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Gender in International Bureaucracies: Evidence from UN Field Missions

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Contemporary international organizations, including the UN, employ tens of thousands of staff outside of their headquarters in field offices around the world. Despite attempts to promote gender equity, significant differences persist in male and female officials' experiences of working in UN field offices and missions. Drawing on a series of internal surveys of UN field staff, we demonstrate that, relative to men, women report having worse relationships with peers, supervisors, and management as well as having less confidence in performance appraisal mechanisms. Through a qualitative analysis of survey comments, archival materials, and semi-structured interviews, we highlight distinct gendered dynamics of working in field offices that affect international bureaucrats' workplace experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary international organizations (IOs) employ tens of thousands of staff outside their headquarters across field offices worldwide. Several IOs, including the UN, have been concerned with the low proportion of women among their staff, especially in field locations, and have developed strategies to promote gender parity and equity. Nevertheless, significant differences persist in how women and men experience working for IOs. In this research note, we draw on diverse data sources to investigate gender-based differences in IO employees' experiences of working in field offices.

While existing literature has highlighted the severity and persistence of gender gaps in international bureaucracies (Bode 2020; Haack 2014), it has three important limitations. First, studies have focused on gender and IO leadership, without investigating the more numerous rank-and-file IO officials. Second, scholarship has tended to focus on numerical (dis)parity between employees of different genders rather than differences in their workplace experience. Third, there has been a lack of attention to the gendered dimensions of work in field locations.

This research note addresses these three gaps by focusing on the experiences of male and female employees of the UN Secretariat who work in the field, adopting a mixed-methods research design that combines the analysis of four original internal UN staff surveys available exclusively to our research team

with interview and archival data. Our findings show that women's experiences of working for the UN Secretariat in the field are worse than men's across a range of indicators. Compared to their male counterparts, women report lower confidence in performance appraisals and worse relationships with management, supervisors, and peers. Women are also more concerned than men about accountability in their organization. Data from survey comments, archives and interviews suggests that this dissatisfaction is driven by the distinctive gendered experiences of working in IO field offices. These findings yield concrete policy implications. First, important differences in male and female staff's perceptions of supervisor feedback and consequences for underperformance in UN field missions indicate that IOs should improve accountability frameworks and supervisor training to reduce gendered biases in performance assessments. Second, since organizational cultures of IOs in field locations increase the risk of gender-based harassment, favor "macho" leadership styles, and are hostile to employees with care responsibilities, IOs should take additional steps to accommodate officials with family commitments, promote work-life balance, and prevent and punish abuse.

The remainder of this research note proceeds as follows. First, we survey the existing literature on gender in different types of international institutions, identifying the gaps that this note fills. Second, we justify the selection of the UN Secretariat as our case and outline our research strategy. Third, we analyze the UN staff surveys and report significant discrepancies in how female staff experience their work environment compared to male counterparts, across different settings and according to several relevant dimensions. Fourth, we focus on key dynamics in IO field offices that affect how women and men experience relationships with management and supervisors, interact with peers, and perceive feedback and performance appraisals. The conclusion summarizes our argument and outlines directions for further research.

IOs AND GENDER

Women's full and equal participation in IOs is an important equity issue.¹ It also improves IO effectiveness and legitimacy (Weaver et al. 2022; Badache 2020). Women's representation has been linked to positive, rights-enhancing outcomes in international politics, including in peacekeeping (Karim

¹ We use 'women' and 'female staff' to refer to UN employees who self-identify as such. Gender goes beyond the male-female binary, but most UN data sources refer to 'male' and 'female' staff.

and Beardsley 2017), international justice (Voeten 2021), European governance (Hartlapp and Blome 2022), and international development (Heinzel et al. 2024). However, the benefits of women's participation in IOs depend on establishing a work environment that enables women to fully contribute in their positions. Existing literature on gender in national and international institutions suggests widespread challenges in this regard, but the specific nature of obstacles in IO field offices has not yet been explored. We aim to fill this gap by examining how officials' gender affects their experiences of working in UN field missions.

Feminist institutionalists have long argued that institutions embody and entrench gender hierarchies (Krook and Mackay 2011; Mackay, Kenny, and Chappell 2010). At the international level, feminist institutionalist scholarship has tended to focus on institutions as sets of norms, rules, and principles (Holmes 2020; MacRae and Weiner 2021; Guerrina and Wright 2018), but two research strands investigating international bureaucracies have emerged. First, scholars have highlighted the underrepresentation of women among IO officials (Davies 2021; Weaver et al. 2022), the imbalances in ranks and portfolios between female and male staff (Haack and Murray 2022; Hartlapp and Tömmel 2021), and differences in male and female officials' perceptions of the organizational support they receive (Giauque and Varone 2018). Second, research has demonstrated that gender dynamics negatively impact the experiences of female leaders within IOs (Bode 2020; Haack 2014; Jongen 2023; Standfield 2022).

We extend this research by focusing on the gendered workplace experiences of staff below the leadership level and, critically, in field rather than headquarters locations. We argue that field locations give rise to specific gender dynamics that increase the likelihood of differential workplace experiences for female and male IO staff. This is despite multiple IO reform initiatives and several equality-promoting dynamics in IO field offices, such as the outsourcing of domestic labor to the local market, limited in-person care responsibilities due to distance from families, and elite status that is typical (but not universal) for officials in the field.

Literature on two other types of international work "in the field" supports this expectation. In diplomacy, legacies of male dominance in the profession mean that contemporary communication, networking, and socialization among diplomats still happens predominantly within male networks (Aggestam and Towns 2019; Aran and Brummer 2024; Standfield 2020). Careers in IOs differ

from diplomatic services in important respects (including a less structured career path), but IO field offices are also historically male dominated locations where women remain significantly less well represented than at headquarters (Appendix Table E1).

Within the international aid sector, a macho or "cowboy" organizational culture leads to a deprioritization of gender equality (Gupta, Geeta Rao and Nowrojee 2023; Vijfeijken 2019; James 2022). Given restrictions on bringing family members to the field, many female aid workers believe they must choose between their career and having a family (Roth 2015; Gordon 2022; Strohmeier and Panter-Brick 2022). Isolation, shared accommodations, and socialization around alcohol increase workers' vulnerability to sexual violence (de Koeijer, Valerie and Smith 2023; Read 2018). Staff in IO field offices tend to be better remunerated, less precariously employed, and enjoying greater prestige than aid workers in non-governmental organizations. However, they also live in small, self-contained communities and often undertake emergency work in challenging settings.

The confluence of historically and currently male-dominated environments, tight-knit communities, and urgent work in challenging settings produces a high risk of gendered workplace dynamics in field locations that negatively affect the everyday work experiences of IO staff.

CASE SELECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The UN is a prominent IO with wide-ranging international responsibilities, including special duties to prevent and address armed conflicts. In December 2022, 42 percent of all UN Secretariat staff – 15,417 employees – worked in 52 field locations, including 38 special political missions and 12 peacekeeping operations (United Nations Secretary-General 2023).² We focus on UN missions for three reasons.

First, gender dynamics in UN field offices are substantively important. These entities employ thousands of officials, constituting one of the largest field-based international bureaucracies (Appendix Table E1). Gender inequities are both inherently important and pose a risk to the effectiveness of missions created to help build peace, protect civilians, and advance human rights. They also undermine a UN mission's ability to promote gender equity norms by providing "a model for the communities it serves" (UN 2019b, 3).

² The UN also operates two logistics centers and a field-based resident coordinator system.

Second, gender disparities in UN field offices have proved especially persistent. While the Secretariat has made progress towards gender parity in its headquarters offices, parity gains have proven more elusive in the field. The UN's 2017 *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity* recognized that UN missions are "where the greatest challenges to gender balance are experienced", slowing down progress towards parity throughout the organization (UN 2017a, 21). Secretary-General Guterres has significantly increased the percentage of women among appointed senior mission leaders (UN 2019a, 15), but as of 2021 only 24.3 percent of all staff in UN missions were women, compared to 53.8 percent of UN headquarters staff (UN Secretary-General 2021; Appendix Table A3). UN field offices thus illustrate the persistence of gendered dynamics even when an organization's senior leadership enacts gender parity reforms.

Third, findings from UN missions are likely generalizable to other international bureaucracies with large field-based components. While each organization may have specific institutional legacies or work arrangements, there is no theoretical reason to believe that gender dynamics within UN missions are fundamentally different from those arising in field offices of other large international bureaucracies. We demonstrate that it is the way in which IOs approach work in the field that produces the most consequential gendered effects. We discuss generalizability further in the conclusion.

We bring a variety of data sources together to assess our argument: 1) four internal UN staff surveys, including our principal *Trust* survey, which provide statistical evidence across a representative sample of international staff; 2) survey comments, including from the *Trust* survey, which we manually coded for evidence of gendered workplace experiences, supplemented by a structural topic model (STM) analysis; 3) 46 interviews with UN staff that revealed gendered dimensions of internal mission processes (see Appendix Section C); and 4) UN archival materials and official documents. We outline the specific quantitative and qualitative strategies and sources in the corresponding sections. Our mixed-methods research design serves two key purposes: 1) staff surveys provide quantitative evidence of systematic disparities specifically in the work experiences of female and male UN field staff; and 2) survey comments, interviews, archival data, and UN documents demonstrate how field dynamics contribute to these gendered experiences.

UN FIELD STAFF *TRUST* SURVEY: SYSTEMATIC GENDER-BASED DISPARITIES

To investigate whether systematic disparities exist between female and male international staff in UNfield missions, we analyze a series of surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021 by the UN Field Staff Union (UNFSU), which represents all international staff in UN missions unless individuals opt out.³ The number of union members in 2020 fluctuated between 6,744 and 6,771. All members were invited to complete the four surveys we use in this research note: one round of a *Trust* survey (in July/August 2020) and three rounds of a COVID-19 impacts survey, in April 2020, September/October 2020 and May/June 2021. The survey questions are detailed in Appendix Table B5 and B6. Twenty-seven percent of staff (on average) completed the surveys, with samples broadly representative of the UN international fieldstaff population (Appendix Table A2). The *Trust* survey, which is the focus of our analysis, asked about staff's general experience of their working environment and perceived relationships with colleagues and management. Details and analysis of the COVID-19 surveys are contained in Appendix Section B. Importantly, the COVID-19 surveys do not present evidence of gendered differences in responses, indicating that the observed differences in the *Trust* survey are not attributable to pandemic circumstances.

We combined the 28 *Trust* survey questions into three averaged indices covering perceptions of: peer relationships; relationship with management, supervisors, and supervision quality; and feedback and performance appraisals (Appendix Tables B3 and B5). Responses range from -3 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree), with 0 corresponding to neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Each index serves as a dependent variable for one of our models, and the main independent variable is respondents' self-reported gender. We estimate a linear model with standard errors clustered at the mission level and fixed effects for each mission. We include control variables at the individual level for respondents' age group (four categories from 25-65),⁴ contract type (permanent, fixed term, or temporary), and staff category (Professional+ or Field Service), as well as a control for whether the mission is a peacekeeping operation. The family duty station variable (a proxy for a location's risk) was dropped due to collinearity in the main specification, but the results are substantively unchanged (Appendix Table B10).

³ This does not include national staff in UN field missions (Coleman 2024).

⁴ Age group 18-24 was dropped as it only had one respondent.

