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Beyond peacekeeping theories: A comparative case study of UNMIL and MONUSCO

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Beyond peacekeeping theories:
A comparative case study of UNMIL and MONUSCO



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1. List of Abbreviations:

AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo <i>(Congolese alliance of rebel groups – fought against Mobutu’s regime)</i>
AFEDE	Action des femmes pour le développement <i>(Congolese women’s organisation)</i>
CPA	Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement <i>(Final peace agreement in the Second Liberian Civil War, signed in 2003)</i>
CWOL	Concerned Women of Liberia <i>(Liberian women’s organisation)</i>
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration program
DRC	The Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group <i>(predecessor of UNMIL)</i>
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
Ex-GOL	Former Government of Liberia <i>(led by Charles Taylor)</i>
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAZ	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo <i>(later renamed FARDC)</i>
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda <i>(Congolese rebel group – fought in both Congo wars, still active today)</i>
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade <i>(MONUSCO’s military wing)</i>
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy <i>(Liberian rebel group – fought against Charles Taylor)</i>
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women Peace Network <i>(female-led Liberian NGO)</i>
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia <i>(Liberian rebel group – fought against Charles Taylor)</i>
MONUC	UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo <i>(predecessor of MONUSCO)</i>
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
M23	March 23 Movement <i>(Congolese rebel group, supported by Rwanda)</i>
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia <i>(Liberian rebel group – fought in the first civil war, later became the new government of Liberia)</i>
PKOs	UN Peacekeeping operations
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front <i>(ruling party of Rwanda)</i>
RSLF	Rien sans les femmes <i>(Congolese women’s organisation)</i>
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy <i>(Liberian rebel group – later becomes LURD)</i>
UNAMSIL	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
UNITA	The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola <i>(political party)</i>
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Network <i>(female-led Liberian network)</i>
WPI	Women's Peace Initiative <i>(Liberian women’s organisation)</i>

2. Introduction:

In a world dominated by a growing number of civil conflicts and rising violence, UN Peacekeeping Operations (*PKOs*) promise to lead war-torn societies to sustainable peace (Bove & Ruggeri, 2016; ACLED, 2023). Peacekeeping successes, such as Liberia's UNMIL mission, which consolidated peace after a decade of civil wars, seemingly offer an avenue to effective civil conflict resolution (Olcay & Bayram, 2020). Yet headlines such as 'The UN's Peacekeeping Nightmare in Africa' and 'Why UN missions are failing in Africa' are all too common (Oladipo, 2017; Mugabi, 2021). Particularly the DRC's MONUSCO mission failed to meet expectations (Grass, 2023). Despite twenty years of involvement, the country's humanitarian situation has deteriorated, sparking protests calling for the termination of the mission as a whole (UNHCR, 2023). These divergent outcomes continue to puzzle scholars, who cannot fully explain some PKOs are more effective than others (Fortna, 2008).

While different explanations remain disputed, scholars generally recognise three main determinants that influence PKOs' effectiveness. First, di Salvatore, Lundgren and Smidt (2022) emphasise the importance of mandates, which "shape the ability of UN operations to manage conflict and assist [...] conflict-affected countries" (p. 925). Second, higher numbers of military and police units allow PKOs to reduce violence by acting as a barrier between combatants and de-incentivising the use of violence against civilians (Hultman, Kathman & Shannon, 2014). Third, a diverse composition of peacekeepers encourages a positive relationship with the local population and efficiently reduces violence (Bove & Ruggeri, 2018). Thus, scholars would expect missions such as UNMIL and MONUSCO, which share similar mandate configurations, peacekeeping sizes and diverse compositions, to lead to similarly effective outcomes. Yet while UNMIL successfully enabled peace in Liberia, MONUSCO has struggled to address the DRC's ongoing conflicts (CFR, 2023). None of the three peacekeeping determinants can explain why the two missions differ so dramatically in their outcomes, suggesting that other factors may be accountable. Hence, this paper aims to answer the following research question: *What factors explain the divergence of UNMIL and MONUSCO's missions?*

I utilise a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) to conduct a comparative case study of the two PKOs, and find that Stedman's (1997) spoiler framework offers a strong explanation for the two missions' divergence. Differences in mandate implementation and women's roles in the peace processes complement this finding. After conceptualising 'effectiveness', the paper discusses the evolution of the peacekeeping field by outlining what factors scholars attribute to successful PKOs. Following this, I explore alternative theories of what may explain the mission divergence.

The research design is outlined before I apply the aforementioned alternative theories to both PKOs, evaluating each factor's ability to answer the research question. Consequently, I present the paper's main findings and discuss their implications. Lastly, I examine the limits of this paper and suggest avenues for future research.

3. Conceptualisation:

This study focuses exclusively on UN PKOs, as their impartial nature and capacity for long-term involvement are particularly effective in reducing violence (Kathman & Wood, 2011). When comparing UN PKOs to regional operations, Bara and Hultman (2020) find that only "UN troops and police curb civilian targeting by non-state actors" (p. 341). Therefore, due to their effectiveness and scope, the analysis concentrates on UN PKOs, particularly UNMIL and MONUSCO.

3.1 Effectiveness

Peacekeeping literature definition of 'effectiveness' continues to be debated. Some studies focus on the short-term cessation of conflict, while others assess the long-term duration of peace (Di Salvatore & Ruggeri, 2017). For instance, Bove and Ruggeri's (2018) investigations measure whether violence was reduced immediately after the PKO's establishment. Hultman (2014), Ruggeri, Dorussen and Gizelis (2017) share this approach, defining PKOs as 'effective' if they shorten episodes of active conflict. In contrast, Bara and Hultman (2020) focus on the duration of obtained peace, terming the absence of war reoccurrence as effective. Other scholars investigate democratic and economic developments after PKOs (Sheehan, 2011, p. 262; Di Salvatore, 2017).

This study defines PKO 'effectiveness' broadly, incorporating the aforementioned variables such as: (a) the reduction of violence against civilians and on the battlefield, (b) the shortening of active conflict episodes, and (c) obtaining a long period of peace. Concurrently, democratic progress is also included, though its relationship with PKOs remains ambiguous (Bove & Elia, 2018).

Such broad conceptualisation allows the analysis to utilise the whole spectrum of peacekeeping literature, without excluding potentially meaningful trends. UNMIL and MONUSCO drastically diverge on each outlined variable, even in terms of democratisation (FH, 2022a). Liberia has not experienced any violence against civilians nor on the battlefield, enjoying over 20 years of peace since 2003 (UCDP, 2023a). In contrast, the DRC continues to struggle with persistently high levels of violence against civilians and ongoing battlefield conflict (UCDP, 2023b). Thus,

because both missions' effectiveness differs so greatly on every previously mentioned variable, I include all four in the analysis. In fact, Diehl and Druckman (2010) discourage using a single standard for effectiveness, because policymakers may adopt "certain policies without being aware of [their] full consequences" (p. 5). The next section briefly examines the development of peacekeeping literature and ongoing debates among peacekeeping scholars.

