistance to including women and potentially undermining the masculine character of the

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military. Thus, those women that do serve in the military are often expected to repress characteristics that are viewed as “feminine,” like empathy. These are the same characteristics that, in theory, would lead them to express caring feelings for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and thus potentially stop the abuse ([Whitworth 2004](#)).

- 5 Most reports of sexual misconduct by U.N. peacekeepers involve the solicitation of sex workers. Previous work has found evidence for not only an increase in sex work in peacekeeping sites but also of a sex-trafficking presence in these locations ([Jennings 2014](#)). While paying for sex does not get as much attention from U.N. investigators, we argue that it can, in some cases, create a demand for sex workers that is likely to be filled through human trafficking for the purpose of forced prostitution.
- 6 Between 2008 and 2013, civilian peacekeeping personnel accounted for a disproportionately high amount of SEA accusations against U.N. peacekeeping personnel, accounting for 33 percent of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) allegations, despite making up only 17 percent of U.N. peacekeeping personnel ([OIOS 2015](#)). To consider the possibility that our results could be driven by civilian personnel, we replicate our analysis excluding police personnel in A5 of the Online Appendix and find similar results. When we replicate the analysis using only police personnel in A6, we find a positive relationship between the number of police personnel and sex trafficking, though the relationship is not statistically significant in all model specifications.
- 7 It is perhaps not surprising that SEA violations are seldom reported to U.N. authorities, as allegations can be difficult to prove ([Jennings 2014](#)).
- 8 [Beber et al. \(2016, 2\)](#) Transactional sex, defined as the “exchange of sex for money, favors, or gifts” between peacekeepers and the local population, is an issue that touches on all three of these concerns: sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), public health, and the host country’s social and economic development. ([Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services 2008, 172](#)). We use that same definition of transactional sex and note that transactional sex takes place in an informal or less formal setting, distinguishing it from sex work, which is a formal and immediate exchange of sexual relations for money ([Base 2015](#)). Our focus is on the demand for *sex work* and its effect on sex trafficking.
- 9 In this paper, we focus on only forced sex work. While previous work finds evidence for PKOs increasing sex work, we do not include it in our analysis for two reasons. The first is that cross-national data on sex work can be unreliable and difficult to come by. The second is that forced sex work is a better indicator of human trafficking, our variable of interest in this project.

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- 10 Previous studies have discussed the linkages between exchange rates, soldiers’ income, and the impact of a foreign military presence on the host state. See [Baker \(2004\)](#) and [Nelson \(1987\)](#) for examples.

- 11 See the discussion by [Simic \(2009\)](#) on nonexploitative transactional sex between locals and peacekeepers.
- 12 Previous work on the effects of US troop deployments on crime in the host country has found that rape does not increase with the presence of US military personnel ([Allen and Flynn 2013](#)). However, the effect of foreign troops on vulnerable members of society can take more subtle forms than rape.
- 13 It is possible that demand for sex work could be met through a local supply/labor pool. From an analytic perspective the presence of a large pool of domestic labor should bias our analysis against our findings, as our not including a variable to directly control for this competing labor pool represents omitted variable bias. If there is a large competing labor pool that is sufficiently large to discourage trafficking, then we should simply not find any relationship between peacekeepers and trafficking for the purposes of forced prostitution. However, given that we control for the state's population size—the closest variable that we could imagine for capturing the pool of potential labor—we do not believe this issue represents a challenge to our inferences.
- 14 Following the SVAC Codebook, we define sexual violence as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization/abortion, sexual mutilation, and sexual torture ([Cohen and Nordås 2014](#)).
- 15 In the case of the abuse reported in 2015 to have occurred in the Central African Republic, there were also accusations against troops serving under both France and the African Union, not just the U.N. ([Sengupta 2015a](#)).
- 16 For example, in the case of Moroccan peacekeepers being investigated for sexual abuse in Congo in 2004, a U.N. report charged that Moroccan officials refused to provide investigators with the names of Moroccan soldiers who were present at the location of an alleged rape ([Lynch 2004](#)).
- 17 For a peacekeeper to be tried in the country where an offense occurred, the U.N. would have to waive their legal immunity, which would be an unlikely occurrence ([Sengupta 2015b](#)).
- 18 Under U.N. regulations, troop-contributing countries have ten days to report to the U.N. whether they will conduct their own investigations regarding sexual exploitation and abuse accusations against their military personnel. Only a few of them actually comply with these deadlines (only 39 percent of those requested to do so between 2011 and 2014) ([OIOS 2015](#)).