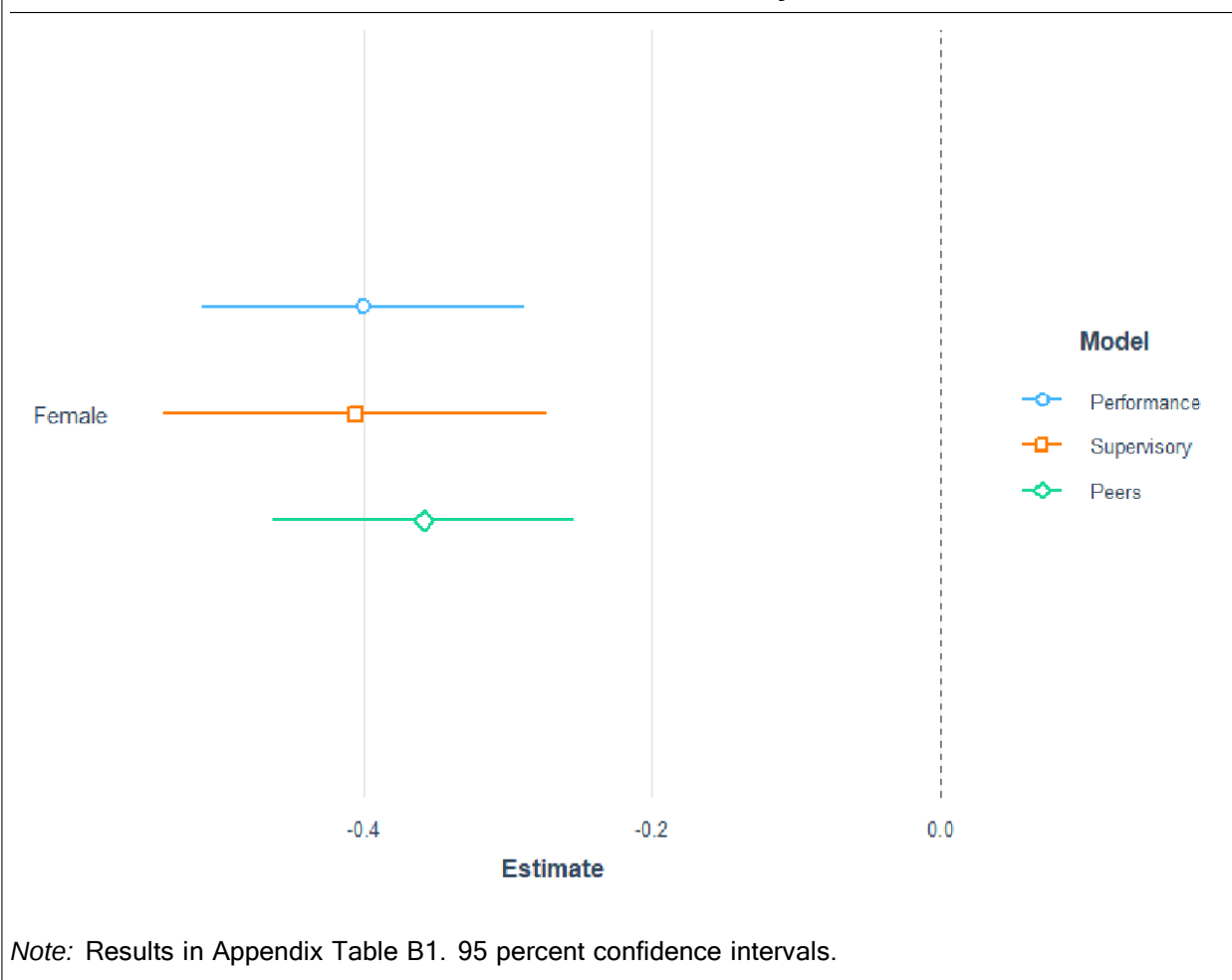
As Figure 1 illustrates, female UN field staff report worse experiences than their male colleagues across all the indices tested. On average, women are more likely to believe they do not receive useful feedback; think that performance is not adequately appraised; and report worse relationships with management, their immediate supervisor, and peers while also believing their supervisor to be less qualified and effective (results in Appendix Table B1). The marginal effect of being a woman results in an average decrease of 0.4 points compared to men for the modal respondent.⁵ These effects are reflected in the descriptive data. The means of the peers, management, and performance indices are 1.51, 0.57, and 1.07, respectively, and women respondents report 0.47-0.56 point lower perceptions across the three indices, on average. . Staff across age groups and Professional+ staff are more dissatisfied than staff in the oldest age group and Field Service staff (see Appendix Section B). Disaggregating the supervisory index into three separate indices for perceptions of supervisory relationships, management relationships, and supervisor quality does not substantively change the results, nor does splitting the performance index into two indices on feedback and performance (Appendix Table B8). The findings are remarkably consistent and indicative of gender-based differences in officials' experiences of working in UN field missions.

The point estimates and the significance of the coefficients for female respondents are consistent and robust to a variety of specifications.⁶ The inclusion of mission fixed effects alleviates concerns that the results are driven by time-invariant mission-level characteristics, such as exposure to violence, duty station comfort, or personalities of mission leaders. This does not mean that these factors play no role, but their influence is unlikely to drive the results of the statistical analysis. Interestingly, women are primarily dissatisfied with their routine, as opposed to crisis, interactions with their coworkers: as noted above, COVID-19 impact surveys for the same population produce no gendered effects (Appendix Section B).

⁵ Modal respondent is aged 45-54, holds a Field Service post, has a fixed-term contract in a peacekeeping operation, and works for the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

⁶ Cronbach's Alpha tests are in Appendix Table B5. Survey questions and indices for the dependent variables were treated as ordinal measures and ordered logistic regression results were consistent with the OLS results. Interacting gender and age (Appendix Table B11) does not change the substantive results, but it highlights how younger staff, particularly women aged 25-44, are among the most dissatisfied across all three indices.

FIGURE 1. Coefficient Plot for Gender and Trust Survey



These findings confirm that IOs are no exception to the feminist institutionalist caution that the internal dynamics of organizations are often deeply gendered. In particular, “criticism of women’s ability to do the job” – which Acker (2012, 216) highlights as common in organizations in general – does not appear to be mitigated by the unique characteristics of the workforce of UN field missions. Elite status and self-selection into challenging missions do not seem to shield women from gendered supervision dynamics, though perhaps they contribute to the modestly better reported peer relations.

GENDERED DYNAMICS IN UN MISSIONS

To probe the dynamics underlying the gender disparities evident in the *Trust* survey, we use the responses to open-ended questions in the *Trust* survey and complement these with four additional sources of qualitative

data. First, we identify relevant comments from two further internal UN surveys, a 2017 *Satisfaction* survey (UN 2017b) and a 2020 *Mobility* survey.⁷ Second, we draw on 46 interviews conducted for projects on internal processes in UN peacekeeping missions that revealed gendered dynamics (Appendix Section C). Third, we use data from the UN Oral History archive, and fourth, we employ official UN documents and reports (Appendix Section D). These different data types deepen our qualitative analysis and help us triangulate insights beyond the single *Trust* survey, revealing multifaceted gendered dynamics and patterns of concerns expressed over time and across a variety of sources.

We discuss the dynamics undergirding each of the three *Trust* survey indices in turn.

Relationship with Peers

International staff in field locations are typically distant from their families and private social networks in their home countries, while also being separated from local communities by language, social barriers, and safety protocols (Coleman 2020; Autesserre 2010). Consequently, UN field missions are exceptionally tight-knit social and professional communities: “the mission is your life” (Di Razza 2020, 11). In this context, the gender-based differences in respondents’ evaluations of their peer relationships found in the *Trust* survey illustrate how the UN’s organizational culture in field locations worsens women’s work experiences.

Work intensity and isolation contribute to the frequent construction of field office communities as spaces of male solidarity. As the UN Ombudsman noted,

Some offices are reported to still have vestiges of an “old boys club” culture, which in itself is a hindrance to the full participation of women. This is especially true in some field missions, where the mix of military and civilian cultures may inject additional layers of a male-dominated culture and women staff members find themselves side-lined or assessed according to a different scale (UN 2016, 22).

A female civilian peacekeeping official echoed the critique of the UN as “a gigantic boys’ club”

⁷ We correct typos in comments where relevant. The *Mobility* survey was shared with us by the UNFSU. Its 3,357 respondents were not asked about their gender, making the data unusable for our statistical analysis.

and suggested that men “protect each other. . . [through] male networks.”⁸ In the *Trust* survey, a female respondent criticized male solidarity in recruitment processes: “[T]hey always cook something and have their own old boys’ clubs and their favorite people!” Male networks also create a perception among female officials that they are excluded from information flows: an internal UN audit found that female international staff in peacekeeping missions felt “significantly less positive about information-sharing” than their male colleagues (UN Office of Internal Oversight Services 2021, 12). In the *Satisfaction* survey, one respondent in the UN political mission in Iraq (UNAMI) noted that “it seems that women are being recruited for the number only, but are not being treated equally. . . You can be the only woman in the department and be continuously excluded from information sharing, meetings, decision making process, etc.” Similarly, a respondent in the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) reported “a typical boys club mentality. . . [where] qualified and successful women are not empowered or treated equally as male colleagues.”

Visibility as a woman in male-dominated spaces can translate into social scrutiny and behavior policing by peers, including by female colleagues. Margaret Anstee, the first woman to head a UN peacekeeping operation, had to contend with persistent gossip about her sex life (Standfield 2022). The former head of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), Heidi Tagliavini (2013, para. 42), noted that in UN missions, “the dress check is usually merciless, especially from other women.” Similar dynamics affect staff beyond the leadership level, as a female national staff member reported: “I can be harassed because there are rumors that I am the girlfriend of the chief [senior manager]. Or I can be harassed because I don’t go out with men. Either way, I am harassed. . . If you are friendly or not friendly, either way you are harassed.”⁹

Gender-based harassment, including sexual harassment, remains a concern for women in UN peace operations.¹⁰ A former national staff member of the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) noted, “Sexual harassment is frequent, that was obvious. Supervisors would harass staff members.”¹¹ In the *Satisfaction* survey, a UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) respondent stated, “Serious measures

⁸ Author’s interview, 22 March 2021.

⁹ Author’s interview, 30 January 2019.

¹⁰ Author’s interview, 31 January 2019.

¹¹ Author’s interview, 18 November 2018.

have to be in place to curb this abuse of authority from the men folk,” while a UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) respondent commented, “My mission needs to tackle issues of harassment of women in particular.” A *Trust* survey respondent noted that “the lack of action against those who are found to be guilty of misconduct has the effect of eroding the trust of staff members particularly amongst women who are vulnerable to sexual harassment and SGBV [sexual and gender-based violence].”¹²

Blurred boundaries between work and leisure increase the risk of inappropriate behavior. The UN Dispute Tribunal (2020, 10) investigated allegations of misconduct at an after-work social gathering as workplace sexual harassment, ruling the case admissible because in the field location in question, staff “were required to live and work within a small compound... without a clear separation between private life and their work environment.” Moreover, given an “institutional culture. . . [that] has made ‘fitness for hardship’ a core requirement for the job,” complaining about life in the field, including any episodes of harassment, is often stigmatized as “weakness” (Di Razza 2020, 19-20). The tight-knit professional community across missions may also cause staff to feel that their future job prospects depend on preserving a reputation for “collegiality” and not being a “troublemaker.”

UN efforts to promote gender parity sometimes increase tensions between female and male staff in field missions. Some UN officials believe that gender parity in UN missions sometimes “stands in the way of meritocracy.”¹³ An internal UN study found that a significant minority of male staff believe that the UN’s drive to hire more women for civilian peacekeeping posts “compromised merit-based recruitment and delayed the process” (UN Office of Internal Oversight Services 2021, 20). Two male respondents in the *Trust* survey focused on recruitment: for one, “being a female staff brings all requirement criteria instead of. . . making sure recruitment process brings the most qualified first”; the other opined, “It seems men are discriminated when you are competing for a post against a woman.” In the *Satisfaction* survey, similar points were made by respondents from UNMIL (“We actively discriminate against men by favoring women in recruitment”) and

¹² Three additional female respondents and one respondent who preferred not to identify their gender commented on unsatisfactory responses to misconduct allegations without specifying the nature of the misconduct. No male respondent raised the issue.

¹³ Author’s interview, 31 January 2020.