4. Literature Review:

Kroeker and Ruggeri (2022) depict the development of peacekeeping literature in three waves. The first occurred during the Cold War and focused largely on interstate conflicts, aiming to maintain inter-state peace (James, 1990). In 1992, Boutros-Ghali revitalised the field by detailing the UN's renewed peacekeeping framework expansion. However, prominent failures such as the 1992 Somalian tragedy, 1994 Rwandan genocide, and 1995 Bosnian massacre soon shifted the focus to peacekeeping's flaws (Jacobson, 2012). These criticisms led to new strategic perspectives on peacekeeping, culminating in the third wave of peacekeeping literature. (Fortna & Howard, 2008; Diehl, 2014). Systematic qualitative and quantitative studies started examining the empirical impacts of peacekeeping, soon demonstrating that "peacekeeping [was] an extremely effective policy tool" (Fortna & Howard, 2008, p. 284). Concurrently, PKOs themselves evolved into demanding multifunctional projects, going beyond conflict prevention by engaging in institution-building, human rights promotion and whole sector reforms (UN, 2023a).

Nevertheless, criticisms remain with scholars such as Autesserre (2019), highlighting that "UN peacekeepers too often fail to meet their most basic objectives" (p. 101). Furthermore, the PKO's mandate expansion has been equivocated with "Christmas tree mandates", prioritising quantity over quality, and overburdening missions with tasks that reflect multiple agendas (Oksamytna & Lundgren, 2021, p. 227). While peacekeeping remains far from perfect, numerous empirical studies have highlighted PKOs' effectiveness in reducing battlefield violence, protecting civilians, and building sustainable peace (Walter, Howard & Fortna, 2021).

5. Theoretical framework:

By investigating the effects of PKOs on peace duration, violence reduction, and why some missions were more successful than others, scholars have generally accepted three determinants (Walter et al., 2021).

5.1 Mandate specifications

Di Salvatore and colleagues (2022) emphasise the importance of mandates, which “specify the size, duration, and tasks of peacekeeping operations”, effectively determining the PKOs’ targets and available tools (p. 927). These mandates regulate the amount of UN funding and specify the PKOs’ partnerships with the host country’s actors (p. 927). While the effects of mandate variations on PKOs’ effectiveness remain unclear, Hultman and colleagues (2014) acknowledge the enormous effect of mandates on PKOs’ ability to manage conflict. Furthermore, Doyle and Sambanis (2006) find that multilateral PKOs, whose mandates include wide-reaching institutional reforms, are more likely to build sustainable peace (p. 4). As such, mandate specifications have vital implications for PKOs’ effectiveness by shaping their abilities to minimise violence and protect civilians (Di Salvatore et al., 2022). Nevertheless, Di Salvatore acknowledges that further research is needed to investigate how “mandates are translated into peacekeeping activities on the ground” (p. 946). This area of mandate implementation remains understudied, as coordination problems can prevent PKOs from adhering to their mandated tasks (Blair, Di Salvatore & Smidt, 2022). The authors find that executing increasingly fragmented mandates in active conflict zones may negatively affect the task implementation of PKOs. While many questions remain in this recent avenue of research, Blair and colleagues’ findings could undermine the importance of mandate configurations if they are only partly implemented. This is further examined in the paper’s research design.

5.2 Peacekeeping numbers

Hultman and colleagues (2014) deploy a bivariate analysis and find that higher numbers of armed military and police units within PKOs correspond with significantly lower levels of violence. They argue that only armed UN personnel are equipped to protect the population. On the battlefield, military soldiers obstruct violence by interceding between combatants, “reducing direct hostilities and mitigating their incentives to target civilians as a conflict strategy” (p. 876). Behind the frontlines, police forces protect civilians by deterring armed factions from using violence to extract support and resources (Walter et al., 2021). Moreover, a soaring number of military and police units signals that the UN is credibly committed to executing the PKO’s mandate. Hultman and colleagues (2013) attribute the success of Sierra Leone’s UNAMSIL in decreasing violence against civilians to its increased number of military troops. The authors emphasise that multiple troops can effectively disarm combatants, reducing their capacities to induce violence, which alleviates the dangers of the security dilemma. Costalli (2014) supports

this argument by demonstrating that a large armed peacekeeping force is more likely to “exert an overwhelming force compared to the resources of all armed groups” (p. 377).

5.3 Peacekeeping diversity

Bove and Ruggeri (2016) find that a diverse peacekeeping force decreases violence against civilians more effectively. Their investigation uses fractionalization and polarization indices to measure the PKO’s monthly diversity, which is weighted against monthly civilian casualties. Bove and Ruggeri’s (2018) investigations centre around the interactions between peacekeepers and the local population, which they consider “necessary for the efficient and successful action of peacekeeping operations” (p. 1635). A high diversity increases the chances of more technically capable peacekeepers passing on their experience to other militaries, creating a more skilled peacekeeping force. Additionally, mutual monitoring between different nationalities decreases the likelihood of misconduct and increases the PKO’s accountability. Though the distinct languages and cultures of the peacekeepers may create co-ordination problems, “the positive effects of field diversity outweigh the negative effects” (Bove, Ruffa & Ruggeri, 2020, p. 189). While diverse PKOs positively impact civilian protection and reduce battle-field violence, cultural proximity between peacekeepers and peacekept remains a mixed picture. Shared characteristics between locals and peacekeepers can strengthen trust, allowing peacekeepers to better identify important group boundaries (Bove & Ruggeri, 2018). Yet such proximity may spur perceptions of the PKO as biased, which could explain why PKOs with “peacekeepers from neighboring countries are associated with more violence perpetrated against civilians” (p. 1649). Hence, empirical investigations have refrained from making conclusions regarding the effects of cultural proximity on PKOs. Nevertheless, the data supports the trend that a diverse peacekeeping force makes PKOs more effective (Di Salvatore et al., 2022).

5.4 Alternative theories

In addition to the aforementioned peacekeeping paradigms, this paper explores four alternative theories: the role of spoilers, mandate implementation (*already covered in section 4.1*), underlying factors, and the role of women in peace-building.

Attempts to end armed conflict almost always involve spoilers, parties who perceive peace as a threat to their power and interests (Stedman, 1997). Spoilers pose the “greatest source of risk” to peace agreements, either failing to implement an initially agreed settlement or using violence to undermine peace (Stedman, p. 5). Depending on a spoiler’s commitment to achieve its goals, it can be classified as limited, greedy or total, which determines the appropriate strategy to deal with it (p. 8). Strategies range from conciliatory measures, such as inducement, to coercive

punishments, which aim to reduce the spoiler's capacity to undermine the peace process (p. 12). Subsequent revisions of Stedman's framework have included a widening of its scope to include state spoilers, rather than solely focusing on non-state groups (Greenhill & Major, 2006; Barrera, 2015). Concurrently, scholars transcended the rigid spoiler categorisation process by increasingly examining the tactics that spoilers use, including nonviolent actions (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2011). Newman and Richmond (2006) and Yonekawa (2014) also advocated for an extended time-frame, covering the entire peace implementation process, instead of the initial post-agreement phase. Spoiler scholars accredit international actors, particularly PKOs, as "custodians of peace", underlining that the success of peace depends on the custodians' successful identification of spoilers and appropriate strategies (Stedman, 1997, p. 6).

