

A test of the democratic peacekeeping hypothesis: Coups, democracy, and foreign military deployments

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Abstract

While peacekeeping's effects on receiving states have been studied at length, its effects on sending states have only begun to be explored. This article examines the effects of contributing peacekeepers abroad on democracy at home. Recent qualitative research has divergent findings: some find peacekeeping contributes to democratization among sending states, while others find peacekeeping entrenches illiberal or autocratic rule. To adjudicate, we build on recent quantitative work focused specifically on the incidence of coups. We ask whether sending peacekeepers abroad increases the risk of military intervention in politics at home. Drawing on selectorate theory, we expect the effect of peacekeeping on coup risk to vary by regime type. Peacekeeping brings with it new resources which can be distributed as private goods. In autocracies, often developing states where UN peacekeeping remuneration exceeds per-soldier costs, deployment produces a windfall for militaries. Emboldened by new resources, which can be distributed as private goods among the selectorate, and fearing the loss of them in the future, they may act to depose the incumbent regime. In contrast, peacekeeping will have little effect in developed democracies, which have high per-troop costs, comparatively large selectorates, and low ex-ante coup risk. Anocracies, which typically have growing selectorates, and may face distinctive international pressures to democratize, will likely experience reduced coup risk. We test these claims with data covering peacekeeping deployments, regime type, and coup risk since the end of the Cold War. Our findings confirm our theoretical expectations. These findings have implications both for how we understand the impact of participation in peacekeeping – particularly among those countries that contribute troops disproportionately in the post-Cold War era – and for the potential international determinants of domestic autocracy.

Keywords

coups, democratic peace, peacekeeping, selectorate theory

Introduction

How does participating in UN peacekeeping missions impact troop-contributing countries (TCCs)? Expanding on the logic of the democratic peace, several authors suggest contributing peacekeeping troops abroad has a democratizing effect at home. Such 'democratic peacekeeping hypothesis' (DPH) arguments vary in their

causal logic, but commonly suggest peacekeeping facilitates the transmission and consolidation of liberal or democratic norms and institutions in less democratic TCCs (c.f. Lundgren, 2018; Norden, 1995; Andersson,

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2000, 2002; *Economist* 2004, 2010; Worboys, 2007). This reasoning is broadly consistent with peacekeeping's liberal internationalist characteristics, and with research on the democratic peace and democratization and more generally.¹ However, others are skeptical: rather than liberalizing or democratizing TCCs, peacekeeping may encourage or entrench illiberal, undemocratic, or praetorian regimes (Beswick, 2014; Caverley & Savage, 2016; Cunliffe, 2013, 2018; Dwyer, 2015; Sotomayor, 2013; Wilén, Ambrosetti & Birantamije, 2015; Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh, 2016).

Scholars have extensively studied peacekeeping's impact on the durability of peace (c.f. Fortna, 2004), democratization (Steinert & Grimm, 2015; Joshi, 2013; Fortna, 2008), and economic development (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000) in receiving states. However, little comprehensive quantitative analysis has assessed the effects of peacekeeping on TCCs. Lundgren (2018) offers a first test using time-series cross-sectional data. He finds substantial support for the DPH across TCCs generally. The greater their dependence on peacekeeping revenue, he finds, the lower the risk of a coup. In contrast, we ask whether a TCC's regime type affects its coup risk. A focus on regime type allows us to disaggregate the effects of peacekeeping across varied domestic political institutions (Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh, 2016).

We draw on selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999, 2005; see Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh, 2016) to explain how peacekeeping abroad might shape internal regime dynamics. We do so with reference to the UN's peacekeeping funding mechanism. The UN remunerates TCCs on a per-soldier basis, at a flat rate. States with low costs per soldier will experience peacekeeping as a financial windfall, the effect of which will likely vary by regime type. In developing autocracies – including many prominent TCCs – these funds can change the domestic balance of power between civilian and military authorities. These states have small selectorates and low per-troop costs. Part or all of excess remuneration will flow to militaries. Emboldened by new resources, and fearing the loss of them in the future, officers may act to depose the incumbent regime. In developed democracies, in contrast, selectorates are large, per-soldier costs are high, and militaries are socialized against coups. They will thus

see no similar effects. In anocracies – intermediate or transitional regimes with large or growing selectorates – selectorate effects and international pressures to democratize (Lundgren, 2018) will reduce coup risk.

We use regression models to investigate the extent of the impact of troop contributions to UN peacekeeping on the likelihood that autocratic, democratic, and anocratic states will experience a coup. In an important revision of the DPH, we find a variable relationship between peacekeeping and coups, depending on regime type. As the theory expects, we see little impact on consolidated democracies such as the UK, Canada, Sweden, and France after they contribute troops. These states face scant coup risk with or without peacekeeping. In line with the DPH, we find anocracies – intermediate and transitional regimes with large and sometimes growing selectorates – are less likely to experience a coup after peacekeeping. However, contra the DPH and consistent with our expectations, we find autocratic TCCs – those with the smallest selectorates – face increased coup risk.