UNMISS (“The UN needs to recruit people who are competent and stop this absurdity about national balance and gender”). In the *Mobility* survey, a male respondent commented that “I do not believe that the effect of the gender parity priority on male colleagues who also want to foster their careers with the UN has been properly looked at.” Moreover, in 2018, the UNFSU President argued that in the era of peacekeeping downsizing, gender considerations would lead to “discrimination” against men as individuals were allegedly “sent home for gender reasons” (UN Field Staff Union 2018, 62).

For female staff, these reactions create additional challenges in peer relations. Male colleagues may doubt their competence: “this women gender parity thing is killing us... As a woman, I am so against that... I want to be evaluated and picked because of my skills... and not just because of my gender.”¹⁴ Some female staff also argue that gender parity rules have led some managers to omit women candidates prior to the final selection round to avoid having to hire them.¹⁵ As a *Satisfaction* survey respondent put it, the “policy on promoting women to leadership positions has led to the systematic exclusion of women on the basis of gender. . . [from] shortlists and rosters for senior positions in order to appoint men.” In short, women’s negative perceptions of peer relationships occur in the context of patterns of male solidarity, increased risk of harassment, and backlash against gender parity initiatives.

Relationship with Management and Supervisors

Most UN missions are mandated to deliver life-saving support to populations threatened by conflict. Staff often understand themselves as engaged in urgent pursuit of a noble cause. A female UN official in the UN Transition Group (UNTAG) in Namibia recalled being “willing to work long hours, to put up with so many things, because I really believed in it” (Dieye 1998, 2). The “things” that officials may put up with include gender-based abuse. Fabrizio Hochschild, a former deputy head of the UN Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), used “abusive language [and] demand[ed] telephone calls at late-night hours and weekends” and said “his office didn’t want women employees to get pregnant” (Heikkilä 2021, para. 6). He was eventually dismissed over staff members’

¹⁴ Author’s interview, 31 January 2019.

¹⁵ Author’s conversation, January 2019.

complaints, but some alleged that the UN delayed investigating his conduct for years because Hochschild’s work in difficult field locations had made him an “archetypal ‘hero’ in the UN” (Heikkilä 2021, para. 10). Hochschild’s own excuse was that his “eagerness to deliver led some to see [him] as an overbearing and over-demanding supervisor” (Heikkilä 2021, para. 10). A *Trust* survey respondent warned that in general, “there are members of the leadership group who communicate aggressively, to the point of being disrespectful and in some case bullying those who are junior to them...The mistake should not be made to overlook such behaviors and actions just because the work under the persons’ leadership has been accomplished.” While bullying affect employees of all genders, these dynamics are especially detrimental to women: as another *Trust* survey respondent noted, “Harassment and abuse of authority are slowly killing mission performance...Women suffer more than men.”

The pattern of comments in the *Trust* survey supports this contention. As Table 1 shows, accusations of nepotism – the most frequent critique of supervisors – are voiced by respondents of all genders at a rate broadly proportional to their representation among those 455 respondents who made substantive comments. In contrast, 54 percent of comments about supervisor harassment, bullying, or abuse were made by female respondents and an additional 15 percent came from respondents preferring not to indicate their gender. Men, who furnished 59 percent of all comments, accounted for only 31 percent of comments on supervisor abuse.

TABLE 1. Supervisor Critiques in Trust Survey Comments, by Gender					
Gender (percent)	Respondents	Substantive Comments	Nepotism	Abuse	
Female	26.5	30.3	29.3	53.9	
Prefer not to say/other	8.7	10.8	17.2	15.4	
Male	64.8	58.9	53.5	30.8	
Total Number (count)	1,697	455	58	39	
Note: Nepotism relates to manager or supervisor nepotism or favoritism. Abuse relates to manager orsupervisor abuse, bullying, or harassment. Appendix Section B includes coding information.					

There is also a gendered construction of what a "dedicated" UN professional is. Missions’ “virtuous” goals are regularly used to validate all-encompassing work schedules that demand staff deprioritize their private lives (UN 2021, 18). This self-abnegation in service of work is often cast in gendered terms: “[m]acho managers who are hard on their employees are often even harder on themselves, and this self-sacrifice is another important element of masculine experience” (Donaldson 1991; cited in Linstead et

al. 2005, 553). Women frequently face skepticism about two aspects of their dedication.

First, they can be perceived as less able to cope with “tough” conditions in the field, creating particular pressure on women to prove their resilience to their supervisors. Anstee (2011, 12) recalled that “women had to. . . be ready to accept difficult and dangerous posts to demonstrate that their gender was not a drawback.” These attitudes persisted through the 2010s, when the all-female leadership team of UNAMI was praised for “defying assumptions that women are unfit for — or unwilling to assume — service in the toughest countries” (Papagioti and von Chamier 2020, para. 1), suggesting that such assumptions remained widespread. In 2018, the UNFSU urged the UN to “recognize certain environments. . . which are by nature not attractive for one gender or the other and exempt them from the gender parity imposition,” essentially calling for deprioritizing gender parity efforts in “dangerous” locations.

Second, women may be seen as less willing to make the personal sacrifices that are considered necessary – at least for women – to work in the field successfully. In particular, the perception remains that women “have to choose between family and peacekeeping” (UN 2021, 18), especially since the UN does not support its staff in balancing work and family commitments: “As you progress in your career and decide to have a family...DPKO [Department of Peacekeeping Operations] will no longer be interested since most posts are non-family duty stations.”¹⁶ Consequently, women’s careers are more likely to be considered temporary, ending with them leaving the UN or, for the fortunate, securing a headquarters position: “I had a friend. . . she was in Liberia, Haiti, DRC, and Afghanistan, and she finally got Geneva. She was 41 or 42, and it was now or never if she wants a family and children.”¹⁷ Some supervisors respond by investing less in women staff: “Priority is given to men when it comes for career development and international trainings...It is assumed that women ‘would not want to attend anyways,’ which is not true” (*Satisfaction* survey). One team leader complained that the person they recruited “showed up 17 weeks pregnant – she left at 7 months.”¹⁸ A female national staff member in another mission commented: “Pregnancy is a frustration. . . It’s aggravating to have a staff who is pregnant [because] towards the end you can’t fly in planes – they let me know that this was frustrating to them... Bosses get irritated that you can’t use a woman.”¹⁹ A *Satisfaction* survey respondent summed up the

¹⁶ Author’s communication with a former UN official, 4 June 2021.

¹⁷ Author’s interview, 28 January 2019.

¹⁸ Author’s interview, 11 June 2019.

¹⁹ Author’s interview, 23 July 2019.

dynamic: “Women with children get very little respect in DPKO. They are seen as less loyal than men with children.” Since working in UN missions and having a family are constructed as incompatible for women – but less so for men – female staff are more likely to resign from field jobs (see Giauque et al. 2019 on the effects of poor work-life balance and negative relationships at work on IO staff turnover). This, in turn, leaves a gender gap in the UN’s leadership pipeline. Alan Doss, who served in senior positions in several UN peace operations, recalled:

Younger female staffers were disproportionately likely to leave missions for other UN assignments based in North America or Europe—they provided better prospects for balancing family and professional life. These factors worked to limit the number of women in the middle ranks of the staff, which in turn reduced the pool of female applicants who could be selected to move up the ranks (Doss 2020, 265).

Yet this path is not possible for all female officials, and, consequently, women’s share of resignations at middle management levels is disproportionately high.²⁰ The dearth of family duty stations and potentially unsupportive colleagues or supervisors decrease the likelihood of mid-career women returning to the field. A gender advisor whose husband accompanied her to the field to care for their child was publicly told by a senior male colleague after a presentation on gender equity, “the real question is, what gender is your husband?”²¹ Female supervisors remain rare in UN missions, which may affect the experiences of women staff in junior positions.

Feedback and Performance Appraisal

Facing, on average, worse relations with supervisors and peers, women may be more concerned that their competencies are overlooked and their contributions undervalued. In the *Satisfaction* survey, the UNSOS respondent cited above on “boys club mentality” continued: “As a woman you have to fight to be able to do your job. . . [W]omen have been demoralized and pushed away after years of male mentality abuse.” Even where women make it to supervisory posts, they may not receive positive feedback on their managerial practice: an UNMISS official reported that at “supervisor level. . . suggestions coming from a woman are

²⁰ Figure A1 in the Appendix.

²¹ Author’s communication with a UN official, 3 August 2022.

still a big issue.”

Women staff may find their performance constrained by gender-based perceptions of appropriate work assignments. For example, when a female UNTAG staff member proposed working in a township outside the capital, “[e]verybody was saying ‘No, you cannot give such a position to a woman; it is a dangerous place’” (Dieye 1998, 3). In Cambodia, when a “human-rights officer [who] was very strong-willed, a young woman” affronted Cambodian government officials, an equally young male colleague “was asked initially to go help her out because the work was so tough” and eventually replaced her because “[t]here was also a question of her safety” (Banbury 1998, 7-11). Gendered protectionism can deprive women of opportunities to demonstrate their competence.²² The female UNTAG official ultimately secured her posting and turned her gender into an advantage when monitoring the local police, who “didn’t take too seriously a woman” and made her “job easier because [they], themselves, would tell me what they were doing. . . just because they were being condescending” (Dieye 1998, 8). However, not all female officials succeed at overcoming skepticism about their ability to excel on challenging assignments, and those who lack opportunities to demonstrate competence may subsequently perceive feedback on their performance as unfair or unhelpful.

Conversely, women field staff are sometimes channeled into work in which femininity is considered an advantage. A blatant example occurred in Namibia, where UN “radio programs were produced by a... support staff woman... [who] had a rather deep, sexy voice” (Eckhard 1999, 12-13). More subtly, women staff may be encouraged to work on “gender” files. One official commented that: “we needed a woman because it’s a high level of sexual violence.”²³ Where missions treat “the operational value of women[a]s dependent on their sex-difference” (Holmes 2019, 66), and women see themselves channeled to less prestigious “feminine” tasks, they are more likely to find feedback and performance appraisals out of sync with their contribution.

Women in leadership positions face particular barriers to being perceived as competent in male-dominated field environments. In the *Satisfaction* survey, a UNAMID respondent noted, “In spite of all the sensitization on gender, females – especially females in supervisory and leadership posts – continue to be

²² For similar dynamics among military peacekeepers, see Holmes (2019); Karim and Beardsley (2017); Newby and Sebag (2021).

²³ Author’s interview, 14 June 2019.

bullied and not respected by the menfolk. . . I am tired of always fighting for my rights as a female staff member in a supervisory position.” An additional barrier to female leaders’ recognition is the so-called “double bind” (Teele et al. 2018): women may lose social capital if they are seen as “neglecting” traditional family roles in favor of careers. A female deputy head of the UN mission in the DRC, for example, “did not benefit from the credibility, power, and influence usually attached to such a rank...because she was a woman, and because she did not have a traditional family with children, something that may have redeemed her in her male colleagues’ eyes” (Autesserre 2010, 218–19). Furthermore, the so-called “glass cliff” phenomenon, whereby members of underrepresented groups are appointed to top positions during crises and then blamed for failure, affects both racial minorities in UN field missions (Oksamytna and von Billerbeck 2024) and female leaders. Hilde Johnson (2014, 112), a female SRSG appointed to lead UNMISS during a crisis, “knew that she would be the one accused before the Security Council if we failed.”

Overall, “women in peace missions face more skepticism and suspicion than men in the same jobs” (Tagliavini 2013, §12). Karin Landgren (2020, 39), who led UN missions in Liberia, Burundi, and Nepal, confirmed:

Men also react to and register women’s leadership less, or less well, than they do the leadership of other men. I recently read a friend’s memoir in which he speaks glowingly of dozens of male colleagues, who are variously brilliant, energetic or collegial. Women are all but absent from this book, and when they appear, it is largely without the fulsome adjectives.