Leonardsson, Rudd (2015) and Barrera (2015) claim that sustainable peace can only be achieved if the underlying causes of tensions are addressed. These include bad governance systems, socio-economic deprivation, land struggles, and colonial underdevelopment (Wong, 2012; Barrera, 2015). Thus, Autesserre (2008) encourages international actors to support far-reaching land reforms, while Wong (2012) advocates for a strengthened imposition of "democratic and constitutional control" on state rulers and the military (p. 89). This narrative implies that PKOs cannot achieve or maintain peace without proposing "concrete solutions for local antagonisms" in their respective conflicts (Autessere, 2008, p. 108). While such solutions often remain abstract, they highlight the significance of local context, coinciding with criticisms of "peacekeeping bubbles" that exclude local circumstances (Jennings, 2016, p. 303).

Lastly, Gizelis (2011) emphasises the often-overlooked role of women in constituting peace agreements and their involvement in the peace-building process. Shepherd (2015) argues that "peace agreements and reconstruction are more sustainable and effective when women are involved" (p. 53). Thus, including women in peace negotiations improves the quality of agreements reached and makes implementation more likely (Klein, 2011). Shepherd (2015) attributes this to the "unique skill sets and experiences that women possess", which stem from their distinctly different war experiences compared to men (p. 53). According to Gizelis (2011) and Klein (2011), women's networks can more effectively consolidate peace at the local level due to their predominantly collaborative approach and ability to bring together different factions. Yet women continue to be excluded as peacekeepers and peace-builders, and are frequently denied a seat at the negotiation table (Weiss, 2019). This complicates empirical investigations into the impacts of female participation on PKO effectiveness.

6. Research Design:

The analysis uses a MSSD to conduct a comparative case study of UNMIL and MONUSCO. I demonstrate that the three aforementioned determinants cannot explain the divergence of outcomes between UNMIL and MONUSCO.

6.1 Mission outcomes

As previously outlined, UNMIL was successful and achieved all four variables of ‘effectiveness’ by (a) reducing violence against civilians, (b) shortening the episode of active conflict, (c) obtaining a long period of peace, and (d) democratising.

In the year of the mission’s launch (2003), violent conflict directly caused the death of 3281 Liberians (UCDP, 2023a). Just over half died on the battlefield, while the other 1500 were classified as one-sided violence deaths, which the UCDP (2023c) defines as “armed force by the government of a state [or a non-governmental organized group] against civilians” (p. 3). Remarkably, the number of deaths dropped to zero before the end of the year, emphasising the success of UNMIL in reducing violence against civilians and on the battlefield (UCDP, 2023a). Since this drop, there have been no further deaths due to violent conflict, as Liberia achieved and maintained peaceful conditions. As a result, the country made significant democratic progress by rebuilding government capacity, peacefully transferring power, and restoring the rule-of-law (FH, 2022b).

MONUSCO stands in sharp contrast to UNMIL’s achievements, falling short on every ‘effectiveness’ variable. When the mission began in July 2010, violence quickly dropped from 5069 to 801 directly caused deaths (UCDP, 2023b). However, violence increased again in the following years, culminating in almost 6000 deaths in late 2017. Since then, directly caused deaths have remained at over 2500 per year, with two thirds being one-sided killings of civilians, followed by battlefield deaths due to state and rebel clashes, and fighting among rebel groups (UCDP, 2023b). Unlike UNMIL, MONUSCO failed to sustainably reduce violence against civilians and shorten active conflict episodes, with particularly state-based violence persisting at high levels (Grass, 2023). The DRC has not consolidated peace and continues to struggle with conflict, particularly in the eastern provinces of Ituri, Nord and Sud Kivu (UCDP, 2023b). This situation has inhibited the democratic developments seen in Liberia. The DRC’s citizens cannot exercise basic civil liberties, nor are they physically safe from human rights abuses committed by government and rebel forces (FH, 2022c). Hence, MONUSCO fails to meet the four variables of mission effectiveness.

6.2 Determinant One: Mandate specifications

The analysis first focuses on Di Salvatore and colleagues' (2022) mandate specifications. Figure 1 summarises the two missions' mandate specifications (*extensive table in appendix*).

Figure 1: Summarised mandate specifications

Stability	
UNMIL 3/11	MONUSCO 7/11
Peacebuilding	
UNMIL 10/26	MONUSCO 13/26
Rights	
UNMIL 4/4	MONUSCO 3/4
Total dimensions	
UNMIL 17	MONUSCO 23
Total shared dimensions	
29/41	

(Di Salvatore et al., 2022, p. 937)

The two missions share 70% (29/41) of all mandate specifications, demonstrating that both missions' mandates were similar. Nevertheless, there was some variation. MONUSCO's mandate consisted of more dimensions, including nine specifications absent in UNMIL's mandate. Similarly, UNMIL included three dimensions which MONUSCO did not share. However, I argue that this mandate variation cannot sufficiently account for the difference in mission outcomes. The three specifications unique to UNMIL (*legal reform, gender mainstreaming and ceasefire assistance*) offer unlikely explanations.

First, while UNMIL's mandate of legal reform was not explicitly present in MONUSCO, the mission aimed to build "the capacities of justice system professionals" while supporting a multi-year justice reform program (Monusco, 2023b). While UNMIL's efforts were more extensive, I argue that the absence of this specification does not explain MONUSCO's failure (Unmil, 2019). This is based on Blair's (2021) finding that the correlation between UN PKOs and the rule-of-law is weak when conflict is ongoing, but positive during peaceful periods. UNMIL completely extinguished violence within a year, which likely provided the foundation for effective law reforms (UCDP, 2023a). In contrast, MONUSCO never sustainably reduced hostilities and could thus not enforce a nation-wide rule-of-law system. Hence, it is likely that other factors, and not the law reform specification, explain why MONUSCO did not reduce conflict as effectively as UNMIL.

Second, unlike UNMIL, MONUSCO did not specify gender mainstreaming as a mandate goal. Yet when one investigates the yearly percentages of female peacekeepers and experts, there were no significant differences between the two. Both missions fluctuated between 1.8% and 5% for the majority of their durations (UN Peacekeeping, 2023). While the number of female peacekeepers cannot account for the many dimensions of gender mainstreaming policies, it provides a valuable indicator of the female peacekeepers' 'on the ground' impact and everyday interactions.