We proceed as follows. First, we locate our discussion of the DPH in post-Cold War changes to peacekeeping. Next, we set out our theory of how peacekeeping impacts sending states, identifying a range of control variables. We then describe data and research design, before turning to findings. A discussion section assesses results and implications.

Peacekeeping and the democratic peacekeeping hypothesis

Since the end of the Cold War, the size, scope, and intensity of peacekeeping missions have all increased (Goulding, 1993; Brahim, 2000; Lipson, 2007). At the same time, troops from Western democracies have largely been replaced by peacekeepers from developing countries, often less democratic states with poor human rights records. In 1990, leading peacekeeping contributors included Canada, Finland, Austria, and Norway. More recently, the largest peacekeeping nations include Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. Developed countries no longer contribute troops significantly to the most difficult operations (c.f. Bellamy & Williams, 2013; Bellamy, Williams & Griffin, 2010). The associated decline in the quality of peacekeeping has included battlefield failures (c.f. Rohde, 2013; Roberts, 1994), corruption (Andreas, 2008), and troop misconduct (c.f. Grady, 2010). Such concerns have prompted extensive scholarly debate (c.f. Lipson, 2007; Aoi, Thakur & De Coning, 2007), UN internal review (c.f. United Nations, 2015; UN Security Council, 2000), and efforts

¹ The democratic peace – the idea that democracies do not go to war with other democracies – has been described as the 'closest thing [...] to an empirical law in the study of international relations' (Levy, 1988: 27).

at institutional reform (c.f. UN Security Council Resolution 1327).

While the effects of peacekeeping on receiving states are well documented, its impact on TCCs has only recently been investigated. The DPH emphasizes positive effects concerning human rights, rule of law, and democratization. Broadly, it includes institutional and normative variants, echoing approaches to the democratic peace (c.f. Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999; Maoz & Russett, 1993; Owen, 1994). Findlay (1996) and Worboys (2007) adopt an institutional perspective, arguing peacekeeping keeps meddling troops abroad, where they cannot interfere in domestic politics. Lundgren (2018) argues that militaries will avoid 'insubordination' because doing so would jeopardize future deployments. Cunliffe (2018) considers the possibility that peacekeeping may compensate the military, undermining praetorian tendencies. He also suggests the bureaucratic and logistical exigencies of peacekeeping might encourage civilian control over the military, facilitating democratization (Cunliffe, 2018).² Others argue peacekeeping socializes TCCs into cosmopolitan values associated with the UN, including human rights and rule of law (c.f. Moskos, Williams & Segal, 2000; Sotomayor, 2013; Norden, 1995; Findlay, 1996; Worboys, 2007).

Others disagree. Sotomayor (2013) identifies multiple conditions to be met before liberal-democratic norms or structures are likely to 'rub off' through peacekeeping. Cunliffe (2018) argues that if socialization mechanisms are strong, as DPH proponents argue, peacekeeping failures would likely strengthen illiberal norms – for example, where troop misconduct and human rights violations are tolerated. Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh (2016: 116) claim that financial support for peacekeeping is 'likely [to] empower militaries, potentially facilitating coups and entrenching military government'. Caverley & Savage (2016) argue that TCCs with more foreign trained officers will be more likely to experience coups and that funding may allow repressive regimes to ignore conditionality on other aid (Savage & Caverley, 2017). Wilén, Ambrosetti & Birantamije (2015) argue that foreign support for peacekeeping has prevented demobilization of former combatants in Burundi. Dwyer (2015) examines mutinies by developing TCC troops operating under poor conditions. Finally, Beswick (2014) questions the wisdom of building the capacity of African peacekeepers, given a history of predatory

behavior. While these accounts vary, they do not differ in seeing peacekeeping as detrimental to TCC domestic politics.

Peacekeeping, selectorate theory, and domestic instability

These competing accounts suggest several possible effects of peacekeeping on TCCs. We narrow the scope of investigation to one outcome linked directly to military activity: coups.³ Coups are a major form of democratic backsliding, and, having already been investigated in the DPH literature (Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh, 2016; Lundgren, 2018), represent an established point of entry. Building on this work, we evaluate the impact of troop contributions on coup incidence in a given state, after peacekeeping deployment, differentiating according to regime type.

To explain how participation in peacekeeping shapes the likelihood of coups according to regime type, we draw on selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999, 2005). Selectorate theory offers a stylized account of 'political survival' across different regime types, wherein a leader must maintain a 'winning coalition' of supporters within the broader 'selectorate' – the group that chooses the leader – to retain power. The winning coalition's size and composition varies with regime type. Countries that hold competitive elections – consolidated democracies as well as those transitioning to democracy – have relatively large winning coalitions: a majority or plurality of the electorate. In autocracies, however, the coalition required to retain or bid for power tends to be smaller: generally a subset of political, economic, and military elites. Winning coalition size dictates leaders' strategies in pursuit of power, particularly how they distribute resources. A large selectorate must be won over with public goods, while a small selectorate can be targeted with private goods. Consequently, even relatively minor changes in resources available to distribute can lead to comparatively large and destabilizing effects in autocracies.