Women’s dissatisfaction with feedback and appraisals may be compounded by the perception that men manage to evade accountability in male-dominated organizations. As Table 2 shows, women and men respondents’ share of *Trust* survey comments about excellence not being sufficiently rewarded line up with their share of all substantive comments, at about 30 and 58 percent of 455 substantive comments, respectively. In contrast, women are over-represented among comments that call for greater supervisor accountability – notably by providing team members more credible opportunities to review supervisors – and those who argue that underperformance is insufficiently penalized. Women account for 39 percent of comments on the need for increased accountability and 48 percent of the comments on underperformance not being addressed. Women are more likely to note that others’ poor performance is not detected or penalized. This is compatible with exclusion from male networks: a UNAMID respondent explicitly argued that “[t]he

boys club mentality is still there, and the management-leadership level seems to have no qualms in covering up for their male colleague’s wrongdoing.” This finding is supported by the disaggregated survey questions related to accountability: the negative effects of being female are larger for questions on accountability and addressing underperformance than they are for the question on rewarding high performance.²⁴ Analyzing the survey comments using a STM demonstrates that women discuss transparency at higher rates than men, with implications for their assessment of feedback and their relationship with management.²⁵ Women also use different words than men when discussing the same topic emphasizing accountability, mandates, rules, and addressing problems, whereas men focused on *organization*, stakeholders and security.²⁶

TABLE 2. Criticism in Trust Survey Comments, by Gender				
Gender (percent)	Comments	Accountability	Underperformance	Rewards
Female	30.3	38.8	47.8	32.4
Prefer not to say/other	10.8	22.5	13.0	8.8
Male	58.9	38.8	39.1	58.8
Total Number (count)	455	49	23	34
<i>Note:</i> Only substantive comments included. Accountability reflects comments that demand more supervisor accountability. Underperformance refers to comments on underperformance not being addressed, and rewards refers to comments on excellence not being rewarded. Appendix Section B includes coding information.				

In short, women’s perceptions that they are not given opportunities to demonstrate their full capabilities, that supervisors (and often male colleagues) are unaccountable, and that female leadership is resisted combine to produce women’s belief that feedback and performance appraisals are not fair or constructive.

²⁴ The effect for holding people accountable for women is -0.52 , and it is -0.32 for whether underperformance is addressed, whereas it is -0.28 for whether high performance is rewarded. See Appendix Table B8 for full results.

²⁵ The STM was fit using the *stm* package in R. The effect of being female is positive and statistically significantly different from male respondents for Topic 5, which centers on transparency and favoritism. This correlation between being female and mentioning words associated with transparency is captured in Appendix Table B11 and Figure B1.

²⁶ In Topic 9 and Topic 10 in the STM fit based on survey comment content, women and men discuss the same topics using different words (Figure B2 in the Appendix).

CONCLUSIONS

UN missions constitute one of the largest field-based international bureaucracies. While scholars have noted gender gaps in IOs in general and the UN specifically, we offer a systematic, mixed-methods investigation of how female and male officials in UN field missions experience their work environment. Women's experiences are consistently worse than men's. In an internal staff survey, women reported worse perceptions of the usefulness of feedback and performance appraisals as well as more negative relationships with management, supervisors, and peers compared to men.

Analysis of the survey comments, interviews, and archives demonstrates how gendered dynamics within field missions contribute to divergent workplace experiences for male and female staff. Male networks, the risk of gender-based and sexual harassment, lack of accommodation for those with family responsibilities, and stereotypes about women's performance drive some of the observed differences in male and female experiences. With these findings, we have contributed to three literatures: on gender and international institutions, on organizational culture in international bureaucracies more broadly, and on gender dynamics in field locations.

We propose three main directions for further research. First, we recommend widening the scope of enquiry to compare gender dynamics in field-based components of other IOs as well as NGOs. For example, the World Food Program was reported to have a pattern of sexual harassment in field locations that some women felt pressure to tolerate in order to not appear "difficult or delicate," a problem at least one leader seemed to deprioritize because of urgent demands of their emergency work (Jeong 2021). If UN missions' unique features, such as the influence of military cultures, affect their gender dynamics, comparative studies can help disentangle the effects of such idiosyncratic features from the more general aspects of working in the field.

Second, the effects of gendered differences among UN field workers on organizational outcomes deserve further investigation. Internally, the (lack of) perceived organizational support and dissatisfaction with workplace social relationships – factors that Giauque and Varone (2018) show to impact employees' commitment to IOs – may influence female officials' motivation. Externally, the persistence of gender inequalities within field missions may undermine the UN's legitimacy, including as a norm advocate. Additional research could illuminate how perceptions that the UN does not itself follow the norms it promotes (see von Billerbeck 2017), including the gender equality norm, impact the credibility of its

advocacy on gender and other issues.

Third, an intersectional investigation could probe the interactions between gender and race, age, or sexual orientation in international bureaucracies.²⁷ An investigation into the experiences of staff facing discrimination based on gender, including beyond the gender binary, and other identity characteristics would represent a long-overdue contribution to research on international bureaucracies.

²⁷ We briefly discuss the relationship between gender and age in Section B of the Appendix.

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SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

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A. UNITED NATIONS ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

TABLE A1. Data Sources: Annual UN Secretary-General's Reports on Composition of the Secretariat: Staff Demographics

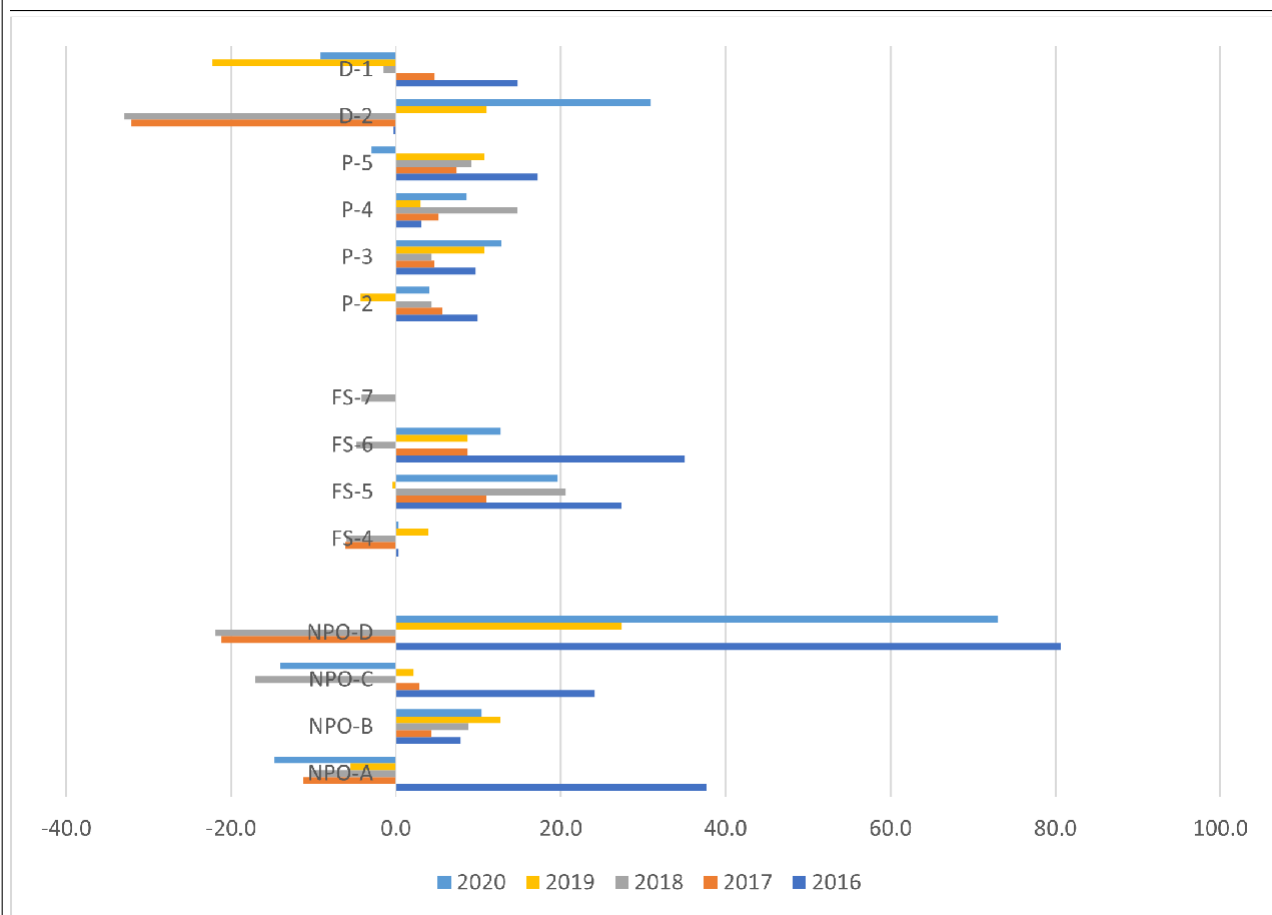
Report Number	Date of Report	Date of the Reported Data	Table
A/66/347	9/8/11	6/30/11	1.B
A/67/329	8/28/12	6/30/12	1.B
A/68/356	8/30/13	6/30/13	1.B
A/69/292*	8/29/14	6/30/14	1.B
A/70/605	12/11/15	6/30/15	1.B
A/71/360	8/31/16	6/30/16	1.B
A/72/123	7/11/17	12/31/16	1.B
A/73/79	4/12/18	12/31/17	1.B
A/74/82	4/22/19	12/31/18	1.B
A/75/591	11/9/20	12/31/19	1.B
A/76/570	11/29/21	12/31/20	1.B

TABLE A2. Comparisons of Staff Composition as of December 2019 with UNFSU Surveys

	Staff Composition Report	Trust	COVID I-III
Age	48.6	45-54	45-54
% Female	29%	26.5%	33%
% Permanent	40.8%	41.9%	42.8%
% Fixed-term	50.6%	53%	51.6%
% Temporary	6%	5.1%	5.7%
% P+	45.3%	53.2%	46.9%
% Field Service	52.2%	46.8%	53.1%
	UNMISS	UNMISS	MINUSMA
	MONUSCO	MINUSMA	UNMISS
Top 5 in Total Size	MINUSMA	MONUSCO	MONUSCO
	UNAMID	MINUSCA	UNAMID
	MINUSCA	UNAMID	UNSOS
	UNMISS	UNMISS	MINUSMA
	MINUSMA	MINUSMA	UNMISS
Top 5 in Female Staff	MONUSCO	MONUSCO	MONUSCO
	MINUSCA	MINUSCA	UNIFIL
	UNAMID	UNSOS	UNAMID

Note: The Staff Composition Report provides information on the average age among international staff (P+ and Field Service staff, 47.5 and 49.7 respectively). The surveys only provide age groups, hence we compare the average age from the report with the modal age group from the surveys.