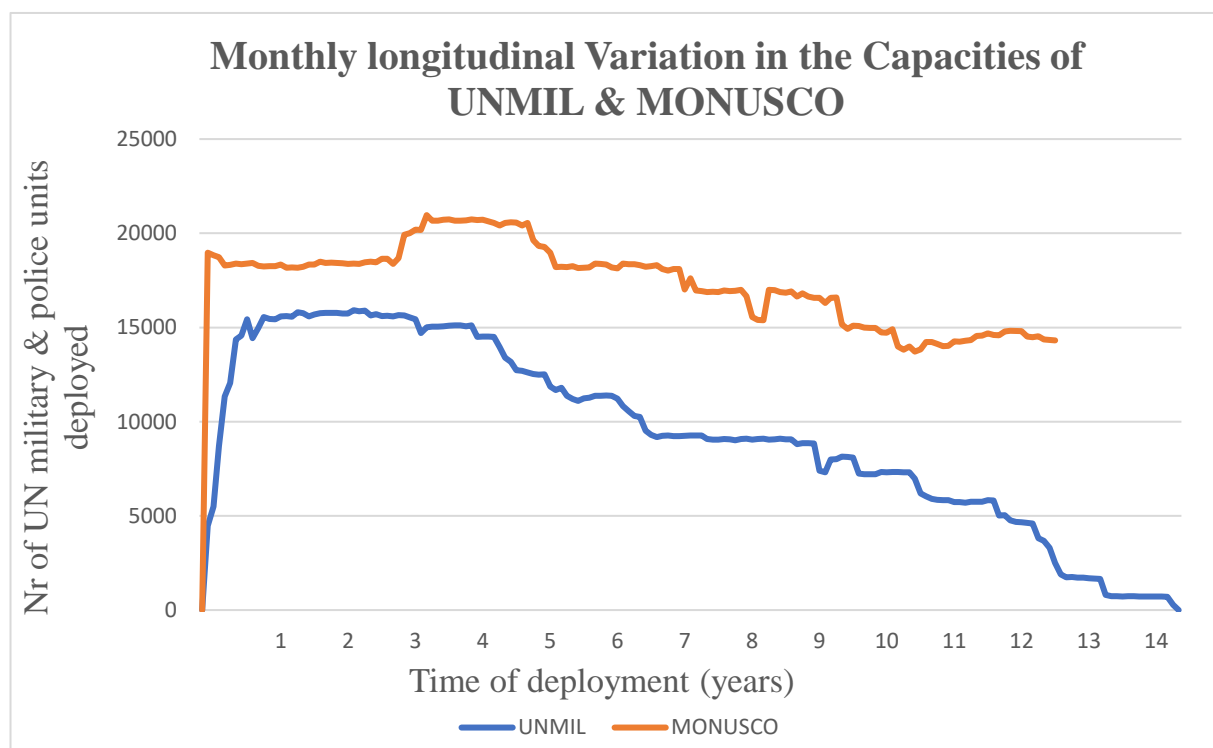
Third, MONUSCO's mandate did not include ceasefire assistance. However, its predecessor mission MONUC established and supervised the implementation of the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement as part of its original mandate (Monusco, 2023a). While the Lusaka ceasefire was never fully implemented and did not entirely halt conflict across the DRC, it nevertheless signified "a significant breakthrough in the resolution of the DRC conflict" (Koko, 2007, p. 35). Thus, when comparing the two PKOs' mandates, one can somewhat account for the omission of 'ceasefire assistance' from MONUSCO's mandate, as a ceasefire was already established before its launch.

Moreover, Blair and colleagues (2022) emphasise how MONUSCO's peacekeepers did not adhere to their mandate of civilian protection when hiding in their camps during mass killings near Beni (p. 664). This demonstrates that mandates may not be automatically implemented on the field. Thus, the authors recommend that PKOs adapt their mandates to the country's conflict situation. Given MONUSCO's wide mandate and the DRC's unstable context, it is unlikely that peacekeepers implemented all 23 specifications. Policymakers suggest that the UN's deployment of multidimensional PKOs to active conflict zones undermines their effectiveness (HIPPO, 2015). UNMIL and MONUSCO shared similar mandates, and its variations are unlikely to have had a decisive effect on the different mission outcomes. Hence, mandate specifications cannot answer the paper's research question.

6.3 Determinant Two: Peacekeeping numbers

This section applies Hultman and colleagues' (2013) theory to the two missions, and finds that peacekeeping numbers also fail to offer a convincing explanation to the research question. Using the UN's data base, I recorded the monthly military and police numbers of the two PKOs. I excluded the number of observers, as they were also not included in Hultman's analysis due to their negative correlation with violence. Figure 2 details the two missions' monthly development from their beginnings until their most recent data (*MONUSCO: Feb 23*), or end (*UNMIL: Feb 18*).

Figure 2: Monthly peacekeeping numbers



(UN Peacekeeping, 2023).

UNMIL began its deployment in 2003 with over 4400 military troops. Within a year, the mission’s capacity increased to over 15’000, maintaining this high level for another three years. After that, troop levels gradually decreased by around 1000 peacekeepers annually until February 2018, when UNMIL’s mandate ended. In contrast, MONUSCO began its deployment with over 18,000 troops, which increased to over 20’000 over the next three years. This high number was maintained for another three years, and then gradually declined to around 14’000, around which the mission has fluctuated over the past years.

Hultman and colleagues (2014) attribute the success of PKOs to deploying a large initial force and retaining high capacities for a long time. Both missions adhered to these requirements, MONUSCO even more so than UNMIL (*Figure 2*). Yet only UNMIL rapidly decreased violence, guiding Liberia to peace. Perhaps the two countries’ different populations and geographic area offer an explanation. The DRC’s population and area are respectively 18 and 21 times larger than Liberia’s, suggesting that MONUSCO's force capacities were comparatively much smaller than UNMIL’s (Worldometer, 2023). However, MONUSCO concentrated its mission on “ongoing military operations in the Kivus and Orientale Province, [minimising] the threat of armed groups” (Yousif, 2010, p. 3). While the area and populations of the DRC’s eastern regions are still larger than Liberia, MONUSCO’s peacekeeping size is still comparable to UNMIL (Monusco, 2015a & 2015b). Ergo, MONUSCO's force deployment

did not encompass the entire DRC and remained similar to UNMIL’s. This suggests that Hultman and colleagues’ (2014) determinant cannot explain the two PKOs’ different outcomes.

6.4 Determinant Three: Peacekeeping diversity

Here, I examine Bove and Ruggeri’s (2018) claim that higher peacekeeping diversity leads to more effective PKO outcomes. Again using the UN’s data base, I chose the month where each mission had the highest number of active military and police troops. For UNMIL, this was February 2006 (*15’890 troops*) and for MONUSCO, October 2013 (*21’064 troops*). I then recorded the number of troops each country contributed to the two PKOs, and used Bove and Ruggeri’s (2016) fractionalization and polarization indices to measure the heterogeneity of the two operations (p. 689). The two indices capture “how far the distribution of the groups is from a bipolar distribution”, with values close to 1 indicating a high, and values close to 0 indicating a low diversity (p. 689).

