Election Accomplished: Democracies and the Timing of Peacekeeper Drawdowns*

Burak Giray†

J. Tyson Chatagnier‡

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Abstract

Peacekeepers often play a vital role in enforcing agreements and promoting stability after a civil war, but participation is costly. While troop-contributing countries (TCCs) may appreciate the diplomatic benefits that come with performing this task, they also want to minimize the associated costs and potential downsides of the mission. We examine troop contributions in post-civil war peacekeeping missions, determining which countries are most prone to withdrawal and when. Drawing from a domestic audience cost perspective, we argue that those TCCs that are most exposed to political risk from scandals or fiascoes are most apt to flee, viewing post-war elections as identifiable exit strategies. Using data on eighty-two peacekeeping operations between 1996 and 2017, we analyze troop contribution dynamics for over 150 different countries to determine whether and when post-war elections prompt peacekeepers to exit. We find evidence that democratic states remove visible and costly soldiers, replacing them with civilian volunteers.

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†Department of Political Science, University of Houston. Email: bgiray@uh.edu

‡Department of Political Science, University of Houston. Email: jtchatagnier@uh.edu

Introduction

In October of 1991, representatives from Cambodia, Vietnam, and seventeen other nations met to sign the Paris Peace Accords, officially bringing the Cambodian-Vietnamese War to an end. As a result of this agreement, the United Nations (UN) Security Council authorized a special peacekeeping mission—the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)—to guarantee the implementation of the historic peace deal. The UN deployed the mission in February 1992, marking its first post-Cold War peacebuilding effort. As a result, UNTAC quickly became the organization's largest-ever peacekeeping operation, with an ambitious and "idealistic" goal of establishing a functioning liberal democracy in Cambodia.[1] Within UNTAC's vast mandate were the tasks of maintaining the longevity of the peace accord, repatriating refugees, assisting Cambodia in conducting a national election, and ensuring the impartiality of the incumbent government before and during the election.

Although UNTAC was successful in repatriating refugees and building infrastructure, and was eventually able to hold an election that went off without a problem, it was ineffective in ensuring that warring parties remained committed to peace. Importantly, neither the Khmer Rouge nor the Cambodian People's Party fully disarmed during the nineteen months that UN forces operated in Cambodia, and they both showed themselves to be unwilling to cooperate with the organization. By early 1993, the success of UNTAC had become contentious and UN officials fretted about the danger of failure. Therefore, "[b]elieving that UNTAC would break up by the end of 1993, [the UN officials] arranged for national elections to be hurriedly conducted in May of that year" (Fleitz and Fleitz Jr 2002, 127). Given the rushed nature of these elections, "[t]he original conditions said to be necessary for free and fair elections to take place were not met, and the criterion [sic] were in effect abandoned" (Martin 1997, 1). Unsurprisingly, the elections failed to facilitate a stable democratic polity, and as a result of the departure of the peacekeepers only months later, the political situation worsened. Writing a few years after UNTAC ended, Martin (1997, 2) lamented the fact that "politics remain volatile, power is used arbitrarily, corruption is widespread, dissent is stifled, and the few political and civil freedoms that were a legacy of UNTAC have been steadily eroded."

[1] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44966916

The UN's behavior in this instance raises an important question: if the ultimate goal in peacebuilding missions is to eliminate the root causes of tensions and prevent the recurrence of conflict, why would UN officials arrange an early election before ensuring that warring groups were committed to the peace deal? While some research suggests that early elections can accelerate democratization (Berman 2007; Carothers 2007) and help post-civil war countries to attract foreign development assistance (Kumar 1998), there is also evidence that the early stages of the democratization process are associated with greater probabilities of civil war renewal (Cederman, Hug and Krebs 2010), and that elections can disrupt the peace process when they are arranged before effective and durable political institutions have been established (Mansfield and Snyder 2005; Brancati and Snyder 2013).

Given the failure of elections to stabilize the country, the relatively poor record of hasty elections in post-civil war countries, and the speedy withdrawal of UN troops from Cambodia following the vote, it seems unlikely that the UN's decisions were driven by Cambodia's best interests. So, why organize the elections and withdraw prematurely? One possible explanation for the UN's withdrawal from such a fragile region in the aftermath of the national election is that UNTAC lacked a clear exit strategy. Following the May 1993 election, the withdrawal of the mission (which was endorsed by the Clinton administration) gave "the UN and the United States the opportunity to declare victory before chaos returned" (Fleitz and Fleitz Jr 2002, 129). The election, then, served to provide cover to members of the Security Council, giving them an excuse to withdraw troops from a dicey situation.

We argue that the situation in Cambodia is not unique. Inspired by this case, we generalize the theoretical expectation that troop-contributing countries (TCCs) that are prone to domestic audience cost see early elections as an identifiable exit strategy and take the chance to minimize the intensity of their commitment to the peacebuilding process.[2] This gives them the ability to escape from any potential fiascoes. We test our argument using a data set that includes the number of peacekeepers from each TCC, dates of post-war elections, and measures of domestic audience costs within the relevant countries. Our findings suggest

[2]The term "audience costs" can have multiple meanings in the international relations literature. Here, we are concerned primarily with punishments inflicted upon leaders by domestic actors for decisions of which they disapprove. This includes, but is not limited to, the type of domestic audience cost that results from backing down after making a commitment (Fearon 1994).

that countries that face domestic audience costs (namely, democracies) tend to reduce their troop contributions in the aftermath of elections, while other states do not. Furthermore, we show that when the situation calls for additional peacekeeping forces, democratic states are apt to remove the more visible and potentially-high-cost soldiers, and to replace them with less-visible civilian volunteers.

Contributions to Peacekeeping Missions

The motivation behind troop withdrawal in peacekeeping missions is inextricably related to the motivation to contribute in the first place. The factors that motivate states to join a mission should also drive them to remain involved. Understanding why states contribute, then, is important in determining when they will stop contributing. Post-conflict countries are inherently dangerous and unstable. The decision to send troops as part of a peacekeeping force is fraught with risk and potential costs. So, why do states choose to take part in these operations? Previous work on the deployment of peacekeepers suggests three general sets of explanations for states' decisions to involve themselves in multinational missions: normative or moral interests, security interests, and material interests.

Given that the United Nations is the driving force behind peacekeeping in the modern world, it should not be surprising that TCCs tend to be those whose foreign policies are most closely aligned with the organization's institutional norms (Andersson 2002). In particular, democratic states, which advocate policies of stability, global peace, and human rights, are generally most likely to join in peacekeeping missions (Perkins and Neumayer 2008), especially when other states that hold such preferences also participate in the operation (Ward and Dorussen 2016). The goals in UN peacekeeping missions are directed at eliminating the root causes of conflict, rebuilding infrastructure, assisting with constitutional design, helping to bring forth electoral reforms, and holding and monitoring free and fair elections (Barnett et al. 2007). These tasks all align with the normative aspirations of developed, democratic countries, and motivate them to participate.