² While Cunliffe is a DPH skeptic, he provides a synoptic review of possible DPH mechanisms.

³ Thyne & Powell (2016) present coups as possible triggers for democratization but acknowledge that coups themselves represent negative progress on the process of democratization. Marinov & Goemans (2014) show that pre-1991 coups tended to produce durable autocracies, whereas post-1991 coups have tended to lead to elections. However, in both studies, international pressures play an important role in democratization, suggesting that international signals – such as funding for autocratic militaries – could exert contrary pressures.

Selectorate theory suggests reasons why some militaries might become coup-prone specifically following peacekeeping missions. Autocracies face greater risk of coups (Huntington, 1968). We argue this risk is exacerbated by peacekeeping remuneration.⁴ Autocratic TCCs are disproportionately developing non-democracies, with relatively low per-soldier peacekeeping expenditures. Because the UN pays a fixed per-soldier rate, these states typically receive remuneration exceeding the cost of deployment (we elaborate below, based on existing empirical studies). We assume these states likely reinvest part of this surplus in their militaries. They do so for four reasons. First, these states, like others, prioritize national defense. Second, improved military capacity may be an investment in future peacekeeping – and thus future rewards. Third, non-democracies may view strengthened militaries as tools of domestic repression, for maintaining autocratic rule. Fourth, these states were encouraged to by the UN, following peacekeeping failures by these TCCs (United Nations, 2015; UN Security Council Resolution 1327).

These conditions present the military with a new, post-deployment incentive structure. On the one hand, new military investment is desirable. On the other, they may fear losing these funds in the future. Peacekeeping deployments are temporary, annually renewable by the UN, and persist only as long as a given mission goes on. Loss of foreign income – whether through non-renewal by the UN or a domestic policy change – would lead to a reduction in military budgets. Moreover, officers may see an opportunity to increase the proportion of the surplus the military receives, by seizing the power of the purse for themselves.⁵ Finally, officers may want to seize power for more generalized reasons. Per selectorate theory's core

⁴ Peacekeeping is thus neither necessary nor sufficient to increase coup risk. It operates as a contributing condition (George & Bennett, 2005; Collier & Mahoney, 1996). While coups are already more likely in autocracies than democracies, the difference will be amplified by contributing peacekeeping troops.

⁵ Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005: 497) argue that coups are instigated by members of the winning coalition dissatisfied with the current (or prospective future) dispensation of private goods. Similarly, Collier & Hoeffler (2006) suggest military coups occur when their requests for resources go unmet. Where extortion fails, coups follow, lest the threat lose credibility. On other accounts, officers commit coups to exert policy influence (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2005: 221–222). Since military funding and resources are readily convertible into power, the two readings are largely overlapping. Albrecht & Eibl (2018) show military budgets can be used to buy off elite officers, whereas social spending buys off combat officers. Our theory emphasizes elite officers.

assumptions, most top-level elites would bid for power, given the chance.⁶

These incentives constitute a motive for a coup. The military's new circumstances also present opportunity. First, the military is now stronger than it was before. Its capacity to coerce or remove the incumbent government is concomitantly greater. The balance of power between the military elite and the incumbent may have been destabilized.⁷ Second, the chance to extract additional funds after a coup provides elite officers with prospective funds dispensable as private goods, in the post-coup environment. They can thus commit to buying off more of the autocratic selectorate than they could before. In short, the uniformed elite are now better positioned both coercively and economically to overthrow the incumbent.⁸ Thus, our first hypothesis:

*H1: Coups will be more likely in autocracies following peacekeeping deployments.*⁹

Democracies, by contrast, have low coup propensity under these conditions for multiple reasons. First, tending to be developed states, their per-soldier costs are much higher (as the studies mentioned below show). They thus receive little to no peacekeeping surplus – indeed, they are more likely to face budget shortfalls. Second, democracies are characterized by a large selectorate – typically a majority or plurality of the voting population. Private goods distribution is thus a poor strategy

⁶ Per selectorate theory, all political elites (civilian or uniformed) aim to maximize their own interests (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005: 21). We assume at least some elite officers are among the subgroup of the selectorate bidding for leadership (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005: 39).

⁷ Per Svobik (2009), autocracies face a distinctive threat of coups due to an unstable internal balance of power between dictators and their elite winning coalitions. Peacekeeping funds disrupt this potentially delicate balance. McMahon & Slanchev (2015) show regimes resist military overthrow in part through the 'power of the purse'. External funding from peacekeeping would undermine this source of control. In contrast, see Powell & Chacha (2016), for whom foreign income adds an incentive against uniformed misbehavior. Relative to coups and peacekeeping, the finding is broadly consistent with Lundgren (2018).