Figure 3: Fractionalization & polarization indices

	UNMIL	MONUSCO
Fractionalization	0.9998	0.9998
Polarization	0.5849	0.5512

(UN Peacekeeping, 2023)

The two missions’ similar fractionalization and polarization scores indicate no significant differences in peacekeeping force diversity. These results again indicate that the third determinant cannot account for the two missions’ differing effectiveness.

6.5 Other contextual similarities

This last section briefly explores contextual similarities between Liberia and the DRC. First, both countries’ early histories involved unequal social structures and an exploitative state. In Liberia, the Americo-Liberians arrived as settler colonialists and developed a hierarchical caste-system, retaining political control until 1980 (Dennis, 2005). The DRC shares a similar experience, with Belgian colonisers imposing a hierarchical administration and segregating the population until its 1960 independence (Gondola, 2002, p. 37). Second, both countries experienced military coups and repressive dictatorships that frequently infringed human rights (Ferim, 2012). Third, both countries have historically close ties to the United States, which exercised a protectorate over Liberia and supported the DRC’s anti-communist president

Mobutu (Dennis, 2005). Fourth, between the 1990s and the 2000s, both countries suffered from two violent civil wars involving foreign states and rebel groups (UCDP, 2023).

In response, PKOs were established in Liberia (*1990's ECOMOG*) and the DRC (*1999's MONUC*), later succeeded by UNMIL and MONUSCO (Adibe, 1997; Monusco, 2023a). Both predecessor missions were unpopular among local populations due to their inability to terminate violent conflicts (Adebajo, 2000; Tull, 2013). Both wars were characterised by high inter-ethnic divisions and conflict over their mineral resources, which incentivised and fuelled fighting across both countries (Le Billon, 2011; Olaopa & Ojatorotu, 2016). Toft (2010) highlights the difficulty of resolving ethnic wars, while Ross (2004) emphasises the destructive effects of natural resources, factors that were central to both conflicts. These contextual similarities between Liberia and the DRC strengthen the MSSD, and allow the analysis to focus on the differences and evaluate their explanatory power.

7. Backgrounds:

Here, I provide a brief summary of the two cases' conflicts that led to the establishment of UNMIL and MONUSCO.

7.1 Liberia

The following description of Liberia's two civil wars draws on existing overviews (Howe, 1996; Dennis, 2005; Kieh Jr, 2014). Liberia's first civil war lasted from 1989 to 1996, pitting President Doe's regime against rebel group NPFL, and involving various other factions such as ULIMO. The conflict ignited after Doe's government initiated crackdowns against the country's Gio and Mano tribes, which were united by Charles Taylor's NPFL. Thousands of civilians were massacred in the process, resulting in the ECOWAS sending a military intervention force (*ECOMOG*) in 1990 to restore order. Multiple peace agreements were established and subsequently broken, culminating in the 1996 Abuja Accord, after which Taylor was elected president. However, violence continued, and Taylor's clashes with rebel groups ULIMO and LURD sparked the Second Liberian Civil War, which lasted until 2003. The conflict ended when Taylor fled to exile, the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (*CPA*) was signed, and UNMIL took over peacekeeping duties from ECOMOG (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023). This was followed up by the peaceful 2005 election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was succeeded by George Weah in 2017.

7.2 Democratic Republic of Congo

The overview of the DRC's civil wars is based on Gondola (2002, pp. 20-176) Diercks (2011),

and Krahnmann and Leander (2019). The First Congo War, often termed “Africa’s first world war”, broke out in 1996 between Mobutu’s armed forces (*FAZ*) and a Congolese alliance of rebel groups (*AFDL*). The former was supported by Hutu factions, Sudan, and Angola's UNITA, while the latter was backed by the Rwandan and Ugandan governments. Numerous other groups were also involved in the conflict. In 1997, the AFDL entered Kinshasa and replaced Mobutu with rebel leader Kabila, which ceased hostilities. However, just a year later, conflict reignited, again involving multiple armed belligerents from across Africa. Thus, in the hope of achieving peace, the UN established MONUC in 2000. But fighting persisted, resulting in Kabila’s assassination and succession by his son Joseph, who persisted in a relentless struggle against the Rwandan-backed Banyamulenge groups. Despite a peace deal in 2002 and the subsequent formation of a transitional government, conflict continued to wage on, particularly in the country’s East. Even the 2013 establishment of MONUSCO did not reduce widespread violence and insurgencies, which continue to plague the country to this day.

8. Empirical Analysis:

The three main PKO determinants cannot explain the divergence of UNMIL and MONUSCO’s outcomes. Instead, the previously outlined alternative theories are examined in terms of their respective explanatory powers. I apply Stedman’s (1997) spoiler framework to the two cases, detailing each mission’s spoiler identification and management strategy. Subsequently, I depict alternative explanations, such as mandate implementation, underlying factors and the role of women.

8.1 Spoilers

The examination of how the two missions identified and responded to spoilers offers revealing insights and a strong explanation for their diverging outcomes. While UNMIL’s successful spoiler recognition and management laid the foundations for sustainable peace, MONUSCO failed to identify and manage its spoilers, undermining the DRC’s peace process.

a) Spoiler identification

In the wake of the 2003-signed CPA, UNMIL accurately identified its two potential spoilers: the former government of Liberia led by Charles Taylor (*ex-GOL*) and LURD, one of the main armed rebel group signatories to the peace accord (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023). Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria, which divided the group between its former leader and the rest of the group, which remained inside Liberia (Krcmaric, 2018). While Taylor left the negotiations, he continued to influence developments within Liberia (Nilsson, 2009). In 2004, Taylor instigated

large-scale violence, financed several presidential candidates, and attempted to influence ex-GOL's internal voting process, resulting in UNMIL recognising him as a dangerous spoiler to the CPA (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023). Most importantly, UNMIL recognised the “vertical fragmentation” between ex-GOL's spoiling leadership and the main group, which was more open to the possibilities of peace (p. 9).

Simultaneously, tensions between the Mandingo and Krahn ethnic groups caused a factional struggle between LURD's leaders Sekou Conneh and his wife Aisha (ICG, 2004, p. 9). Aisha was supported by Guinea's president Conté, the main foreign patron of LURD, adding further complexity to the internal conflict (p. 10). LURD's horizontal fragmentation and increasing instances of intra-party fighting threatened the peace process (UNSC, 2004a). Tensions heightened when LURD's high command suspended Sekou as party chairman. This spread concerns that LURD's internal division could cause a breakdown of peace negotiations, effectively ‘spoiling’ the CPA (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023). The third warring faction, rebel group MODEL, was not officially recognised as a dangerous spoiler. Despite MODEL chairman Nimley's distance from the group's fighters, he secured broad factional support in his pursuit of seats in the CPA's transitional unity government (Simons et al., 2013). To sum up, UNMIL and its head SRSK Klein correctly identified ex-GOL and LURD's internal fragmentations as potential spoiling events, which determined the mission's strategy towards these events (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023).