States also tend to contribute troops when they fear that instability in the target coun-

try may pose a threat to security at home. Civil wars not only cause collateral damage in neighboring states (Murdoch and Sandler 2002), but have a tendency to spread as well. A civil war in an adjacent country can be destabilizing at home (Maves and Braithwaite 2013), can release refugees that alter the domestic political situation (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006), and can eventually evolve into an international conflict (Gleditsch, Salehyan and Schultz 2008). All of these effects have the potential to weaken nearby states, providing their leaders with incentives to work for peace when civil conflict erupts in close geographic proximity (Perkins and Neumayer 2008), in a rival state (Kathman and Melin 2016), or in a state that is likely to generate significant refugee inflows (Bove and Elia 2011; Uzonyi 2015).

Finally, the decision to contribute to a peacekeeping mission may have implications for economic well-being. Most directly, "the UN remunerates countries for sending peacekeepers, thereby giving poor countries with inexpensive peacekeepers a means to earn income" (Gaibulloev et al. 2015, 728). These funds are an important driver of troop contributions for developing states (Lundgren 2018), particularly in the case of UN missions (as other peacekeeping organizations typically do not reimburse contributors) (Gaibulloev et al. 2015). On top of the direct compensation from the UN, poorer TCCs also frequently demand foreign aid from major powers in return for their continued contribution (Boutton and D'Orazio 2020). However, economic incentives exist even for wealthier, developed countries. Empirical research has demonstrated that both explicit trade ties (Stojek and Tir 2015) and former colonial status (which is strongly connected to trade and other economic interests) are related to peacekeeping activity (Perkins and Neumayer 2008).

Within UN missions, peacekeepers are deployed on a voluntary basis, and TCCs may withdraw their personnel at any time. While there are several theoretically-sound and empirically-robust explanations for troop contribution, scholars have spent less time considering the decision to withdrawal. While the various factors affecting pre-mission calculations of the TCCs can help us to understand decisions about withdrawal, there remain many important examples that they cannot adequately address. Belgium's withdrawal from UN mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) in April 1994, for instance, is a well-known example of exit by a prominent TCC (Clayton et al. 2017). Although Belgium's advocacy for peace and stability, along

with its colonial ties with Rwanda, once made the country an important player in UNAMIR, the kidnap and execution of 10 Belgian peacekeepers by Hutu forces in 1994 resulted in an immediate withdrawal of the remaining 413 Belgian peacekeepers from Rwanda. This decision set off a chain of events that led to the withdrawal of other TCCs. However, this sensitivity to casualties is not necessarily general. Indeed, on the day of the kidnapping, the Belgians were accompanied by five Ghanaian peacekeepers, who were also taken, and later set free. Surprisingly, following this abduction, Ghana decided to *increase* its involvement in UNAMIR. The contrast in behavior between the two states suggests that the domestic political institutions of TCCs may play an important role in decisions about whether to continue the mission.

Scholars have only recently begun to explore the connection between domestic politics in the contributing country and the supply of peacekeepers. Participation in UN missions can be rewarding when the operation successfully staves off conflict between warring parties and lays the foundations for peaceful resolution of disputes. However, it also carries risks in the form of casualties and missions failures or fiascoes. Public sensitivity to casualties—particularly among democratic states—has been well documented in contexts of war and peacekeeping (Smith 2005; Gelpi, Reifler and Feaver 2007; Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2009; Boucher 2010). The expenditure of blood and treasure, especially in furtherance of a failed or scandal-laden mission, can lead to public opposition to continuing the action. Moreover, democratic states face greater risks due to the presence of a free press, which can relay information to leaders' constituents (Slantchev 2006; Crisman-Cox and Gibilisco 2018). In cases in which the public is both informed and able to exert influence on policy, setbacks will have negative consequences for leaders (Fang and Sun 2019). For example, during the Bosnian War, when more than 8,000 Bosniaks were massacred in Srebrenica, nearly 400 Dutch soldiers had been sent to guard the town, as part of the UN's UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) mission. Their unwillingness to protect the town or intervene to stop the mass killings led to a public backlash against the government and an investigation of its actions. Eight years later, the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation published a report holding the Dutch government responsible for the massacre, and leading Prime

Minister Wim Kok (who was the head of government in 1995) and his fifteen-member cabinet to resign (Ashraf 2002, 1409).

These political concerns have not been lost on scholars writing about contribution calculations. Drawing on concerns about the potential negative consequences of participation, Young (2019) finds that risk aversion significantly affects Canadian leaders' decisions about troop commitments in peacekeeping operations. He demonstrates that when prime ministers are concerned about casualties in a particular mission, Canada may send only a token force, even when the mission is important and peacekeepers play a valuable role. In a broader study, Duursma and Gledhill (2019) look at constituents' approval for participating in UN missions across a variety of countries. They find that advanced democratic TCCs are less likely to contribute to peacekeeping missions during election years, suggesting an element of risk aversion.

While these studies consider only decisions about initial contributions, there is no reason to believe that similar factors should not affect decisions about continuing participation. Once involved, leaders will be on the lookout for an opportunity to exit the mission gracefully. This allows them to minimize risk while appearing to have fulfilled obligations. Reilly's (2008) "exit strategy" argument suggests that elections may play this role by offering "organizations involved in international peace missions" a justification for leaving (25). Indeed, because "elections provide a clear signal that legitimate domestic authority has been returned and hence maybe the role of international community may be coming to an end" (Reilly 2002, 118), contributors can claim that their mission has been accomplished, and leave without suffering costs for fleeing or reneging on commitments. In fact, powerful countries are often reluctant to commit peacekeepers or provide funding without the promise of possible early elections (Reilly 2008, 160). Because advanced democratic TCCs will be the most exposed to political risk from scandals and casualties in peacekeeping missions, they will be most likely to take the opportunity provided by post-war elections to withdraw troops, minimizing their political risk.

Hypothesis 1 *The number of democratic countries contributing peacekeepers to a UN mission will decrease significantly following the first post-conflict election.*

Yet, complete withdrawal carries risks of its own, many of which are peculiar to democratic states. The push for a liberal international order has been at the forefront of the Responsibility to Protect movement advocated by the United Nations since the end of the Cold War (Chandler 2004). For this reason, there is an international expectation that advanced democracies will use their power to further the cause of liberalism, and to prevent abuses of human rights. An example comes from the United States' involvement in the war in Bosnia. Sciolino (1996) argues that President Clinton was initially concerned with both the "U.S. position of strength in the world" and the possibility that—especially during an election year—an ongoing Bosnian crisis might be perceived as a failure or abdication of American leadership. Opting not to participate can damage a democracy's reputation. However, in addition to the reputational costs that may follow from withdrawal, states must consider the potential costs of re-engagement. Transitions are often rocky, and post-conflict countries have a substantial rate of relapse following the first election (Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom 2008). A TCC that completely eliminates its presence on a mission will find that it needs to rebuild both physical and immaterial infrastructure in order to return effectively. Therefore, democratic TCCs may instead choose to remain as part of the mission, but to draw down troop strength in order to reduce risk exposure.

Hypothesis 2 *The average number of peacekeepers contributed by democratic countries to UN missions will decrease significantly following the first post-conflict election.*

Data and Methods

Testing our hypotheses requires three key pieces of information about peacekeeping operations: troop commitments, election dates, and TCC regime types. We gather data on peacekeeping operations and country-level contributions from the International Peace Institute.[3] This dataset provides figures on contributions by TCCs for each UN peacekeeping mission between 1990 and 2018. Data are assembled monthly, including number of troops (i.e., soldiers), number of police, and number of civilian observers committed by each country.