FIGURE A1. Women's Share of Resignations Compared to Their Share of Positions, by Rank, UN Secretariat, 2016-2020



Note:

TABLE A3. UN Field Missions, by Staff Count and Percent Women in Each Category

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Mission Type</i>	<i>Total Staff</i>	<i>P+ Staff</i>	<i>% P+</i>	<i>FS Staff</i>	<i>% FS</i>	<i>GS+ Staff</i>	<i>% GS+</i>
MONUSCO	PKO	2,304	287	31.0	346	28.9	1,671	16.8
UNMISS	PKO	2,253	381	29.1	495	26.5	1,377	14.2
MINUSMA	PKO	1,584	329	32.8	438	26.0	817	18.6
UNAMID	PKO	1,408	190	26.8	285	25.3	933	13.9
MINUSCA	PKO	1,237	311	31.2	349	28.1	577	19.1
UNAMA	Spec. Pol.	1,055	126	44.4	126	26.2	803	9.5
UNIFIL	PKO	811	92	43.5	150	33.3	569	27.1
UNAMI	Spec. Pol.	725	113	34.5	154	20.1	458	18.1
UNSOS	Spec. Pol.	485	134	28.4	212	29.2	139	36.0
UNLB	Logistics	420	94	30.9	33	21.2	293	38.2
RSCE	Logistics	345	40	20.0	70	44.3	235	62.1
UNMIK	PKO	309	71	47.9	25	32.0	213	39.0
UNISFA	PKO	259	59	20.3	94	26.6	106	8.5
UNVMC	Spec. Pol.	251	87	49.4	34	29.4	130	44.6
UNSOM	Spec. Pol.	249	95	33.7	52	48.1	102	11.8
MINURSO	PKO	234	29	34.5	45	17.8	160	18.8
UNTSO	PKO	214	14	35.7	58	39.7	142	18.3
UNSMIL	Spec. Pol.	212	54	29.6	94	18.1	64	14.1
UNFICYP	PKO	160	25	44.0	16	43.8	119	40.3
UNITAD	Spec. Pol.	139	52	40.4	41	26.8	46	32.6
UNDOF	PKO	123	19	10.5	27	29.6	77	15.6
BINUH	Spec. Pol.	93	32	37.5	15	26.7	46	52.2
OSESG-Yemen	Spec. Pol.	80	26	30.8	23	13.0	31	22.6
UNSCOL	Spec. Pol.	76	11	45.5	6	33.3	59	16.9
UNMHA	Spec. Pol.	75	15	46.7	20	45.0	40	5.0
OSESG-Syria	Spec. Pol.	70	27	37.0	9	11.1	34	32.4
UNIOGBIS	Spec. Pol.	67	15	40.0	17	29.4	35	22.9
UNMOGIP	PKO	67	3	0.0	18	27.8	46	15.2
UNSCO	Spec. Pol.	62	16	31.3	12	8.3	34	26.5
UNOWAS	Spec. Pol.	56	25	44.0	7	57.1	24	41.7
UNOCA	Spec. Pol.	37	19	36.8	6	66.7	12	33.3
UNRCCA	Spec. Pol.	30	6	16.7	2	50.0	22	31.8
OSESG	Spec. Pol.	24	11	36.4	6	33.3	7	0.0
OSESG-GL	Spec. Pol.	22	15	40.0	1	100.0	6	66.7
OSASG-Cyprus	Spec. Pol.	18	9	77.8	4	75.0	5	20.0
UNITAMS	Spec. Pol.	18	11	36.4	4	50.0	3	66.7
ATSMT	Spec. Pol.	16	10	10.0	0		6	50.0
OSASG-POG	Spec. Pol.	13	11	81.8	0		2	100.0
CNMC	Spec. Pol.	10	7	14.3	1	100.0	2	100.0
POE-Yemen	Spec. Pol.	8	1	100.0	5	20.0	2	0.0
SCR 2231	Spec. Pol.	8	6	50.0	0		2	0.0
UNRGID	Spec. Pol.	7	6	33.3	0		1	0.0
POESOM	Spec. Pol.	6	1	0.0	0		5	60.0
OSESG-MYR	Spec. Pol.	5	5	60.0	0		0	
POE-DPRK	Spec. Pol.	5	3	100.0	0		2	100.0
MINUJUSTH	Spec. Pol.	3	1	0.0	2	0.0	0	
OMBUD	Spec. Pol.	2	1	100.0	0		1	100.0
OSESG-SC1559	Spec. Pol.	2	1	100.0	0		1	100.0
POE-CAR	Spec. Pol.	2	1	0.0	0		1	100.0
GOE-DRC	Spec. Pol.	1	1	100.0	0		0	
POE-Libya	Spec. Pol.	1	1	100.0	0		0	
POE-Mali	Spec. Pol.	1	1	100.0	0		0	
POE-S. Sudan	Spec. Pol.	1	1	0.0	0		0	
POE-Sudan	Spec. Pol.	1	1	0.0	0		0	

Note: Data as of December 2020. PKOs are peacekeeping operations, and spec. pol. refers to special political missions. Source: UN Security Council, Composition of the Secretariat: Staff Demographics, 29 November 2021, A/76/570, Table 1.B, section "Peacekeeping operations and special political missions and other political presences"

B. SURVEY ADMINISTRATION AND DATA

The surveys analyzed in this article were conducted by the United Nations Field Staff Union (UNFSU). The President of the Union provided the anonymized data to the research team for analysis. Use of the data was reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia.

The UNFSU invited all of its members to complete the surveys. The participant pool was therefore as diverse as the Union itself and comprises all international staff serving in UN field locations except for those individuals who explicitly opted out of Union membership. Diversity by gender, age, and staff category are captured in the tables above.

None of the recipients were paid for completing the survey. Responses were voluntary. As international bureaucrats, respondents were adult elite professionals. They do not recognizably fall into groups typically considered vulnerable or marginalized. However, the article does investigate and provide evidence for gendered inequalities among respondents. Highlighting these inequalities may benefit those who are disadvantaged by them by inviting a policy response to remedy inequities.

The original survey data was provided to the research team for analysis but not for further distribution, and remains proprietary to the UNFSU. Consequently, the data cannot be made publicly available. The set of surveys provided by the UNFSU are not conducted regularly, though the union does survey its staff occasionally for other reasons.

There are several methodological limitations associated with using UNFSU data. First, the survey uses a particular understanding of gender by inviting respondents to choose “male”, “female”, “prefer not to say” or “other” without offering options to declare other gender identities such as trans-gender, non-binary, intersex, or two-spirit. Some respondents declined to self-identify, but it was impossible to verify whether this category mostly included male- or female-identifying respondents who preferred not to reveal their gender or those who did not have an option that would describe their gender identity. In the *Trust Survey* data, 2 respondents selected “other” and 146 selected “prefer not to say”. Second, the survey asked a limited number of questions that captured several aspects of organizational culture but not all of them. An independently designed instrument would have enabled the research team to ask a broader range of questions, including those focusing specifically on the

experiences or perceptions of gender-based discrimination or harassment. Third, since UNFSU does not repeat the survey at regular intervals, longitudinal data are not being collected, precluding conclusions about consequential trends and shifts. Longitudinal data would allow investigating improvements or setbacks in such perceptions, especially in reaction to reform initiatives. Despite these limitations, the data offer important insights into gender dynamics in UN field missions.

Dependent Variables: Model:	Performance (1)	Supervisory (2)	Peers (3)
<i>Variables</i>			
Female	-0.3999*** (0.0555)	-0.4049*** (0.0657)	-0.3580*** (0.0515)
Age 25-34	-1.084*** (0.3321)	-0.6376* (0.3735)	-0.7903*** (0.2751)
Age 35-44	-0.6647*** (0.1154)	-0.4600*** (0.1139)	-0.3654*** (0.0785)
Age 45-54	-0.2812*** (0.0640)	-0.2094*** (0.0586)	-0.1311*** (0.0444)
Prof. Staff (P1-D2)	-0.5656*** (0.0630)	-0.3083*** (0.0557)	-0.2134*** (0.0364)
Fixed Term Contract	0.3211*** (0.0697)	0.2402*** (0.0619)	0.1601*** (0.0387)
Temporary Contract	0.5123** (0.2299)	0.4316** (0.2048)	0.0789 (0.1592)
PKO	0.0707 (0.0919)	0.1009 (0.0764)	0.0021 (0.0482)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>			
Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>			
Observations	1,488	1,484	1,488
R ²	0.13544	0.11893	0.12565
Within R ²	0.09212	0.06507	0.07995

Clustered (Mission) standard-errors in parentheses

*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>			
Observations	1,488	1,484	1,488
R ²	0.13544	0.11893	0.12565
Within R ²	0.09212	0.06507	0.07995
<i>Clustered (Mission) standard-errors in parentheses</i>			
<i>Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1</i>			

Table B9: Gendered Trust Survey Regression Results with Family Duty Station

Dependent Variables: Model:	Performance (1)	Supervisory (2)	Peers (3)
<i>Variables</i>			
Female	-0.4075*** (0.0575)	-0.4042*** (0.0675)	-0.3812*** (0.0496)
Age 25-34	-1.170*** (0.3426)	-0.7041* (0.3796)	-0.7706*** (0.2787)
Age 35-44	-0.6577*** (0.1153)	-0.4473*** (0.1161)	-0.3333*** (0.0795)
Age 45-54	-0.2711*** (0.0570)	-0.1888*** (0.0569)	-0.1182*** (0.0395)
Prof. Staff (P1-D2)	-0.6073*** (0.0645)	-0.3498*** (0.0590)	-0.2063*** (0.0392)
Fixed Term Contract	0.3647*** (0.0655)	0.2783*** (0.0637)	0.1875*** (0.0362)
Temporary Contract	0.5766** (0.2293)	0.4852** (0.2041)	0.1019 (0.1615)
PKO	0.0450 (0.0848)	0.0779 (0.0713)	-0.0004 (0.0496)
Family Duty Station	0.1003 (0.0866)	0.0744 (0.0791)	0.0752 (0.0670)
Constant	1.069*** (0.0961)	1.400*** (0.0898)	1.786*** (0.0706)
<i>Fit statistics</i>			
Observations	1,488	1,484	1,488
R ²	0.10075	0.06907	0.08137
Adjusted R ²	0.09466	0.06275	0.07515
<i>Clustered (Mission) standard-errors in parentheses</i>			
<i>Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1</i>			

Discussion of Trust Survey Results

The results of an OLS analysis that includes the family duty station variable are shown in Table B9. Comparing the main results (Table B1) to the results that include the family duty station variable (Table B9), we can see that the point estimates for being female do not substantively change across all three models in both tables. In each model across both specifications, being female is correlated with a reduction in the respondent's satisfaction with their performance appraisals, their supervisors, and their peers by about 0.4 points. The directions and substantive sizes of the estimates for the control variables also remain very similar across both tables. The family duty station variable was dropped from our initial estimation due to collinearity. In Table B10, family duty station is retained by removing the mission fixed effects.

The main focus of our quantitative survey analysis is the role of gender on multiple survey outcomes. However, some of the control variables used to accurately capture the effect of identifying as female are also correlated with some of the survey outcomes. Specifically, compared to older staff (over age 55), who serve as the referent category in the model, staff across age groups (age 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54) are also dissatisfied, on average, though the effect size for age decreases for older staff, relative to younger staff. The age relationship is consistent across models. Staff in the Professional+ category (P1 to D2), who are often in management positions, are consistently dissatisfied as well, on average, with their Field Service colleagues (FS3 to FS7) being the referent category in the model. In contrast, staff on fixed term and temporary contracts are not dissatisfied with their work environment; those coefficients are positive. However, the relationship between being on a temporary contract and the peer index is not significant.

Permanent and continuing staff is the referent category for the staff contract variable in our models.

Intersectionality is an important element to consider when studying identity-based workplace dissatisfaction. We do not have data on respondents' racial identity or whether they identify as part of an ethnic minority group, which, when combined with someone's gender, is one crucial way of understanding intersectionality in institutions. However, we do have data on survey respondents' ages. We interacted gender and age for our *Trust Survey* data in our main set of models to better understand how both are associated with staff satisfaction (see Appendix Table B10).

As Table B10 shows, the main results are substantively unchanged when examining the interaction of gender and age group, but there are some interesting heterogeneous relationships. Female respondents aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 are some of the most dissatisfied across the three indices measuring staff workplace satisfaction. The effect of being a female age 25 to 34 or 35 to 44 is typically larger than for older females, age 55 to 65, who are the contemporaries of the referent group in these models (males aged 55 to 65). Interestingly, the interaction models highlight how younger males, age 25 to 34, are particularly dissatisfied with how their performance is assessed as well as their relationships with their supervisors and managers. The coefficients for older males are also negative, but the effect sizes noticeably decrease. Younger males, age 25 to 34, may also be dissatisfied with their peers, but this relationship does not reach the conventional level of statistical significance (0.05).