In contrast, MONUSCO did not correctly identify relevant spoilers and failed to comprehend “the ambiguous status and relationship of spoilers and neighbouring states that [were] hostile to the peace process” (Yonekawa, 2014, p. 159). MONUSCO has continued to collaborate with spoiling forces, failing to sufficiently address neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda's support of rebel groups and respective efforts to exploit the eastern DRC's minerals (Ahere, 2012). This spoiler misdiagnosis lies at the heart of MONUSCO's struggles to cease conflict in the DRC (Yonekawa, 2014).

The UN originally considered the Hutu-led military group FDLR the main spoiler and “negative force” in the DRC (UN, 2012). In 2012, M23 succeeded it, becoming the strongest rebel group in the DRC's East. It was soon seen as the next big spoiler to MONUSCO's mission (Yonekawa, 2014). However, when one applies Stedman's (1997) framework, M23 only classifies as a limited spoiler, as their “only official demand [was] that the original peace agreement should be respected” (Wilén, 2013, p. 123). Crucially, MONUSCO failed to recognise that M23 was merely a proxy for the Rwandan state, acting as a cover for the latter's extraction of mineral

resources (Mathys, 2017; Oxford Analytica, 2022). Additionally, despite M23 fighting the Congolese government's force FARDC, the two sides maintained a vague relationship and even overlapped in terms of group membership (Yonekawa, 2014). This further complicated the spoiler identification process.

MONUSCO's strategy demonised and excluded eastern rebel groups from the peace-building process. This diverted the PKOs' focus away from the main spoiling perpetrators in the DRC, which were not internal rebel groups as believed by the UN, but neighbouring states (Yonekawa, 2014). These states, particularly Uganda and Rwanda under its RPF regime, hid behind the "highly blurred roles and identities" of Congolese armed factions to influence developments in the East (p. 161). Tactics such as 'closing the conflict scene for information management' and interfering with UN investigations by preventing publications of war crimes granted the RPF and its allies total impunity (Reyntjens & Lemarchand, 2011; Reyntjens, 2013, p. 71).

Furthermore, due to its ambitions for absolute authority and unwillingness to compromise, the Congolese government has also been identified as a total spoiler (Wilén, 2013). Yet instead of recognising the Congolese government's spoiling potential, MONUSCO collaborated with its military force FARDC to restore state authority (Barrera, 2015). During joint operations, FARDC soldiers frequently committed atrocities, such as deliberately killing and sexually assaulting civilians (Clark, 2011; HRW, 2014). This collaboration contradicted MONUSCO's mandate to protect civilians, but the mission continued to ignore FARDC's atrocities (Yonekawa, 2014). Thus, MONUSCO not only failed to recognise the Congolese government as a spoiler, but also unintentionally supported a violent "spoiler state" (Wilén, 2013; Barrera, 2015, p. 9). In summary, by focusing its efforts on combating and excluding rebel groups such as M23, MONUSCO failed to recognise the DRC's spoiling neighbours and actively supported a spoiler in the form of the Congolese government (Yonekawa, 2014).

b) Spoiler management strategies

In Liberia, UNMIL successfully deployed a two-pronged strategy: it divided ex-GOL to marginalise Taylor's destructive influence, while simultaneously coercing and socialising the remaining group to remain in the peace fold (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023). UNMIL correctly recognised that Taylor threatened the negotiations, as his ex-GOL supporters clashed with LURD and MODEL forces, looting and harassing civilians (TNH, 2003). In response, SRSG Klein issued a public warning, and UNMIL's Quick Reaction Force took robust action to defuse rising tensions and restore order (Farrall, 2012). Additionally, UNMIL's team met with representatives of LURD, MODEL, and loyal ex-Taylor generals to convince the factions to

cease hostilities, which led to an increase of ex-GOL fighters disarming (ICG, 2004; Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023). Hence, UNMIL's divisive strategy to marginalise the main spoiler of Taylor proved successful, as many ex-GOL officials were brought into the peace process and rewarded with seats in Liberia's transitional unity government (Simons, 2013). As such, Taylor was unable to influence the elections and remained weakened in exile, which changed the power distribution inside ex-GOL, swinging it towards peace (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023).

Moreover, UNMIL faced LURD's two competing factions, of which neither was sufficiently weak to exclude from the peace process. To curb intra-factional fighting, UNMIL deployed a coercive military strategy, combined with a "reconciliatory approach directed toward bridging the divide in the LURD leadership" (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023, p. 11). When Sekou announced he would not participate in the disarmament process, SRSG Klein convinced him to return to Monrovia, where his absence threatened his credibility (ICG, 2004). Other diplomatic measures included meetings with LURD's factions, which aimed to keep the group's unity intact, as further fragmentation was feared to escalate in violence (UNSC, 2004b). While UNMIL could not fully stop LURD's internal struggles, its military patrols and diplomatic approach prevented the conflict from threatening the peace process implementation (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023). Thus, one can conclude that UNMIL accurately recognised Liberia's spoilers and deployed the appropriate strategies to contain them. In doing so, UNMIL never directly entered the conflict, staying impartial and regaining the trust of the Liberian population. Over 90% of public opinion survey respondents considered their security situation improved under UNMIL (Farrall, 2012).

In contrast, MONUSCO's failure to recognise Rwanda and Uganda as interfering spoilers resulted in a drastically unsuitable spoiler strategy (Wilén, 2013). Nonpartisan conflict mediators are key to identify and manage spoilers, and are effective in facilitating peaceful conditions (Rauchhaus, 2006). Paradoxically, Rwanda and Uganda were given the roles of mediators in the Congolese peace process (Davis, 2018). As such, they "exercised partiality by helping raise the profiles of RPF-created rebel groups," strengthening their control of eastern DRC (Yonekawa, 2014, p. 175). When Rwandan-backed M23 occupied Goma in 2012, Rwandan and Ugandan Defence Ministers were included in a sub-committee to "propose urgent actionable steps", plan the deployment of MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), and report the situation (ICGLR, 2012). In essence, Rwanda could retrieve information and influence MONUSCO's response to M23, a faction it logistically and militarily supported (Mathys, 2017). By participating in the report, Rwanda could influence the narrative in its favour (Reyntjens, 2013). One year later, the DRC government signed a declaration to finalise the 2009 peace

agreement, which granted Rwanda immense influence over the eastern Kivus (UNSC, 2013; Yonekawa, 2014). Hence, MONUSCO's flawed spoiler identification allowed spoilers to act as mediators and establish conditions that benefited them, instead of building sustainable peace in the DRC (Olaopa & Ojakorotu, 2016).