[3]The IPI Peacekeeping Database is available at http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org.

We operationalize our tests of Hypothesis 1 at the *mission-month* level, using four different dependent variables: count of democratic TCCs per mission-month, count of non-democratic TCCs per mission-month, count of all TCCs per mission-month, and proportion of TCCs that are democratic per mission-month. We operationalize our test of Hypothesis 2 at the *contributor-mission-month* level, using the total count of contributed personnel. In both sets of tests, we consider a state to be a TCC for a given mission if it contributes at least one peacekeeper of any type to the effort.

Our key independent variable for both units of analysis is mission phase. We code an observation as being *post-election* if it occurs after the first post-conflict election. We draw election dates from the Database of Political Institutions (DPI), created by Scartascini, Cruz and Keefer (2018). Their data cover 180 countries from 1975 to 2017, and include election dates for both executive and legislative elections. For each observations, we narrow our focus to those elections that are arranged within the scope of peacekeeping missions, and we focus specifically upon the initial election held during the mission. Our theory suggests that democratic states' willingness to commit troops to a peacekeeping mission should change significantly following the first election in a peacekeeping operation, while non-democratic states should remain unaffected. In other words, elections can be seen as a treatment that gets applied to democracies, but not non-democracies. Following the election, we should see different effects for the two groups. We classify a state with a Polity2 score (Marshall, Gurr and Jaggers 2019) greater than six as a *democracy*, and a state with a score of six or lower as a non-democracy. We are particularly interested in the interaction between *democracy* and *post-election*.

While time period relative to election is a key variable, security risk is not.[4] Conventional wisdom holds that, given the priority that TCCs place upon the security of their personnel relative to civilians in a conflict country, withdrawals should be most likely when violence becomes intractable. Further given the risk-averse nature of democracies, they should withdraw most quickly. However, recent work by Melin and Kathman (N.d.) shows that democratic TCCs are *more* recalcitrant in the face of instability and violence, compared to

[4] As mentioned below, it *is* included as a control.

their non-democratic counterparts. This is due largely to the political cover provided by the UN helmet, and to democratic TCCs' strong interest in democratic institution-building. For this reason, we do not assume that an active conflict environment is a primary factor behind the withdrawal of democratic TCCs. While risk undoubtedly matters, other considerations are important as well. The 2018 announcement of the Dutch Ministry of Defense on Dutch forces' withdrawal from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) exemplifies how the withdrawal mechanism works for democratic TCCs. On June 15 of that year, the ministry stated the Netherlands' intent to end its contribution to MINUSMA by the end of 2018, with a complete withdrawal potentially postponed through May 2019 to give other governments time to take over Dutch forces' duties. At the time, the Dutch had lost a total of six peacekeepers in Mali since joining the mission.[5] Importantly, the decision to withdraw did not come immediately after these casualties, suggesting that the intensity of violence was not the main cause of the decision to leave the mission.

Our dependent variables lend themselves to different forms of data analysis. Our mission-level data, used to test Hypothesis 1, are insufficient to observe differences in treatments. Therefore, we simply asses how the mission composition changes following the first election. We test this using straightforward regression models (discussed below) to examine changes in the type and proportion of democratic states involved in the mission. Our contributor-level data, used to test Hypothesis 2, however, allow us to look at differences in treatment application. We expect only democracies to be affected by elections, and are able to use a linear difference-in-differences estimator of the following form:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + D_{it}\beta + E_t\gamma + D_{it}E_t\delta + \mathbf{X}_{it}\zeta + \varepsilon_{it}$$

For contributor i in month t, D_{it} indicates whether country i was a democracy and E_t is our post-election variable for period t. We are particularly interested in the coefficient, δ, which tells us the effect of the interaction between democracy and post-election status. Given Hypothesis 2, we expect the estimate to be negative and significant. Similarly, the γ coefficient will give us the effect of being in the post-election period for non-democratic

[5] https://www.thedefensepost.com/2018/06/15/netherlands-end-mali-minusma-contribution/

states. We expect it to be either positive or non-significant. Estimating a valid difference-in-differences model requires that our data satisfy the parallel trends assumption (Abadie 2005). In other words, we must verify that our two sets of TCCs were following similar paths prior to elections. The simplest way to do this is to inspect the data visually, to determine whether the subgroups were trending in the same way during the year prior to the election. This also allows us a first glimpse at their movement following the intervention. In addition to assessing parallel trends for our contributor-level test, we find it useful to examine the data for our mission-level analysis as well.