It is also important to reflect on whether the COVID-19 pandemic biased our survey results. Fortunately, the nature of our data allows us to speak directly to this concern. Our primary data comes from the *Trust* survey, which was fielded in July and August 2020. This is the data in which we see consistent gendered differences in responses. This survey was distributed during a time when COVID-19 may have affected staff well-being at work. However, we also have three surveys specifically about the impact of COVID-19 on staff well-being, which were fielded in April 2020, September/October 2020 and May/June 2021. Strikingly, none of these surveys reveals gendered differences in responses: men and women do not appear to systematically differ in their assessment of how COVID-19 impacted them. Our analysis of the COVID-19 survey results are in Appendix Table B4. We therefore see no basis for expecting COVID-19 to have produced the gendered differences we observe in *Trust* survey responses.

TABLE B10. Gendered Trust Survey Results with Interaction of Gender and Age

Dependent Variables: Model:	Performance (1)	Supervisory (2)	Peers (3)
<i>Variables</i>			
Male × Age 25-34	-1.129*** (0.3311)	-0.9778** (0.4355)	-0.5988* (0.3522)
Male × Age 35-44	-0.5548*** (0.1232)	-0.3322** (0.1245)	-0.4345*** (0.1037)
Male × Age 45-54	-0.2348*** (0.0792)	-0.1920*** (0.0648)	-0.1033** (0.0426)
Female × Age 25-34	-1.414*** (0.4509)	-0.8608* (0.4709)	-1.230** (0.4662)
Female × Age 35-44	-1.120*** (0.1534)	-0.9696*** (0.1442)	-0.6291*** (0.1100)
Female × Age 45-54	-0.6713*** (0.1086)	-0.5741*** (0.0998)	-0.5468*** (0.0783)
Female × Age 55-65	-0.2162 (0.1392)	-0.2875** (0.1419)	-0.3312*** (0.1109)
Prof. Staff (P1-D2)	-0.5620*** (0.0644)	-0.3050*** (0.0580)	-0.2132*** (0.0356)
Fixed Term Contract	0.3188*** (0.0709)	0.2364*** (0.0628)	0.1636*** (0.0383)
Temporary Contract	0.5121** (0.2347)	0.4094* (0.2165)	0.0970 (0.1702)
PKO	0.0697 (0.0914)	0.0993 (0.0758)	0.0034 (0.0486)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>			
Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>			
Observations	1,488	1,484	1,488
R ²	0.13691	0.12126	0.12774
Within R ²	0.09367	0.06755	0.08215

Clustered (Mission) standard-errors in parentheses

*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

TABLE B2. Gendered COVID Survey Regression Results

Dep. Variables: Model:	Easy Work (1)	Con. Support (2)	Exp. Support (3)	Cur. Mood (4)
<i>Variables</i>				
Female	0.2047*** (0.0756)	-0.1140*** (0.0344)	0.3707 (0.2271)	-0.1066 (0.1102)
Age	0.0601*** (0.0214)	0.0738*** (0.0273)	0.0660 (0.0859)	-0.1995** (0.0972)
Work from Home	0.0273 (0.0615)	0.2714*** (0.0489)	0.4658*** (0.1685)	0.0928 (0.1302)
Permanent Empl.	0.0333 (0.0526)	0.0552 (0.0388)		
Field Staff	0.0314 (0.0677)	0.2176*** (0.0356)	0.1461 (0.1605)	0.1011 (0.1444)
Family Duty	0.2251 (0.2904)	-0.3165* (0.1749)	-0.2963 (0.5996)	0.7381** (0.3264)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>				
Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>				
Observations	2,795	2,795	1,197	1,326
R ²	0.06246	0.09213	0.07271	0.07412
Within R ²	0.00927	0.03698	0.01246	0.00761
<i>Clustered (mission) standard-errors in parentheses</i>				
<i>Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1</i>				

TABLE B3. Trust Survey: List of Survey Questions Used to Code the Dependent Variables

Question	Index
My coworkers and I have a good working relationship	Peers
Employees treat each other with respect	Peers
I feel connected to my peers	Peers
My values are similar to the values of my peers	Peers
My supervisor and I have a good working relationship	Sup. Relationship
I can tell my immediate supervisor when things are going wrong	Sup. Relationship
My immediate supervisor listens to me	Sup. Relationship
I am free to disagree with my immediate supervisor	Sup. Relationship
I feel connected to my immediate supervisor	Sup. Relationship
My immediate supervisor is concerned about my personal well being	Sup. Relationship
My values are similar to the values of my immediate supervisor	Sup. Relationship
My immediate supervisor follows through with what he/she says	Sup. Quality
My immediate supervisor behaves in a consistent manner from day to day	Sup. Quality
My immediate supervisor keeps confidences (i.e. things of a personal and confidential nature that have been shared)	Sup. Quality
My immediate supervisor keeps his/her commitments to team members	Sup. Quality
My immediate supervisor is sincere in his/her efforts to communicate with team members	Sup. Quality
My immediate supervisor speaks positively about subordinates in front of others	Sup. Quality
Communication between senior leaders and employees is good in my mission/organization	Management
Senior management and employees trust each other	Management
Senior management/leadership is sincere in their efforts to communicate with staff	Management
Senior management/leadership listens to employees' concerns	Management
Senior management/leadership keeps their commitments to staff	Management
Senior management/leadership is concerned about employees' well being	Management
In my mission/organization high performance is acknowledged and appropriately rewarded	Performance
In my mission/organization underperformance is adequately and appropriately addressed	Performance
In my mission/organization, people are held accountable for any wrongdoing	Performance
I receive useful and constructive feedback regarding how well I am doing in my job	Feedback
I receive relevant and useful feedback regarding how I am being evaluated	Feedback

TABLE B4. COVID Surveys: List of Survey Questions

Question	Answer Range
How easy or difficult is it for you to work effectively these days?	–2 to 2
Outside of work, how confident are you that you have the right support network to help you through this period?	0 to 4
On a sliding scale, how would you rate your experience related to the services offered by the staff counsellors offices?	1 to 10
On a sliding scale could you please indicate your overall current mood?	1 to 10
<i>Note:</i> Answers were on likert or sliding integer scales with minimum values being the most negative and maximum values being the most positive.	

TABLE B5. Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent Variable Indices and Variables from the Trust and the COVID Surveys

Index or Variable	Minimum	Median	Mean	Maximum	Index N	Cronbach's Alpha
Performance/Feedback	-3	0.800	0.5691	3	1698	0.901
Supervisory	-3	1.4211	1.0724	3	1694	0.971
Peers	-3	1.750	1.509	3	1698	0.829
Management	-3	1.00	0.674	3	1698	0.959
Feedback	-3	2.00	1.191	3	1698	0.920
Performance	-3	0.333	0.154	3	1698	0.886
Sup. Relationship	-3	1.714	1.272	3	1698	0.953
Sup. Quality	-3	1.667	1.237	3	1694	0.953
Easy Work	-2	-1.00	-0.4149	2	N/A	N/A
Confident Support	0	2.00	1.924	4	N/A	N/A
Experience Support	1	5.00	4.691	10	N/A	N/A
Current Mood	1	6.00	5.67	10	N/A	N/A

TABLE B6. Gendered Trust Survey Regression Results (Disaggregated Indices)						
Dep. Variables: Model:	Management (1)	Feedback (2)	Performance (3)	Sup. Rel. (4)	Sup. Qual. (5)	Peers (6)
<i>Variables</i>						
Female	-0.3880*** (0.0697)	-0.4396*** (0.0710)	-0.3735*** (0.0704)	-0.4107*** (0.0733)	-0.4153*** (0.0746)	-0.3580*** (0.0515)
Age 25-34	-1.001*** (0.3191)	-0.5590 (0.4711)	-1.434*** (0.2651)	-0.3253 (0.4267)	-0.6231 (0.4186)	-0.7903*** (0.2751)
Age 35-44	-0.7563*** (0.1116)	-0.3924** (0.1474)	-0.8462*** (0.1237)	-0.3590** (0.1429)	-0.2812** (0.1215)	-0.3654*** (0.0785)
Age 45-54	-0.3662*** (0.0557)	-0.1372** (0.0656)	-0.3772*** (0.0745)	-0.1617* (0.0803)	-0.1121* (0.0664)	-0.1311** (0.0444)
Prof. Staff (P1-D2)	-0.2890*** (0.0736)	-0.4907*** (0.0663)	-0.6155*** (0.0838)	-0.3277*** (0.0606)	-0.3158*** (0.0681)	-0.2134*** (0.0364)
Term Contract	0.3111*** (0.0685)	0.1167 (0.0864)	0.4574*** (0.0739)	0.2041*** (0.0744)	0.2168*** (0.0707)	0.1601*** (0.0387)
Temp. Contract	0.4940** (0.2104)	0.2746 (0.2786)	0.6708*** (0.2251)	0.3318 (0.2366)	0.4837** (0.2142)	0.0789 (0.1592)
PKO	0.0131 (0.0850)	0.1193 (0.0926)	0.0383 (0.1036)	0.1417* (0.0766)	0.1403* (0.0815)	0.0021 (0.0482)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>						
Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>						
Observations	1,488	1,488	1,488	1,488	1,484	1,488
R ²	0.13146	0.11020	0.13333	0.09231	0.09397	0.12565
Within R ²	0.07139	0.05772	0.09556	0.04881	0.04770	0.07995
<i>Clustered (Mission) standard-errors in parentheses</i>						
<i>Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1</i>						

Structural Topic Model

The structural topic model was run with 10 topics, and the highest probability words by topic are shown in Table B10XX. Male and female-identifying respondents discuss many of the topics with similar relative frequency. However, there are statistically significant differences between the frequency that male and female respondents discuss topics 1, 5, and 6. Topic 1 concerns discussions of fairness (stem: “fair”), Topic 5 includes a focus on transparency and favoritism (stems: “transpar” and “favorit”), and Topic 6 focuses on clearance and decision-making (stems: “clearanc” and “decis”). Topic 1 and Topic 6 are discussed less often by female respondents than male respondents, while Topic 5 is positively correlated with a respondent being female (Appendix Table B11XX and Figure B1). Given we do not know the gender identity of respondents who selected “Other”, it is difficult to interpret those results, but the relevant coefficients have been included in Table B11 and Figure B1.

Male and female respondents also use different words to discuss the same topic. This is best evidenced by examining the gendered use of words across topics 9 and 10 (see Figure B2). Figure B2 shows how female respondents, whose words are in blue, discuss the same topic using very different vocabulary than male respondents, whose words are in red. Word size is determined by the frequency of the word’s use. For example, in Topic 9, female respondents focus more on accountability, mandates, and rules, whereas male respondents emphasize security and stakeholders. In Topic 10, female survey respondents focus on

addressing problems while male respondents use the words organize and organization. Male and female respondents use the word issue similarly within Topic 10. The topics captured in the structural topic model are representative but the results are very noisy. The qualitative survey comment analysis, performed and checked by one of the authors, allowed for a more nuanced interpretation of the survey comments and is discussed further in Appendix Section B.