Moreover, MONUSCO's partnership with FARDC effectively transformed it into a party to the conflict (Clark, 2011; Karlsrud, 2015). Together with FARDC, MONUSCO fought against the FDLR and M23, which it identified as the main spoilers of the DRC's conflict (Wilén, 2013; Lopor, 2016). This compromised the impartiality of the PKO by projecting the image that the UN took sides (Karlsrud, 2015). Additionally, MONUSCO's failure to condemn FARDC's war crimes damaged its legitimacy and credibility, and explains its domestic unpopularity (UNHCR, 2023). Due to FARDC's vague relationship with M23, MONUSCO's peacekeepers "never intervened in abuses committed by M23 to defend civilians, even though UNSC Resolution 1856 authorised them to do so" (Yonekawa, 2014, p. 172). Thus, MONUSCO's choosing of sides restricted its ability to fulfil the mandate of civilian protection. Lopor (2016) even labels MONUSCO a "subconscious spoiler of the peace process in the DRC" due to its execution of a contradictory agenda and deepening of local rivalries (p. 49). In summary, MONUSCO ended up collaborating with the negative forces it was originally supposed to eliminate, damaging its credibility and ability to achieve sustainable peace.

c) Conclusion spoilers

The two PKOs' distinct spoiler management offers a convincing explanation of UNMIL's success and MONUSCO's continued struggles. UNMIL's accurate spoiler identification enabled it to deploy suitable spoiler strategies, which were successful in protecting the peace process and implementation. This allowed UNMIL to create conditions for sustainable peace, lay the foundations for democratisation, and complete its mandate with widespread approval from Liberia's population (Farrall, 2012; FH, 2022b).

In contrast, MONUSCO's erroneous spoiler identification allowed neighbouring states to continuously interfere in the DRC's conflict, act as biased mediators, and obstruct the peace process in pursuit of their geopolitical interests (Yonekawa, 2014). Furthermore, in pursuit of eliminating the supposed main spoilers (FDLR & M23), MONUSCO sided with the abusive FARDC, which was arguably a spoiler in its own right. The questionable decision to support the Congolese government seems to be confirmed in the wider literature. Kathman and Wood (2011) find that "pro-government intervention worsens hostilities with time" (p. 753). Walter

and colleagues (2021) report that peace may be harder to generate and maintain “when the government is winning” (p. 1714).

In practice, however, it remains an enormous challenge to correctly classify actors as different spoiler types, especially in such diverging contexts. Spoilers’ motivations, compositions and situations cannot be treated as constant, as they often change in response to the conflict’s development (Zahar, 2010). Furthermore, spoilers may have a legitimate claim to defect from the agreement, and can therefore not be always oversimplified as negative externalities that hinder peace negotiations.

8.2 Alternative explanations

a) Mandate implementation

While UNMIL’s mandate implementation and disarmament measures were more effective than MONUSCO’s, they also fell short on various dimensions. Thus, there are not enough concrete mandate implementation differences to convincingly explain the different outcomes of the PKOs.

UNMIL’s DDR program was key to facilitating sustainable peace (Simons, 2013). By 2006, UNMIL disarmed and demobilised over 100’000 combatants and destroyed 28’000 weapons (UNSC, 2006). Nevertheless, its initial 2003 implementation had to be suspended due to inadequate preparations, premature initiation, and an increasing threat of violence escalation (Nichols, 2005). It was resumed in 2004, enabling UNMIL to successfully implement all three core mandate goals: violence abatement, conflict containment and settlement (Farrall, 2006). Moreover, UNMIL effectively implemented its civilian protection mandate by responding swiftly to key moments in which civilians were under the immediate threat of violence. However, UNMIL failed to “provide reintegration opportunities for the demobilized fighters”, creating a dangerous disconnect between the disarmament and reintegration phases of the DDR process (Paes, 2005, p. 253). Nevertheless, UNMIL successfully implemented its core mandate goals, particularly the demobilisation, democratisation and civilian protection aspects (Simons, 2013). However, its record in terms of effectively implementing its reintegration, peace-building and rule-of-law goals remains mixed (Farrall, 2006).

In contrast, MONUSCO’s implementation process has been criticised for its “clear mismatch between doctrine and current practices” (Karlsrud, 2015, p. 50). While UNMIL’s peacekeepers swiftly de-escalated LURD’s intra-party fighting in 2004, MONUSCO forces hid in their camps during mass killings and failed to inhibit FARDC’s killing of civilians (Yonekawa, 2014; Blair

et al., 2022). MONUSCO's approach to DDR was "too passive in the adoption of policies and strategies", exacerbating the contradictions within its mandate (Boshoff, 2010, p. 12; Clark, 2011). While both missions compromised the reintegration part of DDR, MONUSCO failed to implement a filter mechanism, leading to the dangerous absorption of war criminals into the Congolese army (Clark, 2011). Such contradiction links back to MONUSCO's military collaboration with FARDC, who continued to massacre civilians (Autesserre, 2019). Hence, MONUSCO could not implement its civilian protection mandate, as it was also mandated to support FARDC (Karlsruh, 2015). Furthermore, the ongoing hostilities in eastern DRC made it impossible for MONUSCO to effectively implement DDR (Boshoff, 2010). This seemingly confirms Blair and colleagues' (2022) finding that active conflict negatively affects mandate implementation.

In summary, while UNMIL's mandate implementation was more effective than MONUSCO's, it cannot convincingly explain the diverging mission outcomes. Neither PKO fully implemented its mandate, and even UNMIL's most effective DDR program initially failed. It seems more feasible that MONUSCO's struggles, such as its contradictory mandate, stem from its failed spoiler identification process.

b) Underlying factors

McDonough (2008) and Autesserre (2008) argue that PKOs can only achieve sustainable peace if the primary causes of tensions are addressed. While one cannot deny the impact of such deep-rooted antagonisms, it is difficult to establish causality when examining how UNMIL and MONUSCO addressed these factors.

Barrera (2015) argues that the DRC's extreme poverty, exploitative neo-colonial state, and interethnic land conflicts are the main causes of the country's conflicts. Wong (2012) depicts the Congolese state as one characterised by politics of survival and intense factional divisions, which aim to control the country's mineral resources. MONUSCO's top-down approach has thus neglected local grievances and knowledge, which will continue to reignite conflict and prevent sustainable peace (Autesserre, 2019).

However, all these factors, such as an exploitative government, ethnic tensions, land conflicts and resource struggles, were also present in Liberia and influential in its civil wars (Richards, 2005; Annan, 2014). Furthermore, neither mission's mandate included regional or local reconciliation to address the underlying local tensions (Di Salvatore et al., 2022). While regional

contexts are important and too often overlooked by PKOs, they cannot explain UNMIL's success and MONUSCO's failure.

c) Role of women

When comparing the Liberian and the DRC's conflicts, there are clear differences in terms of the roles that women played.