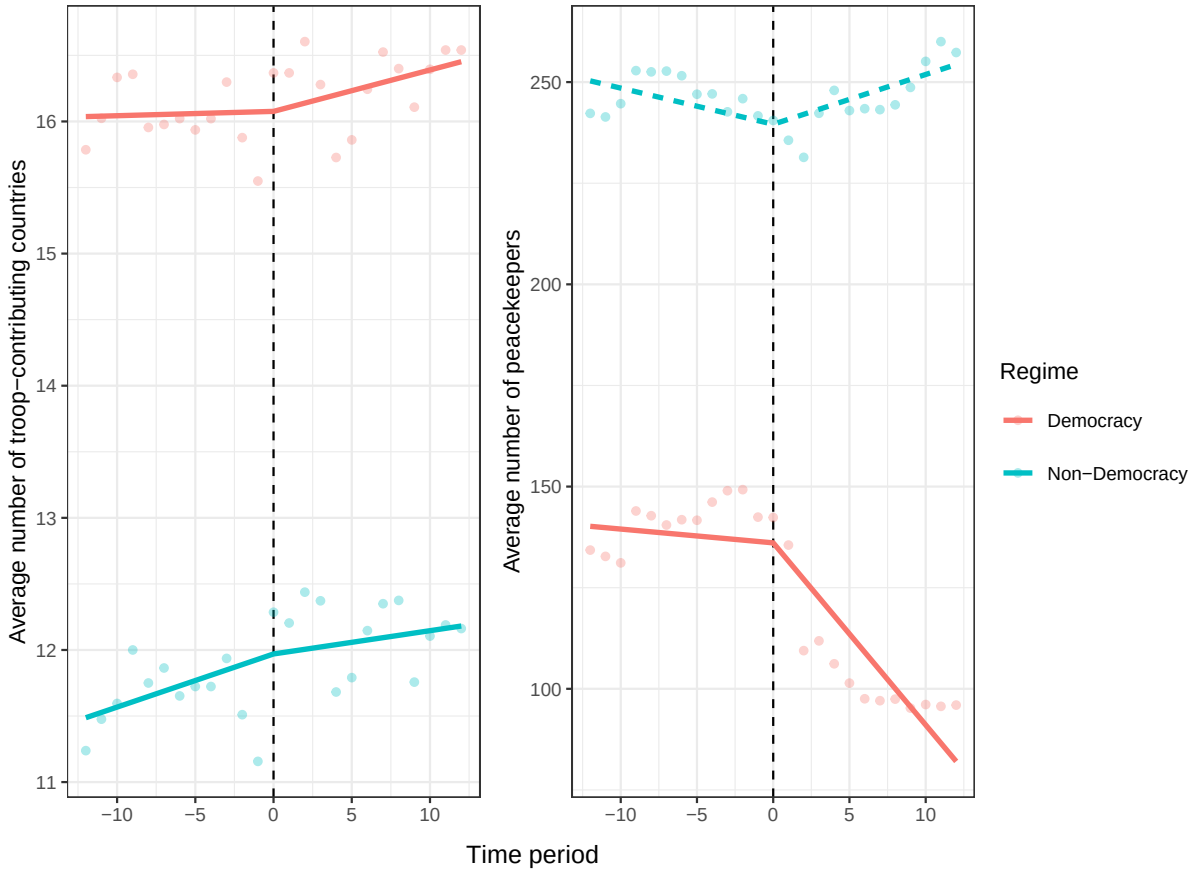

Figure 1: Profiles of troop-contributing countries relative to election timing

Figure 1 provides a glance at the relevant data for both hypotheses. The points in the left panel indicate the mean count of TCCs for each mission in the twelve months preceding and following the first election, while those in the right panel plot the mean contribution size for each contributor to each mission over the same time period.[6] In both cases, we plot a

[6]We remove missions for which a full year does not exist on either side of the election.

linear regression through the point cloud, with a spline at $t = 0$ (i.e., the election month). This facilitates visual interpretation of the data. While these plots cannot account for spuriousness, and therefore are unable to isolate a causal effect, they are a good first indicator of what the relationships in the data may be. They also allow us to examine the viability of the parallel trends assumption for the data on the right.

The left panel suggests similar, though not identical, trends across the two types of contributors. Missions see rising numbers of both democratic and non-democratic states in the year prior to an election, though the slope is steeper for non-democratic countries. Following the election, we see additional countries of both types, on average, with a *stronger* post-election trend for democracies. This initial pattern in the data is surprising, and is inconsistent with the predictions from Hypothesis 1.

The right panel tells a different story with respect to the *size* of contributions. Prior to the first election in a host country, democratic and non-democratic contributors reduce their average contributions to an almost identical degree, suggesting that the parallel trends assumption is indeed satisfied.[7] Following the election, we see a sharp drop in the average number of peacekeepers contributed by democratic states (a reduction of nearly 40%), and an increase in those deployed by non-democracies (around 6%). Thus, Figure 1 provides initial support for Hypothesis 2.

However, other factors may be relevant to states' commitment and withdrawal decisions, and there exists a possibility that the relationship between contributions and timing is spurious. Therefore, we estimate the effect of election timing on participation in peacekeeping mission while controlling for a number of potentially confounding variables that might affect both election timing and troop contributions. Five of these—population growth, military expenditures, government effectiveness, political stability, and violence—are measured at the host country level. These factors should all affect the capacity of the country in which peacekeepers are deployed, increasing stability and creating the necessary conditions for elections to be held. The first two come from the Open Data project,[8] the third and fourth

[7] The coefficient on the interaction between democracy and time is non-significant prior to the first election ($p > 0.4$).

[8] Available from https://data.worldbank.org/.

are drawn from the Worldwide Governance Indicators,[9] and the last comes from version 19.1 of the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (Sundberg and Melander 2013; Högbladh 2019). *Population growth* is coded as annual percent change,[10] while *military expenditures* are calculated as a proportion of GDP. *Host effectiveness* and *host stability* are continuous variables, which range from −2.5, indicating the least effective or least stable government, to 2.5, which represents the strongest or most stable government. The *total violence* variable indicates the log of the total number of deaths (inclusive of both sides and civilians) in a given host country-month. Four variables are measured at the TCC level. These include *distance*, which measures the capital-to-capital distance (in logged kilometers) between the TCC and the host country, and *EU member* and *AU member*, which are dummy variables indicating whether the contributor is a part of the European Union (EU) or the African Union (AU), respectively. These data are drawn from the IPI Peacekeeping Database. Our *refugees* variable comes from the World Bank, and measures the (logged) number of refugees coming out of the host country in a given year. One variable, the number of *new missions*, is measured globally at the month level, and simply reflects the number of UN peacekeeping missions initiated anywhere in the world during that month. Finally, we have two variables measured at the mission level. We control for mission costs by including the number of *casualties* in a given month for both the overall mission (Hypothesis 1) and the relevant TCC (Hypothesis 2). These data come from the Peacekeeping Fatalities Open Data.[11] We also include a dummy variable, *Civilian Protection*, which is coded one if the mission's mandate includes protection of civilians, and zero if it does not. The variable comes from Third-Party Peacekeeping Missions Dataset, created by (Mullenbach 2017). We lag time-varying covariates by the appropriate unit in order to mitigate concerns about the direction of causality.

Our data set initially comprises 5,731 observations at the mission-month level and 151,842 at the contributor-mission-month level. After accounting for missing data, we are left with 3,782 and 117,074 observations, respectively. Relevant information about the distribution of each of these variables can be found in the appendix. Those measured at the mission-month

[9] Available from https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/.

[10] We use the percent change in the number of young males (under nineteen years old) in the country, as opposed to overall population growth, in order to account for the effects of youth bulges .

[11] Available from https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/peacekeeper-fatalities.

level are used to evaluate Hypothesis 1, while those at the contributor-mission-month level are included in our assessment of Hypothesis 2.

We analyze Hypothesis 1 by looking at both the number and proportion of democratic (and non-democratic) contributor countries in a given mission-month. As the former variable is a count of contributors and the latter is a continuous proportion, we estimate a series of count and ordinary least squares (OLS)models, respectively.[12] To assess Hypothesis 2, we use the equation given above to obtain OLS estimates of the number of peacekeepers contributed by a TCC in a given month.

Analysis

We begin by evaluating our first hypothesis, which posits that host country elections should reduce the number (and proportion) of democratic states involved in a mission. We look at all missions taking place between 1996 and 2017, and count the total number of countries that contributed any personnel in a given mission-month.

[12]We initially run Poisson models for our regressions that use count data. We then test for overdispersion and estimate negative binomial models when appropriate.

Table 1: Contributions to peacekeeping operations (all countries)

	Dependent variable:			
	Proportion of democracies	Number of contributors	Number of non-democracies	Number of Democracies
Post-election	0.08^{***}	-0.10^{***}	-0.25^{***}	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.01)
Civilian protection	-0.02^{***}	0.43^{***}	0.29^{***}	0.38^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.01)
Casualties	-0.02^{***}	0.05^{***}	0.12^{***}	0.04^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.00)
Government effectiveness	0.11^{***}	-0.21^{***}	-0.73^{***}	-0.02^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)
Political stability	-0.01	-0.21^{***}	-0.11^{***}	-0.24^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)
Population growth	-0.00	0.05^{***}	0.04^{***}	0.03^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
Military expenditures	-0.00	-0.02^{***}	0.04^{***}	-0.03^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
New missions	0.00	-0.03^{***}	-0.03	-0.03^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)
Total violence	0.01^{***}	-0.11^{***}	-0.16^{***}	-0.10^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
Constant	0.68^{***}	2.99^{***}	1.86^{***}	2.59^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.01)
Observations	3,782	3,782	3,782	3,782
Adjusted R^2	0.28			
Log Likelihood		$-25,682.78$	$-12,069.93$	$-17,359.77$

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{*}p < .10$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$. All tests are two-tailed tests.