TABLE B10. Overview of STM Results

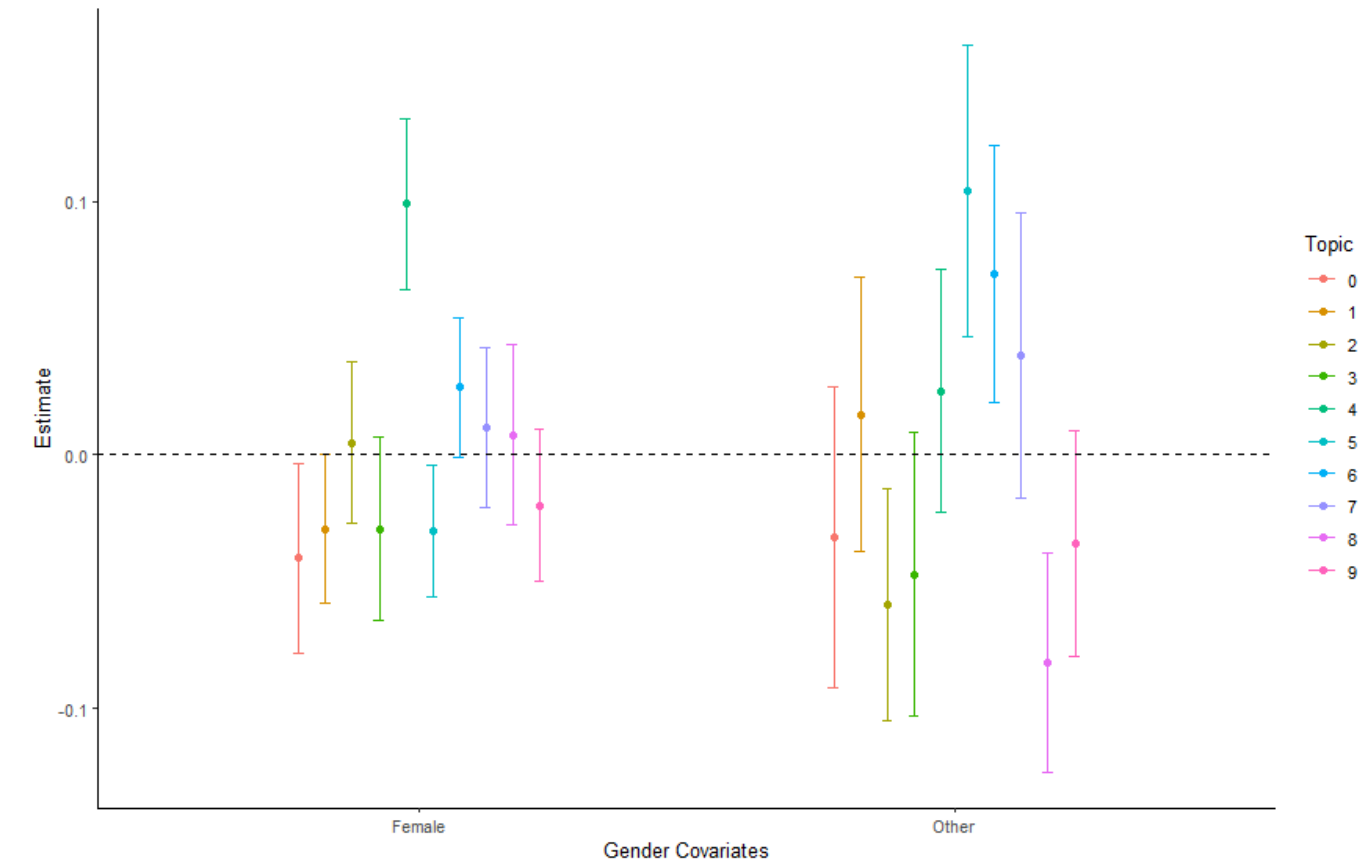
Topic	Highest Probability Words
1	communic, nil, fair , respons, noth, recruit, may
2	none, motiv, commit, still, leader, talk, unit
3	local, author, intern, now, mission, unv, etc
4	often, comment, leadership, can, question, way, rate
5	favorit, lack, transpar , yes, duti, improv, action
6	person, taken, peopl, valu, clearanc, nowadays, decis
7	subordin, manag , corrupt, senior, confidenti, system, fro
8	trust , environ, field, deal, must, knowledg, leav
9	rule, certain, non, good, polit, secur, stakehold
10	covid, address, issu, organ, toward, initi, year

Note: Models use word stems.

TABLE B11. STM Relationship by Gender and Topic

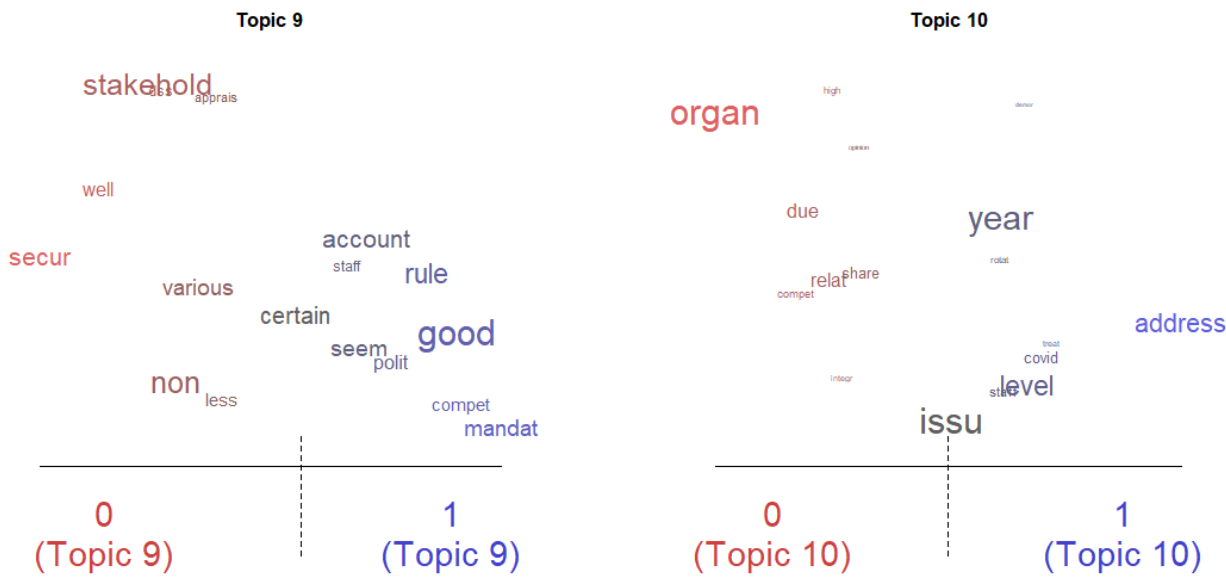
Variables: Gender	Model	Estimate	Std. Error	T Value	P Value
Female	1	-0.041	0.019	-2.128	0.034
Other	1	-0.032	0.030	-1.063	0.288
Female	2	-0.029	0.015	-1.946	0.052
Other	2	0.016	0.028	0.573	0.567
Female	3	0.004	0.016	0.272	0.786
Other	3	-0.059	0.023	-2.540	0.011
Female	4	-0.029	0.019	-1.579	0.115
Other	4	-0.047	0.029	-1.638	0.102
Female	5	0.099	0.017	5.796	0
Other	5	0.025	0.024	1.065	0.287
Female	6	-0.030	0.013	-2.282	0.023
Other	6	0.104	0.030	3.510	0.0005
Female	7	0.027	0.014	1.885	0.060
Other	7	0.072	0.026	2.745	0.006
Female	8	0.011	0.016	0.667	0.505
Other	8	0.039	0.029	1.361	0.174
Female	9	0.008	0.018	0.436	0.663
Other	9	-0.082	0.022	-3.710	0.0002
Female	10	-0.020	0.015	-1.309	0.191
Other	10	-0.035	0.023	-1.552	0.121

Figure B1: Coefficient Plot of STM Topics by Gender



Note: Male is the reference category in these models

Figure B2: Survey Content by Gender for Topics 9 and 10



Note: Comments from female identifying respondents are in blue, male respondents' comments are in red.

TABLE B8. Gendered Effects in the Disaggregated Accountability Index

Dependent Variables: Model:	Accountability (1)	High Performance (2)	Under Performance (3)
<i>Variables</i>			
Female	-0.5203*** (0.0830)	-0.2824*** (0.0831)	-0.3178*** (0.0832)
Age 25-34	-1.378*** (0.3367)	-1.189*** (0.3556)	-1.734*** (0.2222)
Age 35-44	-0.9923*** (0.1366)	-0.7308*** (0.1309)	-0.8156*** (0.1566)
Age 45-54	-0.4187*** (0.1080)	-0.3100*** (0.0747)	-0.4030*** (0.0747)
Prof. Staff (P1-D2)	-0.7218*** (0.1054)	-0.4119*** (0.0812)	-0.7127*** (0.0986)
Fixed Term Contract	0.4579*** (0.0886)	0.4586*** (0.0796)	0.4556*** (0.0958)
Temporary Contract	0.5499** (0.2478)	0.6905** (0.2751)	0.7721*** (0.2347)
PKO	0.0082 (0.0982)	0.0734 (0.1154)	0.0332 (0.1143)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>			
Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>			
Observations	1,488	1,488	1,488
R ²	0.13820	0.08905	0.12294
Within R ²	0.10315	0.05165	0.08565

Clustered (Mission) standard-errors in parentheses

*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Survey Comments: Qualitative Coding

The Comments submitted in the Trust survey were hand coded twice for reliability, as well as analyzed using the “stm” package in R (see footnotes 30 and 31 in the main text). Of the 1,697 responses to the survey, 927 provided an answer to the question “Do you have any comments, questions or suggestions related to issues of trust between various stakeholders in your mission/organization?” Among these answers, we disregarded those that only contained variations on “no comment,” “none” and “thank you”. Of the remaining 455 answers providing substantial comments, 13 were in French and 442 in English.

All comments were initially read to help illuminate patterns noted in the quantitative analysis. Very few comments were found to contain direct descriptions of relationships with peers, though there were references by female respondents to organizational culture (“boys’ club”) and flawed Conduct and Discipline processes, as we report in the article. For the other two indicators discussed in the article (supervisory relationships and performance assessment), we inductively distinguished two and three main types of comments, respectively.

Supervisory relationships The first type of comments related to supervisory relationships include critiques of supervisor or management favouritism and nepotism, often expressed in relation to recruitment or promotion. Some comments directly used these terms (e.g. “Stop nepotism!”), others critically described relevant dynamics (“Promotion = be part of strong group in organization”). Critiques of recruitment (“recruitment procedure is not fair!”) are not coded unless there is an attribution of unfairness to the recruiter.

The second type of comments include claims of supervisor harassment, bullying or abuse. Examples include comments that use the terms abuse or harass explicitly (e.g. “My direct supervisor has been reported several times for harassment however he could get away with it.”) or describe abusive dynamics (e.g. “It is a passive-aggressive way to get employee to quit not communicat[ing], provocation, intimidation. . . staff are scared to speak up.” or “Sometimes my supervisor interfere or teleguide the [performance] rating of S/M [staff members] who have a disagreement with him.”)

Performance assessment Comments on performance assessment were categorized into three types: 1) comments on supervisor accountability; 2) comments on underperformance not being addressed; and 3) and comments on excellence not being rewarded. Calls for greater supervisor accountability included, for example, calls for “360 evaluations” in which supervisees evaluate supervisors (<https://hr.un.org/page/home>). To distinguish from complaints about supervisors, critiques of supervisor quality were only coded as falling in this category if there was also an explicit call for greater accountability or a complaint of an accountability deficit (e.g. “nothing is done about it.”).

Many comments state that underperformance is not penalized directly (e.g. “non-performance of staff going unpunished” or “Underperformance is not addressed”), while some are more indirect (e.g. “recognition is not based on merits and demerits”). Comments on excellence not being rewarded included direct critiques (e.g. ““I had great 16 Epas [performance assessments] but was never promoted”) or exhortations (e.g. “Support people who deserve and who worked hard for UN.”).

One author proficient in French and English coded all comments twice, at several weeks’ temporal remove. Each time, the gender indicator column was hidden during coding. Comments were coded “1” if they clearly fell in a particular category and “0.5” for marginal cases. Where applicable, comments were coded as belonging to multiple categories. During the second coding initial coding columns were hidden. Once coding was complete, initial and second codes were compared. They generally revealed strong overlap, but where there were discrepancies a third reading determined final coding. The gender column remained hidden until coding was finalized. The tables in the main text (Tables 1 and 2) report proportions of comments in each category by gender identification of respondents, using comments coded “1” and “0.5”. As Table B9 shows below, restricting the data to only include comments coded “1” does not significantly change the interpretation of the proportions.