Despite being disproportionately affected by Liberia's civil wars, women's networks played a crucial role in restoring socioeconomic and political stability in post-war Liberia (Goyol, 2019). Many exclusively female organisations acted as "activists for peace [and] agents of reconciliation" at all social levels (Moran & Pitcher, 2004, p. 507). For instance, when the CPA peace negotiations between the warring factions continued to stall, MARWOPNET blocked the exits of the negotiation room, refusing "to let the participants out until some progress was made" (Nilsson, 2009, p. 23). Simultaneously, CWOL contacted women in territories held by warring factions, offering alternative mediation avenues, which set the foundations for later peace talks (Moran & Pitcher, 2004). Moreover, WPI led mass demonstrations for peace in Monrovia to "convince international organisations that [...] Liberians rejected armed conflict" (p. 507). Furthermore, WIPNET brokered a deal between rebel groups and President Taylor and was instrumental in facilitating demobilisation (Gizelis, 2011). Interestingly, after the CPA peace agreement, many Liberian women's groups focused on the implementation of the DDR programs (Gizelis, 2011). WIPNET also played a role in the country's democratisation by registering women to vote and refusing to retreat to traditional gender roles (Bekoe, & Parajon, 2007). Liberian women capitalised on their crucial roles in the peace process, staying involved in UNMIL's long-term projects (Fuest, 2008).

Rather than being recognised as actors in their own right, Congolese women were predominantly perceived as victims of sexual violence (Autesserre, 2012). Banwell (2014) and Kitharidis (2015) criticise the Congolese military's hegemonic masculinity and rebel groups' use of sexual violence against women. Thus, many women's organisations in the DRC, such as AFEDE, revolve around raising awareness of female sexual violence victims (Godin & Chideka, 2010). Other organisations, such as RSLF, seek to increase female electoral representation in the DRC. However, women continue to be generally excluded from political decision-making structures (Sadie, 2010). This cannot be attributed to a lack of female participation, as Congolese women demonstrate "a profound grasp of [the DRC's] conflictual dynamics and challenges to peace-building" (Selebogo, 2020, p. 15'136). Yet women have not been involved in the DRC's peace process, as the narrative of women as victims persists (Martin de Almagro, 2018).

Comparing the two cases, it is apparent that Liberian women have played a larger role in the peace-building process. However, despite organising critical summits, “women found themselves closed out of the negotiations” (Moran & Pitcher, 2004, p. 508). Nevertheless, women’s organisations undoubtedly contributed to Liberia’s effective peace process, demobilisation and democratisation. This likely laid the foundations for UNMIL’s success, while in the DRC, women were excluded and subjugated to the roles of victims. However, this cannot fully explain why UNMIL was more successful than MONUSCO, as women were still excluded at critical moments of peace negotiations and had limited influence over Liberia’s rebel groups (Nilsson & Kovacs, 2023).

9. Conclusion:

This paper recognised that the three broadly accepted peacekeeping determinants could not explain the divergence between UNMIL and MONUSCO’s missions. Thus, it investigated alternative theories by using a MSSD to conduct a comparative case study of the two PKOs. The analysis showed that UNMIL’s success and MONUSCO’s failure can be largely attributed to the different spoiler identification and management strategies of the PKOs. The higher degree of mandate implementation and involvement of women’s organisations in Liberia compared to the DRC also offer considerable explanations. This suggests scholars may have to look beyond the internal factors of the PKOs, such as their compositions and mandates, when investigating avenues to improve peacekeeping effectiveness. Additionally, they should consider each mission’s unique external context, conflict history, potential spoilers, and the extent to which peacekeepers implement their mandates in practice. The UN cannot simply deploy large and diverse peacekeeping forces with similar mandates and expect equally good results. The aforementioned external factors need to be adapted to, which will challenge the rigid UN bureaucracy.

However, there are limitations to this study. In hindsight, it is simple to criticise a PKO’s spoiler misdiagnosis and highlight alternative strategies. Yet one can never truly know a spoiler’s intentions, especially in the multi-layered DRC conflict with its overlapping armed rebel groups, and complex history. Nevertheless, the spoiler framework sheds a dubious light on Rwanda’s destructive role in the conflict, deeming the EU’s decision to send the RPF €21 million of military assistance questionable (CEU, 2022).

While the research design treats the two PKO’s mandates as virtually equal, it cannot determine the extent to which they were implemented in the field. This coincides with Blair’s (2022)

recommendation for further research into when mandates are implemented. Furthermore, the paper could not make a claim regarding the impact of underlying factors, as there is no research on how the two PKOs, particularly UNMIL, addressed them.

Interestingly, Liberia's women's organisations acted predominantly at a local level, which may have allowed them to address some of these primary factors. Thus, the study provides a framework for further research into the roles of Liberia's women in addressing underlying factors. One may also investigate how women's organisations have influenced the implementation of mandates and democratisation, as UNMIL's success in implementing DDR has been largely attributed to women (Gizelis, 2011). This may encourage the international community to invest more heavily in Congolese women's organisations, instead of excessively focusing on the victimisation narrative.

This paper has set the stage for quantitative, large-N analyses to combine internally-focused peacekeeping approaches (mission composition & diversity) with theories that acknowledge external influences on the PKO (spoilers & women's role). These may offer more generalisable conclusions regarding the impact of this combination on PKOs' effectiveness. Given the rising risk of armed civil conflict, especially in Africa, PKOs will continue to play an important role in consolidating peace (Hoch et al., 2021). The more knowledge of what factors improve their effectiveness can be obtained, the better.

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11. Appendix

Full list of mandate specifications at UNMIL & MONUSCO's establishment

Stability		
	UNMIL	MONUSCO
Ceasefire assistance	✓	✗
Demilitarization	✗	✗
Control SALW	✗	✓
Electoral security	✗	✗
Disarmament & demobilisation	✓	✓
Arms embargo assistance	✗	✓
Reintegration	✗	✓
Use of force	✗	✓
Civilian protection	✓	✓
Peace process	✗	✗
Offensive operations	✗	✓
Peacebuilding		
	UNMIL	MONUSCO
Refugee assistance	✓	✓
Electoral assistance	✓	✓
Police reform	✓	✓
Humanitarian relief	✓	✓
Political party assistance	✗	✗
Voter education	✗	✗
Demining	✗	✓
Border control	✗	✓
National reconciliation	✗	✗
Economic development	✗	✗
Public information	✗	✓
Civil society assistance	✗	✓
State authority assistance	✓	✓
Transitional justice	✗	✗
Legal reform	✓	✗
Media resistance	✗	✗
Resources	✓	✓
Justice sector reform	✓	✓
Military reform	✓	✓
Prison reform	✓	✓
Regional reconciliation	✗	✗
Local reconciliation	✗	✗
Democratization	✗	✗
Public health	✗	✗
Power-sharing	✗	✗
Cultural heritage	✗	✗
Rights		
	UNMIL	MONUSCO
Human rights	✓	✓
Child rights	✓	✓
Gender mainstreaming	✓	✗
SGB violence	✓	✓
Totals	17	23
Shared dimensions	29/41	

(Di Salvatore et al., 2022, p. 937)