⁸ Put differently, dispersible resources may help coup-prone officers resolve the coordination problems identified by Little (2017), by both providing incentives to join the coup faction and providing coup plotters credible means, in financing and materiel, to back up their intended seizure of power.

⁹ Collier & Hoeffler (2006) also find foreign aid increases coup risk. Because peacekeeping remuneration is essentially aid specifically for militaries, we would expect an especially acute such correlation for autocratic TCCs.

for securing rule. Third, entrenched democratic institutions are commonly understood to be generally resistant to military overthrow – a view supported by existing evidence (Belkin & Schofer, 2003; Feaver, 1999; Powell, 2012; Montinola & Jackman, 2002). Militaries in entrenched autocracies face few to none of these barriers. Thus, our second hypothesis:

H2: Democracies will see little effect on coup propensity following peacekeeping deployments.

In anocratic states, the situation is different. Anocracies are characterized by elements of both democratic and autocratic states. They are described as ‘partially open yet somewhat repressive’ (Hegre et al., 2001: 33–35).¹⁰ Here, where elections may or may not be free and fair, selectorate size is ambiguous. Elites may be able to secure rule without popular support, through private goods distribution, but doing so is uncertain. Militaries thus face similarly uncertain outcomes of any coup attempt. They may also encounter a broader citizenry that expects to choose its own rulers. Moreover, anocratic regimes are often states in transition to democracy, and thus under international observation or supervision. They thus have special incentives to present themselves as functioning democracies – indeed, access to foreign funds such as development aid may be predicated on these appearances. Under these conditions, a coup would undermine access to foreign income (whether for peacekeeping or otherwise), lowering rather than raising the national budget – the military budget included, as Lundgren (2018) argues. Finally, the existing rate of coups among anocracies appears relatively high, for largely exogenous reasons – rates thus have further to fall than in already coup-resistant democracies.¹¹ Here, we expect that the DPH applies, and coup propensity will

¹⁰ Indeed, the category has been described as theoretically incoherent (c.f. Gunitsky, 2015; Przeworski et al., 2000). It includes stable but intermediary regimes, as well as those transitioning to and from democracy. Some theoretical coherence being necessary, our theoretical expectations emphasize transitions toward democracy.

¹¹ Powell (2012: 1035) finds anocracies are more likely than both autocracies and democracies to face coup attempts, ‘though the result is not robust’. In transitional anocratic regimes, existing political institutions may deconsolidate, undermining checks and balances and creating new winners and losers (Hegre et al., 2001; Sahin & Linz, 1995; Tarrow, 2011; Fearon & Laitin, 2003: 75–76, 81; Vreeland, 2008: 403–404; Gurr, 1974). As a result, anocracies are said to be ‘ripe for ethnocratic or ideological leaders who want to organize rebellion’ (Hegre et al., 2001: 34). Collier & Hoeffler (2007) find a non-monotonic relationship between military spending, coup risk, and coup-proofing behavior. In the present

drop as a result of peacekeeping. Officers can be expected to remain in their barracks, lest they do more harm than good to their circumstances. Thus, finally, our third hypothesis:

H3: Coups will be less likely in anocracies after peacekeeping deployments.

We base our account in part on existing evidence concerning how peacekeeping remuneration works. Developing states with lower per-troop military costs receive remuneration well in excess of their peacekeeping costs. Based on a spatial panel regression from 1990 to 2012, Gaibulloev et al. (2015: 727, 740) conclude that ‘some countries specialize in supplying UN peacekeepers as a money-making venture’. They continue, ‘UN peacekeeper contributors are more motivated by money-making personnel deployments than by other contributor-specific gains, such as regional stability’. While UN payments to TCCs are fixed at a per-soldier rate, actual per-soldier costs vary by country, being lower in developing TCCs (Coleman, 2014: 9).¹² Thus, ‘[p]oorer troops contributing countries, which send the lowest paid forces, are reimbursed more than their actual cost’ (Bove & Elia 2011: 710). Many developing TCCs therefore experience peacekeeping deployments as a net windfall, and are incentivized to peacekeep for profit, as well as or rather than out of commitment to liberal-internationalist principles (Sheehan, 2011; see also Sotomayor, 2013: 35, 63; Cunliffe, 2018; see Zaman & Biswas, 2014: 331 on the case of Bangladesh).¹³

situation, international incentives appear to reduce a high ex ante coup risk.

¹² The UN’s remuneration system for troop contributor has evolved dramatically since its inception, in 1974. It now covers billions of dollars annually and is governed by some half-dozen UNGA resolutions. In 1974, TCCs were paid \$500 per peacekeeper per month, rising to \$988 in 1991 (with supplements for specialists) plus an allowance for food, equipment (including weapons), and ammunition for a total of \$1,058. In the past decade, the rate increased three more times, to \$1,410. Troops also receive directly a daily allowance (\$1.28) and recreational leave allowance (\$10.50 per day for up to 15 days). While these rates are supposedly calculated to cover costs only (i.e. not enough to turn a profit), they are fixed across troop contributors, despite vast cross-national disparities in troop salaries. Because rates appear to be based on average costs across nations, wealthier countries are remunerated below cost and poorer ones well above it. Remuneration for materials has risen even more dramatically. See details in Leslie & Langholtz (2016) and Coleman (2014).