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- 19 We note that we are not implying that this case is a typical example of a peacekeeping operation. We use it here purely for illustrative purposes and not as a source of theory. However, case study evidence has shown similar patterns in Haiti, Bosnia, and Sierra Leone.

- 20 An opposite argument is presented by [Bove and Ruggeri \(2015\)](#), who argue that more diverse peacekeeping operations are less likely to have misconduct because the different countries' troops are more likely to report on each other as opposed to being complicit. We note that their dependent variable is civilian killings. Thus, while they do find support for more diverse missions reducing the amount of civilian killings, we do not think that this would necessarily carry over to behavior like paying for sex with locals.
- 21 Whether a state is characterized as a source or destination depends on whether there are over 100 reported incidents. Note that states may be both sources and destinations of trafficking.
- 22 This is an extremely small mission with a maximum of 165 personnel present in any given year and with 0 peacekeeping troops present in 9 of the 11 years included in the sample.
- 23 The vast majority of UN peacekeeping personnel are military and the [Kathman \(2013\)](#) data only include military, military observers, and police in their measures of U.N. personnel. The correlation coefficient between the number of all peacekeeping personnel and the number of only peacekeeping troops is 0.99 for the years included in our sample.
- 24 This variable is operationalized as  $\ln(x + 1)$ .
- 25 Though our sample only runs from 2001 to 2011, we use all available observations from the peacekeeping dataset to generate the duration variable. Accordingly, observations in our estimation sample may have duration values that exceed the number of years available in our sample
- 26 The correlation between the low- and high-intensity conflict variables and the peacekeeping troops variable in our primary analysis is low ( $r=0.07$  and  $0.12$ , respectively). We include another set of models in the appendix where we limit our sample to a slightly broader set of possible candidates for peacekeeping operations. Because conflict is necessarily a prerequisite for peacekeeping, we limit our sample to cases that have experienced civil conflict at some point in the post-war period for which the PRIO data are available. In these models, we first code countries for whether or not they have experienced a low- or high-intensity civil conflict according to the PRIO data. We then run our primary models again using these limited samples wherein the countries have some history of civil conflict.
- 27 We replicate these models in Table A2, omitting the peacekeeping variable from the three models. In these robustness checks, none of the conflict variables correlate significantly with the outcome variable, suggesting peacekeepers are not simply proxying conflict.
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- 28 The original data are coded using monthly units of observation. We take the maximum monthly number of troop-contributing countries for a given year to generate this variable.

- 29 We test the differences between the predicted marginal effects using the margins and `margins` commands in Stata.
- 30 The case with the highest number of troop-contributing countries, Sudan between 2007 and 2011, was a joint U.N. and African Union peacekeeping mission that was sent in as a reaction to the highly publicized crisis in Darfur, which, as [Murithi \(2008\)](#) notes, was an example of a “celebrification” of an international conflict, with many American celebrities drawing increased Western media attention to the conflict. In addition, we note that peacekeepers went into Darfur without there being an effective ceasefire in place, thus potentially making it more difficult for them to create a demand for sex work, given the lack of stability and safety around them ([Murithi 2008](#)).
- 31 Data on US military deployments from 1950 to 2005 were obtained from [Kane \(2006\)](#). Data from 2006 forward were collected by the authors from the Department of Defense ([Department Manpower Data Center 2015](#)). We use the full temporal range available to calculate the duration of deployments to the host state.
- 32 [Beber et al. \(2016\)](#) argue that a reason why U.N. peacekeepers are likely to engage in sexual misconduct is that they most often come from states with poor gender equality norms (the monetary incentives associated with a peacekeeping contract draw lower income states to volunteer their troops for peacekeeping missions).
- 33 Between 2010 and 2013, South Africa, Uruguay, and Nigeria, in that order, had the highest number of substantiated sexual exploitation and abuse allegations against them ([OIOS 2015](#)).

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