Table 1 provides the results from our first estimation. As Figure 1 suggested they might, our findings generally run counter to our expectations from Hypothesis 1. Column two indicates that the average number of contributing states falls slightly (but significantly) following an election. When looking at the third and fourth columns, we see that this decrease comes entirely from non-democratic states exiting the mission. While the estimated effect of the post-election period on the number of democracies is also negative, it is much smaller and non-significant. Unsurprisingly, then, the proportion of democratic TCCs in a mission rises following the first election. Generally, then, these results are precisely the opposite of what we expected to find. Rather than democracies leaving after elections en masse, they tend to stay on board, while non-democratic states exit. However, it may be the case that

democratic countries continue to contribute following elections, but that the nature of these contributions changes. Therefore, we turn to the question of contribution size, with respect to mission timing.

Table 2: Number of peacekeepers contributed

	Total Number of Peacekeepers	
Post-election	-7.70^{*}	-13.17^{***}
	(4.34)	(4.60)
Polity score	-4.59^{***}	
	(0.50)	
Polity × post-election	-1.50^{***}	
	(0.56)	
Democracy		-64.10^{***}
		(5.31)
Democracy × post-election		-5.71
		(5.89)
Distance	11.59^{***}	12.79^{***}
	(2.08)	(2.08)
Military expenditures	7.95^{***}	8.06^{***}
	(0.89)	(0.89)
Refugees	13.02^{***}	12.83^{***}
	(0.45)	(0.45)
Casualties	383.27^{***}	380.72^{***}
	(13.27)	(13.26)
Civilian protection	62.11^{***}	61.60^{***}
	(3.05)	(3.05)
EU member	-31.36^{***}	-26.19^{***}
	(3.59)	(3.60)
AU member	-7.80^{**}	-9.54^{***}
	(3.72)	(3.70)
Population growth	19.27^{***}	19.32^{***}
	(0.68)	(0.68)
New missions	3.95	3.87
	(2.50)	(2.50)
Total violence	-1.07	-0.98
	(0.70)	(0.70)
Constant	-89.93^{***}	-86.44^{***}
	(19.80)	(19.84)
Observations	117,074	117,074
Adjusted R^2	0.04	0.04

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$. All tests are two-tailed tests.

Table 2 estimates the total number of peacekeepers contributed by a given country in a

particular month. The first column measures TCC regime type using the 21-point Polity scale, while the second column dichotomizes the sample into democracies and non-democracies. As this is a difference-in-difference estimation, the parameter of interest is the coefficient of the interaction in each column. In both cases, we see that both types of TCCs significantly decrease their engagement in the mission in the aftermath of the first-post conflict election. Our second column shows that democratic states (as a binary concept) are associated with smaller contributions following an election; however, the difference between the two types of regimes is not statistically significant. Yet, when we use the more fine-grained measure of democracy in column one, we can discern a statistical difference. Each additional point on the Polity scale in the post-election period reduces the expected number of troops contributed, relative to the contribution of a comparable non-democratic country. Unlike the results presented above, our findings here are mostly in line with Hypothesis 2. The fact that we find a significant result with the polytomous measure and not the dichotomous variable suggests that the effect may take hold somewhere below the conventional (and somewhat arbitrary) threshold that separates the two regime types.

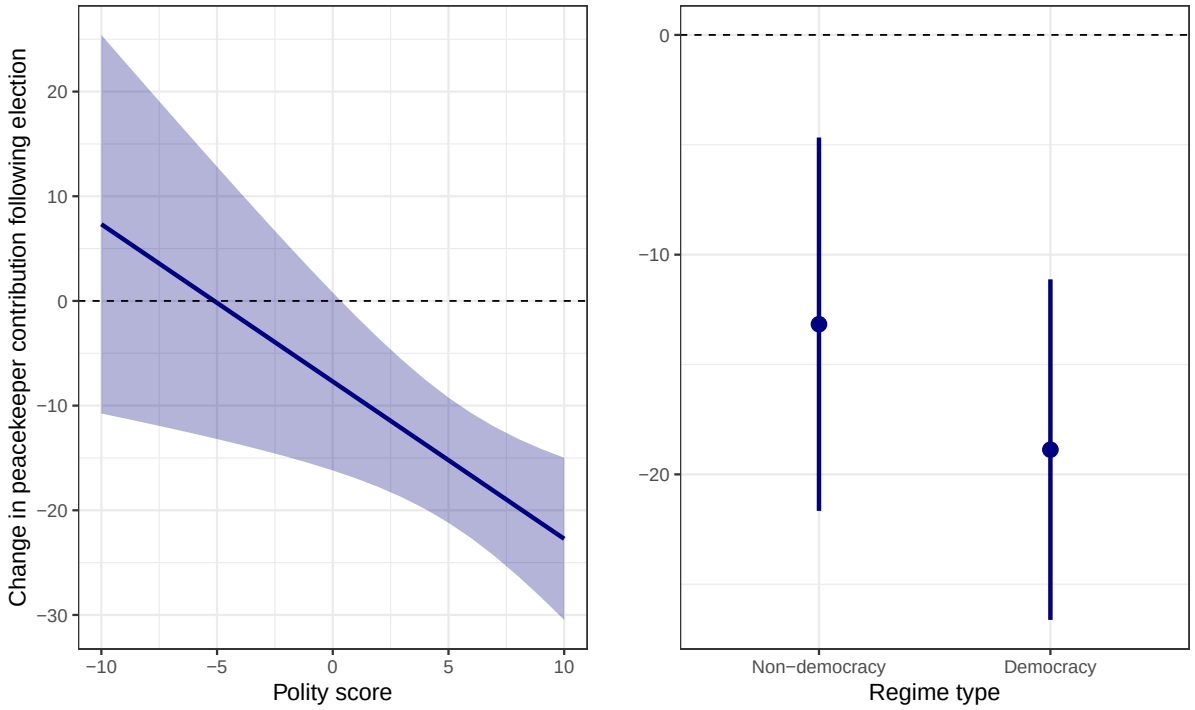

Figure 2: Substantive effect of election on peacekeeper contributions

Interaction terms can be difficult to interpret. Therefore, the substantive effect of the election is depicted in Figure 2. Here, we calculate and plot the marginal effect and 95% confidence interval (see Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006) associated with the post-election period across regime types. The mean contribution in a given mission-month is approximately 143 peacekeepers. Our estimates suggest that a strong autocracy (Polity score of −10) will alter its contribution from a decrease of 11 to an increase of 26 troops (between −8% and +19%, relative to the mean), while a strong democracy (Polity score of 10) will reduce its contribution by between 14 and 31 troops (a decrease of between nine and 22%, relative to the mean). When comparing democracies and non-democracies as a binary measure, our findings show that non-democracies will reduce their troop levels by somewhere between four and 22 troops (a shift of between 2% and 16%, relative to the mean), with a decrease for democracies of between 11 and 27 (7–19%).