¹³ Remuneration for troops alone can exceed \$100,000,000 annually for the largest TCCs (e.g. Pakistan, Ethiopia, India, and Bangladesh). While this may represent little of military budgets in larger states, it

The resulting funds appear to flow in large part to militaries. Indeed, Bove & Elia (2011: 704) find that ‘for countries deploying large peacekeeping forces the earning is a significant portion of the defence budget’. Peacekeeping also tends to result in larger and better-equipped standing armies.¹⁴ A persistent policy of peacekeeping increases the number of troops under arms, insofar as more deployment requires more soldiers, and pays for those increases. Moreover, remuneration extends beyond per-troop costs to materiel.¹⁵ Military equipment, being durable, often persists beyond deployment. Larger and better equipped armies are more powerful than they would otherwise be, with domestic as well as international consequences.¹⁶ In some cases, the impact is significant. Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh (2016: 109) summarize an extreme example:

accounts for a large proportion of smaller state military budgets (79% of total military expenditures in Rwanda, 29% in Ethiopia, 27% in Togo, 25% in Malawi, 25% in Fiji, 24% in Ghana, 24% in Gambia, and 21% in Nepal) (c.f. Bobrow & Boyer, 1997; Berman & Sams, 2000; Belamy & Williams, 2013; Gaibullov et al., 2015; Victor, 2010). Coleman & Nyblade (2018) argue the ‘peacekeeping for profit’ thesis has significant limits. However, even they find TCCs may be motivated by profit in some circumstances.

¹⁴ Admittedly, if retained by civilian authorities, these transfers could lead also to another outcome: coup-proofing. In this study, we limit ourselves to the risk of coups. On coup-proofing as a possible alternate outcome, see Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh (2016). Our thanks to an anonymous reviewer for clarifying our thinking here.

¹⁵ Pre-1994 materiel reimbursements were paid through an overly complex system for use, loss, and depreciation. In 1994, the system was simplified, and equipment reimbursements were standardized. Standardization does not account for dramatic differences in materiel costs across TCCs. Indeed, remuneration has tended to favor developing countries with lower-grade equipment. By stocking up on cheap equipment, states can arm themselves at discount rates, pocketing the excess. TCCs with large stockpiles can deploy also their most substandard equipment and be reimbursed at the same fixed rate. At minimum, they stand to be better equipped than they would otherwise be. See discussion in Coleman (2016: 17–19). On UN equipment reimbursement policy generally, see Leslie & Langholtz (2016). UN guidelines on reimbursement for troops, equipment, and supplies are available here: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/2014_COE_Manual.pdf.

¹⁶ As Coleman & Nyblade (2018) note, some of this elevated funding flows through militaries to soldiers, who receive higher than normal salaries when peacekeeping. On their reading, this counts against the profit motive. However, while salaries do not remain in national military coffers, they may still incentivize military intervention in politics. Soldiers with elevated incomes are, in effect, a constituency to which the military brass are accountable, assuming they want to forestall unrest in the lower ranks. The risk of unrest among enlisted troops may motivate military elites to act against civilian leadership. See related discussion of salaries in Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh (2016).

Fiji, a country that faces few international or domestic threats, now maintains both a quality and quantity of armed forces that would otherwise be unaffordable. At more than 1 soldier for every 100 citizens it has become one of the most heavily militarized countries on the planet [...] Where the army was once a small force with little institutional clout or material power, it now has both the means and the desire to intervene in domestic politics. Indeed, it has prosecuted no less than 4 coups in the last 20 years.

In short, there are substantial theoretical reasons to link UN peacekeeping payments to coup risk in certain regime types. Where reimbursements exceed costs, and where selectorates are small, as they are in autocracies, the resulting surpluses increase officers’ motive and capacity to depose the incumbent.

Research design

Publicly available data about coups, regime type, and peacekeeping deployments does not allow us to directly test the causal impact of troop contribution on military seizure of power. Instead, we test whether there is a relationship between peacekeeping deployments and coups, and whether this relationship is conditioned by the regime type of the sending state. Selectorate theory focuses on domestic elite politics to explain why autocracies might be particularly coup-prone. Given the unlikelihood of accessing precise information about the internal political machinations of small-selectorate states, especially across a large number of cases, we measure the outcomes our theory correlates with each regime type as a best available test of our theory.

We analyze time-series cross-sectional (panel) data from 1991 to 2013 to estimate the effect of the interaction of regime type and troop contributions on coup attempts. Specifically, we look at data from 157 countries.¹⁷ The unit of observation is the country-year and there are 3,001 observations in total.¹⁸

Dependent variable

The dependent variable is *Military coup attempts*, which is the number of military coup attempts in a given country in a given year. The original data come from Marshall & Jagers (2002) but were coded by Lundgren (2018) to

¹⁷ We exclude countries with a population under 500,000.