TABLE B9. Restrictive Survey Comment Coding, by Gender							
Gender (percent)	Resp.	Comments	Nepotism	Abuse	Accountability	Underperf.	Reward
Female	26.5	30.3	31.1	52.2	47.2	47.4	33.3
Prefer not to say/other	8.7	10.8	20.0	21.7	25.0	5.3	8.3
Male	64.8	58.9	48.9	26.1	27.8	47.4	58.3
Total Number (count)	1697	455	45	23	36	19	24
<i>Note:</i> Resp. refers to respondents. Comments refer to substantive comments only. Accountability reflects comments that demand more supervisor accountability. Underperf. refers to comments on underperformance not being addressed, and rewards refers to comments on excellence not being rewarded. Nepotism relates to manager or supervisor nepotism or favoritism. Abuse relates to manager or supervisor abuse, bullying, or harassment.							

C. QUALITATIVE DATA: INTERVIEWS

The authors, or the teams of which the authors have been a part, conducted approximately 400 interviews in 2017-2021 in the frameworks of two projects investigating internal processes in UN peacekeeping missions. These projects were not focused on gender, but 46 interviews nevertheless explicitly revealed gendered dynamics within peacekeeping operations. We draw on these insights, and discuss the methodological aspects of using such interview material below.

One project, carried out by one of the authors, focused on the role of national staff in UN peacekeeping missions and addressed such issues as working conditions, abilities to influence organizational policies, and relations between national and international staff. Another project, conducted by a team involving one of the authors, focused on organizational decision-making by UN peacekeeping officials. Questions concerned how UN officials at different levels of seniority contribute to decision-making as well as whether peacekeeping missions themselves uphold values that they promote. In this sense, the project touched upon the issue of hierarchies, authority, and information flows in the organization – issues and processes that, according to previous research, are likely to be gendered.

For both projects, the sample included former and current civilian officials (and in some cases, senior military and police leaders who are members of the senior leadership team) in UN field missions at different ranks and in different thematic roles. Interviews were conducted in four missions – MINUSCA in Central African Republic (national staff), MONUSCO in DRC (both projects), MINURSO in Western Sahara (national staff) and UNFICYP in Cyprus (national staff) – as well as in Liberia after the UN mission closure (national staff) and in New York (both projects), London (decision-making), Berlin (decision-making), and virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic (decision-making). Interview respondents worked in the following UN field missions over their career (some of them in multiple missions): UN Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR, former Yugoslavia), UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), UN Mission

of Support to East Timor (UNMISSET), UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The sampling strategy for the project focusing on national staff was to seek participation from national and international staff across a range of substantive and support units in each of the missions visited. In the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, interviews were conducted in mission Headquarters (Kinshasa and Bangui, respectively) and in one additional location (Goma and Kaga Bandoro, respectively). Each mission offered assistance in scheduling interviews with staff across a wide range of units, after confirming researcher priorities, which reflected the distribution of national staff across units but included modestly oversampling substantive units in which national staff play significant roles (e.g. Civil Affairs). As research progressed, this purposive sampling was supplemented with snowball sampling. The full sample included 203 interviewees, of whom 128 were national staff and 75 international staff. The gender composition of the sample was 126 male-presenting respondents (42 international and 84 national) and 77 female-presenting respondents (33 international and 44 national).

The sampling strategy for the project focusing on organizational decision-making was a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The team started with a purposive sampling strategy of identifying potential respondents who have had an influence on decision-making within their peacekeeping operations. For this reason, the sample included officials working in “substantive” units, such as electoral support or political affairs, and not “support” units, such as logistics or human resources. Officials at higher level of seniority, such as mission leaders and heads of units, and international staff are over-represented in the sample. As the project progressed, the purposive sampling strategy was complemented by the snowball sampling strategy as respondents recommended colleagues with insights into organizational decision-making, including those who

have left the mission or the UN and those whose informal influence has not been obvious from looking at formal hierarchies. The gender composition of the sample was 151 male-presenting respondents and 54 female-presenting respondents.

The interviews were semi-structured and lasted on average an hour. Where consent was provided, they were audio recorded and transcribed by a confidential transcription service. The interviews were conducted in English and French. Quotes from French interviews were translated by the authors.

Both projects complied with the necessary ethics review procedures at the institutions where the researchers conducting the interviews are or were based. [Details about ethics review decisions by can be provided to the Editors anonymously] None of the interviewees were offered or requested to be paid and no undue influence was exercised. All interviewees were non-vulnerable adults who gave informed written or oral consent to being interviewed. No questions concerned sensitive issues like sexual exploitation and abuse in order not to minimize the risks of re-traumatization. When interviewees brought up such issues, the researchers listened to and acknowledged their concerns but diverted conversation to related neutral topics, such as UN's policy frameworks on compliance with international human rights law. Considering the sensitive nature of many of these discussions, all interviews are anonymized, and no data about their locations is provided with a view to protecting interviewees.

We conducted a search across the entire corpus of transcribed interviews for the following terms (in English and French): “gender”, “man”, “men”, “women”, “female”, “male”, “sexual” and “harass*”. We excluded general references to “men” as human resources (for instance, “men under arms” to indicate the size of the military). We counted instances where discussions pertained to the local population in the country of deployment (for example, discussions of UN officials’ efforts to encourage women candidates to stand for office) and those focusing on gender hierarchies within the UN workforce separately. In the “national staff” project corpus, gender dynamics within the organization or mission were brought up in 32 interviews. In the “organizational decision-making” project corpus, gender was brought up 14 times with a focus on the UN itself and 63 times in the context of the local population (the latter are excluded from the count because they do not specifically concern dynamics internal to the UN). The 46 interviews mentioning gender within the UN were then subjected to qualitative analysis to identify themes that may provide insights into the quantitative

findings.

There are several methodological challenges and advantages of deriving the data on gender from interviews on other issues pertaining to the UN's functioning. The first challenge stems from respondents' self-selection into conversations about gender. Those who addressed this issue did so probably because of experiencing or observing gender inequality or discrimination in the organization. Therefore, they are likely to have reported more negative views than the average UN peace operation employee. We believe, however, that this negative bias does not necessarily undermine the validity of the interview data: even if gender inequality or discrimination is not experienced by all the organization's employees, the fact that it affects a proportion of them is still a significant finding. The second challenge stems from data completeness. Not asking all respondents about gender meant that the research team might not have obtained the most complete data. Again, however, this does not invalidate the data we did collect.

As for advantages, a similar methodological approach has been successfully employed by De Koeijer, Parkinson, and Smith (2024) whose "data on sexual violence [by and against humanitarian workers] unexpectedly emerged from interviews about everyday ethics in the humanitarian community." De Koeijer, Parkinson, and Smith (2024: 4) highlight the following benefits. First, they contend that the data "may not have emerged in more topically and causally focused research designs". Similarly, in our project, direct questions about gender equality could have elicited denial or repetition of platitudes on organizational goals or strategies. Yet in interviews on seemingly "everyday" issues, such as working conditions or reporting lines, our team discovered that gender-based discrimination or exclusion manifested itself in mundane interactions within the organization that reflected and reproduced structures of inequality. Second, Koeijer, Parkinson, and Smith (2024: 4) note the fact that the issue "arose organically" meant that it was "broadly experienced as a problem in the humanitarian sector". Similarly, we contend that dozens of interviewees bringing up gender indicated that concerns about equality, equity, and (non)discrimination were widespread. Therefore, we believe that the methodological choice to use the interviews as illustrative vignettes adds an important element to the other types of sources and analyses.

D. QUALITATIVE DATA: ARCHIVES AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Archives

We have conducted a systematic search of materials from the UN Oral History Project focusing on interviews with civilian UN officials who have worked in peacekeeping or political missions. We have looked for any mentions of different roles that men and women played in those missions. The full list of the interviews is below:

1. Interview with Adriaan Verheul, by Jean Krasno, July 2, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/V512. Related to his role as a human rights officer, UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, 1992-1993.
2. Interview with Ahmad Fawzi, by Jean Krasno, September 23, 2005, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/F281. Related to his role as the media advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, 2001.
3. Interview with Anthony Banbury, by James Sutterlin, July 20, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/B22. Related to his role as a human rights officer, UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, 1992-1993.
4. Interview with Dennis McNamara, by James Sutterlin, February 16, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/M112. Related to his role as the director of the human rights component, UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, 1992.
5. Interview with Francesco Vendrell, by Jean Krasno, April 18, 1996, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/V453. Related to his role as a senior political adviser to the UN Special Envoy for Haiti, 1992-1993.
6. Interview with Frederic Eckhard, by James Sutterlin, February 16, 1999, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/E36. Related to his role as the spokesperson, UN Transition Assistance Group, 1989-1990.
7. Interview with Hawa Binta Dieye, by James Sutterlin, June 23, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY

- (02)/D567. Related to her role as a head of office, UN Transition Assistance Group, 1989-1990.
8. Interview with Michael Williams, by James Sutterlin, July 7, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/W722. Related to his role as the deputy director of the human rights component, UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, 1993.
 9. Interview with Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, by Jean Krasno, February 10, 1999, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/L521. Related to his role as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Transition Assistance Group, 1989-1990.
 10. Interview with Joseph Stephanides, by James Sutterlin, April 20, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/S5. Related to his role as a head of office, UN Transition Assistance Group, 1989-1990.
 11. Interview with Raymonde Martineau, by James Sutterlin, July 7, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/M385: Related to her role as an electoral affairs officer, UN Transition Assistance Group, 1989-1990.
 12. Interview with Thant Myint-U, by James Sutterlin, July 1, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/T367: Related to his role as a human rights officer, UN Transitional Authority for Cambodia, 1992-1993.
 13. Interview with Sture Linner, by Jean Krasno, November 8, 1990, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/L45: Related to his role as the chief of civilian operations, UN Operation in the Congo, 1960-1962.
 14. Interview with Timur Goksel, by Jean Krasno, March 17, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/G616: Related to his role as a press information officer, spokesperson, and senior adviser, UN Interim Force in Lebanon, 1979-1998.
 15. Interview with Sergio Vieira de Mello, by James Sutterlin, May 5, 1998, ST/DPI ORAL HISTORY (02)/M527: Related to his role as the director of the repatriation component, UN Transitional Authority for Cambodia, 1992-1993.

UN Documents

UN documents that we have consulted include UN strategies and audits, especially those that address gender, diversity, or organizational culture. The full list of the documents is below:

1. UN. 2016. Activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services: Report of the Secretary-General. A/71/157.
2. UN. 2017. System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity. New York: UN.
3. UN. 2020. Administrative Instruction: Temporary Special Measures for the Achievement of Gender Parity.

ST/AI/2020/5.
4. UN Office of Internal Oversight Services. 2021. Evaluation of the Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Operations: Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. A/75/803.
5. UN. 2021. Report of the International Civil Service Commission for the Year 2021. A/76/30.
6. UN. 2021. Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System: Report of the Secretary-General.

A/76/115.
7. UN Department of Peace Operations. 2018. Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028. New York: UN. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/uniformed-gender-parity-2018-2028.pdf>
8. UN Department of Peace Operations. 2019. Women, Peace and Security: Gender Equality in Peacekeeping Operations.
9. UN Secretary-General. 2019. Overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: budget performance for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 and budget for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30

June 2020. 28 February. A/73/776
10. UN Women. 2021. Make Parity a Reality: Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System.

E. COMPARATIVE DATA

TABLE E1. Number of All and Field-Based Staff for Major International Field Bureaucracies			
IO	Count All Staff	% Field-Based Staff	Count Field-Based Staff
WFP	21,800	87	18,966
UNDP	21,000	82	17,220
IOM	17,761	94	16,695
UNHCR	17,878	87	15,554
UNICEF	15,278	87	13,292
WHO ^a	8,000	81	6,480
World Bank	12,528	45	5,638
<i>Note:</i> Data from IO Official Websites or Annual Reports.			
^a The website only provides this approximate number.			