While these differences are substantively interesting and provide some support for our theoretical argument, we believe that a deeper investigation of our data is necessary, particularly given our unexpected findings with respect to Hypothesis 1. One possibility is that democratic states change their contributions to peacekeeping missions in important ways following elections, but that these changes offset one another in our aggregate analysis. Thus, we move to an investigation of the different types of peacekeepers that TCCs contribute.

Disaggregating contribution types

Although our initial analysis provides some support for our theoretical contention that democratic states make strategic use of elections (particularly with respect to Hypothesis 2), our data provide us with the opportunity to delve more deeply. The United Nations disaggregates peacekeeping contributions into three types. *Troops* are soldiers, generally contributed to the missions by a given TCC's military. On average, they make up about 29% of a TCC's monthly contribution, and are responsible for patrolling a conflict area and deterring or suppressing violence. *Police* are civilian police officers that are sent to the country to enforce law and order. They constitute about 30% of the contribution, on average. The largest

component of a TCC's peacekeeping team (around 40%) comes from civilian *observers* and experts. These individuals engage in a wide range of activities, from election observation to legal consultation to human rights monitoring.

Disaggregating the type of peacekeepers deployed by a given country can be useful in two ways. First, each class of peacekeeper represents a different level of commitment for the TCC, and serves a different purpose. In particular, in the period just before and after an election, civilian observers may be especially useful. Indeed, their task may simply be to gather information about the attempted resolution of the conflict, and report back to the government—deploying civilian observers may not actually imply any commitment to the peacekeeping process itself. Therefore, we propose an alternative version of our first hypothesis, which excludes TCCs that contributed only observers:

Hypothesis 3 *The number of democratic countries contributing* non-observer *peacekeepers to a UN mission will decrease significantly following the first post-conflict election.*

Second, our proposed causal mechanism relies on the prospect of electoral punishment for leaders when missions go (or are expected to go) awry. This includes not only scandal but peacekeeper casualties as well. There is reason to believe that the public may react differently to different types of deployments or casualties. Democratic audiences should be especially sensitive to troop contributions. Within peacekeeping missions, "troop-contributing countries have a major interest in keeping their military safe" (Karim and Beardsley 2013, 469). While this idea may initially seem counterintuitive, it follows from the conditions under which peacekeepers are recruited, and is, in fact, consistent with previous work on wartime casualties. The literature on resolve and cost tolerance suggests that, subject to some conditioning factors (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2009; Levy 2009), democratic states are particularly sensitive to military casualties (Gartner 2008; Valentino, Huth and Croco 2010). However, even in democratic states, the public has no such problem with the death of private military contractors (Schooner and Swan 2012), who volunteer to participate in the conflict and derive personal benefit from doing so. While it is true that soldiers "sign up" to defend the country, they do not necessarily volunteer to be dropped into these particular situations. The same cannot be said of mercenaries.

Perhaps surprisingly, it is this latter group that shares its nature with civilian observers and police. In the United States, for example, civilian police officers are "deployed through private security companies sub-contracted by the US Department of State," and have an "economic motive" for participation (Smith 2014). The same motive also manifests itself in Turkey's police contribution to peacekeeping missions. According to Satana (2012), Turkish police appear to be more enthusiastic about contributing to peacekeeping missions than military personnel. This is primarily due to the fact that police receive lower salaries than military officers and they "benefit from UN peacekeeping deployments in the form of additional allowances." Even when pecuniary compensation is not a primary motivator, civilian police tend to derive individual benefits from deployment. When the U.S. sent civilian police to as part of its peacekeeping force in Haiti, during the 1990s, it largely recruited Haitian-Americans, who had personal ties to the country (Rohter 1996). Police deployment, then, is often a matter of individual calculation, driven largely by personal and economic motives. In this respect, it would not be wrong to compare police to mercenaries in UN peace missions.

Moreover, in many (particularly within democratic) TCCs, the government is obligated by law to seek consent from the national legislature before sending troops to participate in operations that require the use of force. For civilian observers and police, however, the decision-making process is not as constrained. In Denmark, for instance, the contribution of observers to a mission (up to a given limit) can be done without a parliamentary vote (Jakobsen 2016). The decision-making process for police deployment is similar, as it generally does not require legislative consent, unlike the use of military personnel. In Germany, for example, given its federalist nature, "the police [force] falls under state legislation, not federal legislation" (Ansorg and Haass 2017), unlike the military. Thus, given the stark heterogeneity across peacekeeper types, we propose a modified version of our second hypothesis as well.

Hypothesis 4 *The average number of* troops *contributed by democratic countries to UN missions will decrease significantly following the first post-conflict election.*