¹⁸ We do not have significant missingness with any of our key variables, and as such we do not employ any strategies to deal with missing data.

exclude non-military coup attempts.¹⁹ Marshall & Jaggers (2002) define a coup as a ‘forceful seizure of executive authority and office by a dissident/opposition faction within the country’s ruling or political elites that results in a substantial change in the executive leadership and the policies of the prior regime’. We analyze coup attempts as our theory does not predict the likelihood of success, rather the likelihood of attempt. However, we confirm in the robustness checks that the results hold if we consider only successful coups (see Online appendix).

Independent variables

The main independent variables of interest are the interaction terms between regime type and the number of peacekeepers contributed. To create these interaction terms, we use regime type data from Marshall & Jaggers (2002). We follow Polity specifications, coding countries with a score of 6 and above as democracies, countries with a score of 5 to –5 as anocracies, and those with –6 and below as autocracies. We create a dummy variable for each of these categories that takes a 1 if a country is an autocracy/anocracy/democracy in a given year and a 0 otherwise. The number of peacekeepers contributed is the number of military personnel committed to UN peacekeeping by a given country in a given year.²⁰ These data come from Perry & Smith (2013). Our theory predicts that the effect of contributing peacekeepers on the likelihood of coup attempts varies by regime type. Specifically, we predict that autocracies that contribute peacekeepers will be *more* likely to experience a coup attempt (which would imply a positive and statistically significant coefficient on the *Robust autocracy*Peacekeepers* interaction term) and that democratizing countries (anocracies) that contribute peacekeepers will be *less* likely to experience a coup attempt (which would imply a negative and statistically significant coefficient on the *Anocracy*Peacekeepers* interaction term). We predict that contributing peacekeepers should have a positive but insignificant effect on democracies.

Control variables

We also consider a range of control variables, in two major categories: economic and military. The first is the overall level of economic development (*GDP per capita* in thousands of US dollars), low levels of which correlate with increased rates of military interventions in politics

(Luttwak, 1969; Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Next, we consider *Regime durability* (or the years since the last authoritarian regime takeover), which captures, in part, past coups.²¹ Past coups may make states more likely to experience additional coups in the future (Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson & Woller, 1992). We also control for ongoing *Political violence*.²² As demonstrated by Lundgren (2018), military expenditure and expenditure per soldier may be confounding our results. As such, we control for the size of *Military expenditure* (in billions of US dollars)²³ and *Expenditure per soldier* (in thousands of US dollars) (Powell, 2012). Finally, we control for *Population*, which affects the number of peacekeepers a country could plausibly contribute.

A statistical model of coup attempts

As the dependent variable is a count variable (the count of military coup attempts in a given year), we utilize a Poisson regression.²⁴ Goodness-of-fit chi-squared tests confirm that a Poisson model fits our data well. We cluster our standard errors by country and use year fixed effects.²⁵ However, we confirm that the results hold when using negative binomial regression and OLS panel regression in the robustness checks. Due to issues of multicollinearity, it is inappropriate to estimate our three interaction terms of interest (*Robust autocracy*Peacekeepers*, *Anocracy*Peacekeepers*, and *Robust democracy*Peacekeepers*) in the same model. As such, we estimate one model per interaction term, holding all other

²¹ Marshall & Jaggers (2002).

²² We use the variable *Conflict*, which takes a 1 if more than 25 people were killed by political violence in a given year (Gleditsch et al., 2002).

²³ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

²⁴ We chose to use Poisson models given that the dependent variable is a count variable. As is the case with many count variables, the data are non-normally distributed and highly positively skewed. As a result, standard ordinary least squares regression may produce biased results (see, among many others, Winkelmann, 2008; Lovett & Flowerdew, 1989; Hutchinson & Holtman, 2005; Coxe, West & Aiken, 2009). That said, in an abundance of caution, we do confirm in the Online appendix that the results are robust to OLS panel regression, both with clustered standard errors and with country and year fixed effects.

²⁵ In a perfect world, we would use time-series methods to analyze these data to ensure that we are capturing all temporal dependencies (Beck, Katz & Tucker, 1998). However, as the data are from 1991–2013, we do not have sufficient observations to employ time-series methods (Lehmann & Casella, 1998). Given this constraint, we use year fixed effects to capture the influence of time-series trends. In the robustness checks, we also employ a lagged dependent variable (Keele & Kelly, 2006).

¹⁹ However, we confirm in the Online appendix that our results are robust to including all coups, not just military coups.

²⁰ Measured in thousands of military personnel.

Table I. Determinants of military coup attempts, 1991–2013; Poisson regression with year fixed effects

	<i>Military coups</i>	<i>Military coups</i>	<i>Military coups</i>
Robust autocracy	0.347 (0.313)		
Robust autocracy*Peacekeepers	2.117* (1.003)		
Anocracy		0.782** (0.259)	
Anocracy*Peacekeepers		-2.930*** (0.736)	
Robust democracy			-1.233** (0.385)
Robust democracy*Peacekeepers			-0.489 (0.590)
Peacekeepers	-1.759 [†] (0.991)	0.152 (0.199)	-0.154 (0.387)
GDP per capita	-0.022 (0.050)	-0.017 (0.043)	-0.008 (0.030)
Regime durability	-0.023 (0.021)	-0.014 (0.020)	-0.021 (0.021)
Political violence	0.868* (0.351)	0.798* (0.317)	0.709* (0.314)
Military expenditure	-338.298 [†] (181.882)	-382.188* (181.312)	-348.227* (166.255)
Expenditure per soldier	1.127 (1.524)	1.337 (1.394)	0.846 (1.533)
Population	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Constant	-1.598** (0.486)	-1.884*** (0.417)	-1.298** (0.425)
N	3,001	3,001	3,001

Standard errors in parentheses. [†] $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

specifications and variables constant. As there is a risk of autocorrelation (observations within countries are not necessarily independent), we also estimate a model with a lagged dependent variable in the robustness checks. Finally, there is a risk of unobserved country or year-specific effects. As such, we estimate a model with OLS panel regression with country and year fixed effects.

An empirical test of the democratic peacekeeping hypotheses

Table I shows the results of our three main models, each of which estimates the effect of one of our interaction terms of interest, which correlate with the three hypotheses posed earlier. As is evident, our theory correctly predicted that the effect of peacekeeper contributions on coup attempts is conditioned by regime type. Importantly, and as theorized, the interaction is statistically significant and positive in the autocracy model,

confirming our hypothesis (H1) that coups are considerably more likely in autocracies following a peacekeeping deployment. In the anocracy model, the interaction term is also statistically significant, yet negative. This lends support for H3, which stated that anocracies see reduced coup likelihood after peacekeeping deployments. Additionally, as predicted in H2, democracies see little effect on coup propensity following peacekeeping deployments. It is difficult to substantively interpret the coefficients of non-linear models, so we calculate the marginal effects of our main quantities of interest. These results are presented in Figure 1.

Robustness checks

We conducted a battery of robustness checks to confirm that our results are not dependent on one particular specification of the dependent variable, on one particular modeling strategy, or on the specific control variables we have selected. As such, we tested two additional

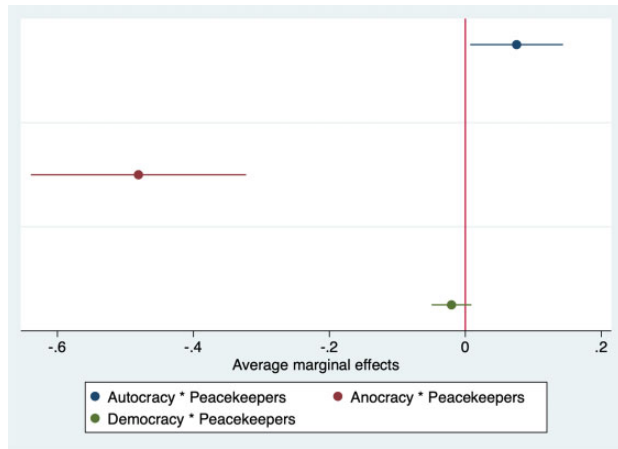


Figure 1. Marginal effect of interaction between regime type and peacekeepers

specifications of the dependent variable: successful coups (as opposed to attempts) and all coups (as opposed to military coups). The results are consistent. While we believe Poisson models to be the most appropriate given that our dependent variable is a count variable, we also tested our theory using OLS panel regression. For thoroughness, we estimated our model using country and year fixed effects as well as with standard errors clustered by country. We also estimated the model using negative binomial regression, which is an extension of the Poisson model that accounts for potential overdispersion. Our final model specification includes a lagged endogenous variable to alleviate any potential concerns about autocorrelation. Again, we find our results to be consistent.

Finally, we test additional covariates to make sure our results are not overly sensitive to the controls we selected for the main model. In line with Lundgren (2018), we introduce the number of ground-combat capable organizations in a country as a control for coup-proofing measures (Pilster & Böhmelt, 2011). Similarly, we introduce ethnic fractionalization, which measures the degree of ethnic heterogeneity in a country (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Our results are largely robust to the inclusion variables. The fact that our model is robust to the country fixed-effects model above should assuage concerns about other potentially missing control variables. All robustness checks can be found the Online appendix.

Discussion

Our most important finding is that the relationship between peacekeeping and the occurrence of coups varies by regime type. Autocracies are more likely to experience a coup following peacekeeping deployments, while

anocratic TCCs are significantly less likely to experience a coup during the same period. In short, the evidence supports the DPH in transitional and intermediary TCCs and runs contrary to the DPH in non-democratic TCCs. Democracies remain unlikely to experience coups regardless of peacekeeping. Broadly, the control variables behaved as expected. Countries with more political violence are more likely to experience coups. Countries with larger military budgets are less likely to experience coups. Economic development, regime durability, and expenditure per soldier are not statistically significant.