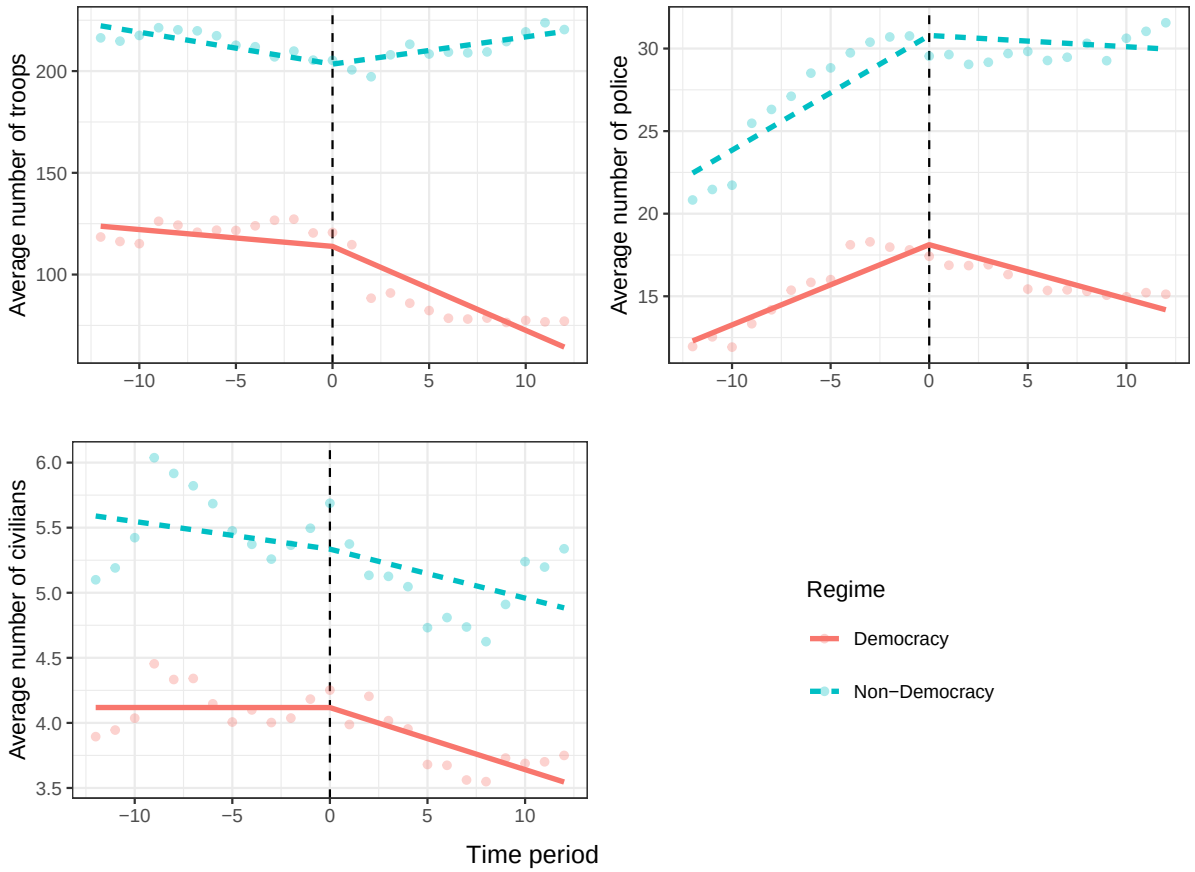

Figure 3: Types of troop contributions relative to election timing

We evaluate these two hypotheses in much the same manner as above. While the set of observations or relevant variables may change, the statistical tools remain the same. Thus, we analyze our data for Hypothesis 3 using OLS and event count regressions, and we use a difference-in-differences approach to test Hypothesis 4. As before, we assess the validity of our difference-in-difference framework by comparing the pre- and post-election slopes for democratic and non-democratic TCCs. Figure 3 is effectively a disaggregated version of Figure 1, which depicts average contribution levels by peacekeeper across both types of regime, one year before and after the election. Again, we see very similar behavior prior to the election across all three peacekeeper types, suggesting that the parallel slopes assumption still holds.

Disaggregated analysis

Table 3: Peacekeeper contributions (excluding countries contributing only observers)

	Dependent variable:			
	Proportion of democracies	Number of contributors	Number of non-democracies	Number of Democracies
Post-election	0.06^{***}	-0.16^{***}	-0.12^{***}	-0.10^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Civilian protection	0.04^{***}	0.98^{***}	0.79^{***}	0.97^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Casualties	-0.01^{*}	0.09^{***}	0.10^{***}	0.07^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Government effectiveness	0.07^{***}	-0.17^{***}	-0.73^{***}	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Political stability	0.06^{***}	-0.42^{***}	-0.42^{***}	-0.39^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Population growth	0.01^{***}	0.15^{***}	0.13^{***}	0.13^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Military expenditures	0.00	-0.05^{***}	0.00	-0.05^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
New missions	0.01	-0.01	-0.00	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Total violence	-0.01^{***}	-0.19^{***}	-0.20^{***}	-0.19^{***}
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	0.66^{***}	2.29^{***}	0.87^{***}	1.92^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Observations	3,009	3,009	3,009	3,009
Adjusted R^2	0.27			
Log Likelihood		-11660.95	-9024.13	-10250.87

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{*}p < .10$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$. All tests are two-tailed tests.

Table 3 displays our results for mission participation, excluding those countries that contribute only observers. Comparing the number of observations in Table 3 to those in Table 1 reveals that approximately 20% of mission-months included *only* observers. Thus, those are treated as having zero contributing countries and are omitted from this sample. Additionally, when we exclude countries that do not contribute troops or police, the median number of TCCs in a mission-month falls from 23 to 13. The setup of Table 3 is identical to that of Table 1, but the results are slightly different. While we still see fewer non-democratic countries following the first election, and a greater ratio of democratic contributors to non-democratic

contributors, we now obtain a negative and significant effect for democracies as well. This indicates that democratic states are indeed less likely to contribute non-observer peacekeepers in the aftermath of an election, though to a lesser extent than their non-democratic counterparts. While the general result from column four is in line with Hypothesis 3, it is not wholly in the spirit of our theory. Thus, we return to our investigation of the level of engagement of democratic and non-democratic TCCs, disaggregating TCC contributions by type of peacekeeper.

Table 4: Other Types of Peacekeepers, the Whole Sample

	Observers		Troops		Civilian Police	
Post-election	-1.24^{***}	-1.65^{***}	-9.68^{**}	-14.31^{***}	3.22^{***}	2.80^{***}
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(4.17)	(4.43)	(0.50)	(0.53)
Polity score	-0.08^{***}		-3.99^{***}		-0.52^{***}	
	(0.01)		(0.48)		(0.06)	
Polity x post-election	0.01		-1.09^{**}		-0.42^{***}	
	(0.01)		(0.54)		(0.06)	
Democracy		-1.56^{***}		-57.19^{***}		-5.35^{***}
		(0.09)		(5.11)		(0.61)
Democracy x post-election		0.84^{***}		-3.05		-3.49^{***}
		(0.10)		(5.67)		(0.68)
Distance	0.19^{***}	0.21^{***}	12.86^{***}	13.98^{***}	-1.45^{***}	-1.40^{***}
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(2.00)	(2.00)	(0.24)	(0.24)
Military expenditures	0.23^{***}	0.23^{***}	9.34^{***}	9.44^{***}	-1.62^{***}	-1.61^{***}
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.86)	(0.86)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Refugees	0.02^{**}	0.02^{**}	11.31^{***}	11.13^{***}	1.70^{***}	1.68^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Casualties	2.18^{***}	2.15^{***}	368.91^{***}	366.68^{***}	12.19^{***}	11.89^{***}
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(12.76)	(12.75)	(1.53)	(1.53)
Civilian protection	-2.06^{***}	-2.06^{***}	38.65^{***}	38.22^{***}	25.51^{***}	25.44^{***}
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(2.93)	(2.93)	(0.35)	(0.35)
EU member	-0.93^{***}	-0.81^{***}	-24.75^{***}	-19.58^{***}	-5.68^{***}	-5.81^{***}
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(3.45)	(3.46)	(0.41)	(0.42)
AU member	0.31^{***}	0.23^{***}	-7.88^{**}	-9.86^{***}	-0.23	0.09
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(3.58)	(3.56)	(0.43)	(0.43)
Population growth	-0.20^{***}	-0.19^{***}	18.98^{***}	19.02^{***}	0.48^{***}	0.49^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.08)	(0.08)
New missions	0.25^{***}	0.25^{***}	3.80	3.72	-0.10	-0.10
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(2.40)	(2.40)	(0.29)	(0.29)
Total violence	0.52^{***}	0.52^{***}	-0.23	-0.14	-1.36^{***}	-1.36^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.67)	(0.67)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Constant	3.74^{***}	4.03^{***}	-103.29^{***}	-100.08^{***}	9.62^{***}	9.61^{***}
	(0.34)	(0.34)	(19.04)	(19.08)	(2.29)	(2.29)
Observations	117,074	117,074	117,074	117,074	117,074	117,074
Adjusted R^2	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.08

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{*}p < .10$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$. All tests are two-tailed tests.

The outcome of our more detailed examination of different peacekeeper types appears in Table 4. The results for our coefficient of interest—the interaction between democracy and period—are consistent across our two measures of democracy in terms of sign, though not always significance. Interestingly, we find significant effects for observers only when looking at the binary measure of democracy, and for troops only when we look at the 21-point measure. With respect to civilian police, we find significant effects on both measures of democracy. Ultimately, our results indicate that democratic troop and police contributions will decrease to a greater extent (or increase to a lesser extent) than non-democratic contributions of the same type. The opposite is true for observers. The negative and significant coefficients in columns three, five, and six are generally in line with our expectations, suggesting a stronger reaction for democracies than non-democracies. However, the ultimate effect is difficult to determine from the coefficients alone. Thus, we turn once again to an analysis of substantive effects.