Our findings point specifically to deficiencies in both the institutional and normative forms of the DPH. Institutionally, the suggestion is that coup-prone militaries can be either kept deployed abroad or bought off with resources from peacekeeping (c.f. Findlay, 1996; Worboys, 2007). The evidence above suggests neither reliably forestalls military meddling in politics. Peacekeeping only deploys and funds troops impermanently. Uniformed elites may return home wanting more. Normatively, peacekeeping deployment appears not to sufficiently expose officers from autocracies to liberal-democratic norms to alter their behavior. Indeed, evidence of peacekeeper corruption (c.f. Andreas, 2008) suggests participation alone does not imply liberalization. Our data do not tell us precisely why.

Participating in peacekeeping may socialize transitioning and intermediary regimes into liberal or democratic norms or reinforce the modest institutions that are characteristic of them. Our data reveal no particular insights here. However, despite the increased means (i.e. private goods) afforded by peacekeeping, their larger selectorates make them less coup-prone. That coups appear less common in anocratic peacekeepers suggests that the category may be more conceptually coherent than has been previously argued (c.f. Gunitsky, 2015; Przeworski et al., 2000).

As we note above, we do not specifically test the selectorate-theoretic causal mechanism. Doing so would require data on selectorate composition in each case and a considerably more elaborate research design. In non-democracies, data on the composition of and shifts in elite coalitions is unlikely to be systematically available, especially across multiple states. Selectorate size nonetheless seems a likely explanation for the patterns observed in the empirical analysis.

Conclusion

Peacekeeping remains an important feature of contemporary international order and the shift to developing

world peacekeepers has attracted much attention. The often implicit, but nonetheless common, democratic peacekeeping hypothesis maintains that participation in peacekeeping may have liberalizing or democratizing effects in sending states. Conversely, a range of qualitative research to date suggests peacekeeping abroad may have the opposite effect. To resolve this disagreement, we offer a quantitative test of how peacekeeping is linked to a specific type of counter-democratic event: coups. We find evidence that the accuracy of the DPH varies by regime type. Anocracies are less likely to experience coups subsequent to peacekeeping deployments abroad. Autocracies, on the other hand, are more likely to experience coups. These findings strongly suggest a need to further assess how deployment impacts these states' domestic institutions, and reason to approach the DPH with a great deal of caution.

How might policymakers respond? The UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations might, for example, better monitor the political activities of contributing states' militaries. To the extent the UN and its member states are committed to reducing military interventions in politics, they can advance this goal by contracting fewer peacekeepers from autocracies. If already coup-prone states and their military elites lack access to peacekeeping reimbursement funds, then an important incentive to coups will be removed. For their part, developed liberal democracies can best assist in this by contributing peacekeeping troops themselves, rather than paying other, less democratic states to do so.

However, given the difficulty of contracting troops for UN missions, TCCs may be well positioned to refuse UN involvement in their domestic politics. UN officials do seem to have at least indirectly acknowledged the problem. Before the 2006 coup in Fiji, Kofi Annan warned the Fijian military that it risked losing its place as a troop contributor, should it overthrow the elected government. Nonetheless, the UN has continued to use Fijian troops since. Indeed, criticism following the coup was muted (Levin, MacKay & Nasirzadeh, 2016: 121). The UN's approach to date implies a free hand for non-democratic TCC militaries to intervene in their states' politics. Solutions may be hard to find.

We identify three areas for further research. First, the specific causal mechanisms at work could be more closely explored. For example, qualitative data might be used to more closely investigate how funds dispersed in specific ways impact specific TCCs. Second, it might be useful to investigate how government coup-proofing efforts impact outcomes.²⁶ Third, the specific regime types implicated could be more closely parsed. We treat all

mid-range regimes as equivalent, whether they involve state weakness, ongoing democratization, democratic decline, or other factors. Better parsing which anocratic regimes are least coup-prone would better identify which TCCs are most able to deploy with democratizing domestic knock-on effects.

If we are right, stark trade-offs appear to confront the developed states that no longer significantly contribute troops but continue to fund peacekeeping. They may be forced to choose between some countries' need for a peacekeeping presence and a need to minimize harms to TCCs. Demand for peacekeeping having risen in recent decades, such trade-offs are complex and pressing. Whatever the liberal-internationalist intentions of peacekeeping may be, its net impact appears troublingly mixed. Future research should more carefully consider peacekeeping's potential adverse effects on contributing countries, particularly those with less democratic – and less stable – regimes.

Replication data

The dataset, codebook, and do-files for the empirical analysis in this article can be found at <http://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets>.


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²⁶ Our thanks to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this. See Pilsner & Böhmelt (2011) for possible data.

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