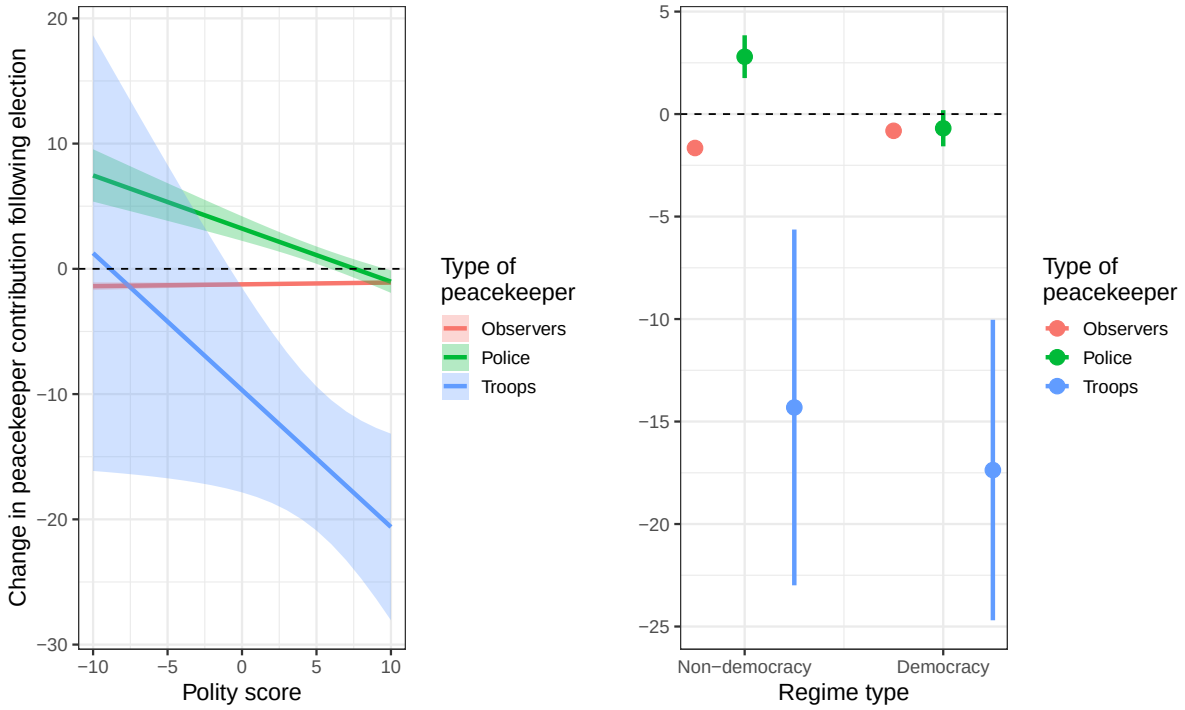

Figure 4: Substantive effect of election on contribution types

Figure 4 shows the marginal effect of a shift from the pre-election period to the post-election period, across our two democracy measures. Both democratic and non-democratic

states decrease the number of observers they contribute, and all but the most democratic states increase their police presence. The decision with respect to troops is also conditional upon regime type. The most non-democratic countries are associated with an increase (though non-significant) in their troop contributions in the wake of elections, while democratic states decrease them.[13] In many cases there may be a substitution effect as well, as almost all types of governments increase the number of police that they commit following an election. However, post-election drawdowns are greatest among the most democratic states. The behavior that we see suggests that democratic TCCs respond to elections in host countries in a significantly different way than non-democratic countries. They reduce overall peacekeeper levels, and they begin with military personnel.

Robustness Check

Our online appendix contains descriptive statistics for all variables included in our regressions, along with a series of robustness checks. We first re-analyze mission participation (while excluding countries that contribute only observers) over a limited time sample. Specifically, we check the results while limiting the temporal frame to one year before and after the first post-conflict election to alleviate potential concerns about the fact that the majority of troop deployment may take place immediately before the election date. These results are generally consistent with our previous findings in Table 3. We use the same strategy to analyze the number of peacekeepers contributed by TCCs. The additional results over this truncated sample are in line with results from Table 2. Interestingly, while the coefficient of the interaction term between binary evaluation of regime type and post-election grows in magnitude, the interaction term between polity scores and post-election loses statistical significance (though it remains correctly signed). Finally, we disaggregate peacekeeper types over our shortened period. Our findings here are in line with Hypothesis 4, showing a negative and significant effect only for *troops*.

To our knowledge, Duursma and Gledhill (2019) is the only study that accounts for con-

[13] In the left panel, which uses the 21-point Polity scale, the point estimate crosses the zero line at a Polity score of −8, while the upper confidence interval falls below zero at a Polity score of 0.

stituents' approval for participating in peacekeeping missions. Their article shows that advanced democratic TCCs are more likely to withdraw from missions during election years. In Table A5, we use their main independent variables—dummies for time periods within six months or one year from the election date in the relevant contributing country—as control variables. Even then, across all models our results from difference-in-differences estimations remain statistically significant.

Finally, we entertain the potential alternative explanation that casualties at the peacekeeper level might affect the engagement of democratic TCCs. In other words, our results may be driven by security threats, rather than strategic calculations. To that end, we take the lag of contributor-mission-month level peacekeeper casualties and interact it with regime type variables. Across all models, we find positive results for the interaction terms (with the exception of civilian police). These findings indicate that the withdrawal decisions of advanced democratic TCCs are not driven by the killing of peacekeepers.

Conclusion

Extant work on peacekeeping has focused primarily on engagement in peacekeeping missions. Scholars have concentrated on the varied motivations of contributor states, which cause them to be selective in the countries to which they send soldiers. While the exploration of motivation is useful, an equally important phenomenon—the behavior of TCCs once the mission has begun—has received far less attention. In particular, previous research has left open the question of why contributors would withdraw from ongoing missions, even after pledging to contribute to peace. In this paper, we considered such behavior in the context of the domestic political structure of the participating countries. Our results show that the behavior of democratic and non-democratic TCCs differ markedly. While both types of TCC reduce their commitment following elections, democracies do so to a greater extent, viewing such events as opportunities to exit, or at least to withdraw the most costly components of their contributions.

We argue that our work marks an important step forward within this literature. At the

same time, it opens up a number of interesting questions. Perhaps most importantly, our research hints at a phenomenon that we do not assess empirically. If democratic states see elections as exit opportunities, then post-conflict elections may (at least in some cases) be strategic in nature. Therefore, when democratic states—which often play pivotal roles within peacekeeping missions—foresee a difficult and calamitous road ahead, they have an incentive to push for premature elections in order to bring about a chance to declare victory and withdraw before disaster sets in. In fact, this is likely what occurred in Cambodia, where UNTAC contributors were unable to resolve lingering commitment problems. Future research into this and related questions pertaining to contributor behavior after a mission has begun is necessary to deepen our understanding of how and when peacekeeping missions are most likely to succeed.

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