

**VOTED OUT:  
REGIME TYPE, ELECTIONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

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**Abstract:** Previous research has suggested that leaders of democratic regimes are particularly willing to contribute troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations because backing ‘liberal’ peacekeeping allows them to support the diffusion of liberal institutions. However, evidence used to sustain this argument is based on contribution patterns during the decade of peacekeeping that followed the Cold War. In this article, we argue that there has been a reversal in the relative willingness of democratic and non-democratic governments to provide the UN with peacekeepers since then. Specifically, we propose that the introduction of more ‘robust’ forms of peacekeeping during the ‘90s has rendered democratic governments reluctant to contribute large numbers of peacekeepers to UN operations because elected leaders are now concerned that voters may object to the deployment of national troops to high-risk humanitarian missions in which there is no clear national interest. By contrast, non-democratic leaders partly discount public opinion because they are less reliant on popular support to retain power. Thus, when non-democrats see that contributing troops to UN peacekeeping will bring them reputational and/or resource benefits, they are willing to contribute peacekeepers -- and on a large scale. We test our claims quantitatively. We find that, since the 1990s, democratic governments have remained more likely than non-democrats to contribute *some* troops to UN peacekeeping operations, but non-democratic governments have been more likely to make *large-scale* contributions. We also find that governments have been especially reluctant to make sizable contributions to peacekeeping when elections have been on the horizon.

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Are democracies or non-democracies more likely to contribute troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations (UN PKOs)? Previous research has suggested that democratic governments are particularly willing to contribute to PKOs because backing ‘liberal’ peacekeeping and peacebuilding allows them to support the diffusion of liberal institutions and values (Andersson, 2000; Lebovic, 2004). While there is evidence to support this claim, that evidence is somewhat ‘dated’ because it is based on observations of contribution patterns over the decade that followed the Cold War. Thus, in this article, we revisit the relationship between regime type and troop contributions.

We argue that -- since the 1990s -- there has been a reversal in the relative willingness of democratic and non-democratic governments to commit large numbers of troops to UN PKOs. Specifically, we propose that the introduction of more ‘robust’ -- and, thus, risky -- forms of peacekeeping during the 1990s has rendered democratic governments particularly reluctant to contribute large numbers of peacekeepers to UN missions. This, we suggest, is because elected leaders, who are reliant on popular support, have become concerned that voters may object to sending national troops to high-risk humanitarian missions in which there are no clear national interests at stake. By contrast, since non-democratic leaders are less reliant on public support, they can discount any negative public opinion. Consequently, when illiberal governments believe that providing peacekeepers might bring them reputational gains and/or resources that they can use to strengthen their hold on power, they are willing to contribute troops -- and on a large scale.

To assess these claims, we run two sets of quantitative tests. First, using data on troop contributions from all independent states since 1990, we use a Heckman model to examine the relationship between regime type and peacekeeping contributions during two discrete periods: 1990-99 and 1999-2015. Our results suggest that, since the 1990s, democratic governments have remained more likely than non-democrats to contribute *some* troops to UN peacekeeping operations. However, we also find that governments at the non-democratic end of the regime spectrum are now more likely to make *large-scale* contributions to UN PKOs. Given this finding, we explore our proposed causal claim, which holds that democratic leaders have become reluctant to provide large numbers of peacekeepers because they are concerned that such a move may be unpopular with voters. We assume that, if this is true, then democratic

governments (since the 1990s) will have been particularly reluctant to initiate large-scale troop contributions when elections have been on the horizon. We find that this is the case.

Overall, our study makes two contributions: one academic, one policy-focused. On the academic side, our finding that democratic governments have become relatively reluctant to contribute large numbers of peacekeepers to UN missions revises existing understandings of the relationship between regime type and troop contributions. And from a policy perspective, our results suggest that ‘liberal peacebuilding’ is now being implemented, to a large extent, by peacekeepers that are deployed by illiberal governments. Beyond the evident irony of such an arrangement, this could be cause for concern because troops from illiberal regimes may not have the kinds of experience, training, and/or institutionalized checks that would allow them to contribute optimally to the construction of liberal institutions.

In the sections that follow, we first consider existing explanations of when and why governments contribute their states’ troops to UN peacekeeping, noting current understandings of the role that regime type plays in shaping contributions. We then develop our arguments. To do so, we outline how elite and popular attitudes to peacekeeping evolved across the course of the 1990s, before arguing that shifts in attitudes have rendered democracies less likely than non-democracies to contribute large numbers of troops to UN PKOs since that time. We then sketch how we test this claim by detailing our sources of data, variables, and models. Next, we present our descriptive and inferential results, which broadly confirm the claim that democracies have become reluctant to make large-scale troop contributions to UN PKOs -- particularly when elections are pending. Arguing that this reluctance is problematic, we conclude by proposing a simple institutional remedy that could boost the contribution of liberal democratic governments to UN peacekeeping operations.

### **Existing Accounts of Contributions to UN PKOs and Regime Type**

In the literature that explains peacekeeping contributions, there is a broad distinction between interest- and idea-based explanations. Scholars who subscribe to each of these approaches have engaged to differing degrees with the question of whether, and how, regime type might shape national troop contributions to UN missions.

Interest-based accounts maintain that governments contribute peacekeepers to UN operations when their states stand to enjoy ‘selective’ benefits by contributing (see Bellamy and Williams, 2013: 5–11). In making that claim, scholars reject the idea that UN peacekeeping is a classic ‘public good’ -- a service from which all states benefit equally (through the maintenance of international peace and security), regardless of whether or not they contribute

to the provision of that service (see discussion in Shimizu and Sandler, 2002). Instead, the formation and deployment of UN peacekeeping forces is an ‘impure’ public good, which benefits some states more than others (Bove and Elia, 2011). The governments of those beneficiary states, it is then argued, are particularly likely to support peacekeeping with troops because they see that contributing is in the national interest. This can be the case, for example, when the strategic goals of UN operations (e.g. preventing regional conflict spillover) are consistent with the strategic objectives of potential contributor states (Bove and Elia, 2011; Perkins and Neumayer, 2008; Uzonyi, 2015). Governments may also see that their states can enjoy reputational and/or resource benefits if they contribute troops to UN missions, no matter what the strategic goals of those missions may be. Leaders of emerging and mid-level powers, for example, are said to contribute troops to peacekeeping because involvement in UN operations can consolidate or boost their states’ international standing and influence (based on Neack, 1995). And the governments of weaker states are seen to have an interest in contributing to PKOs because the UN offers training and resources to militaries that join its operations and, as such, deploying troops to UN missions can strengthen contributor states’ security forces (Kathman and Melin, 2017: 153).

Interest-based accounts provide a good entry-point for explaining contributions to UN peacekeeping. However, these arguments are limited by the fact that they focus on the interests of *states*, and it is assumed that governments act in accordance with those interests. However, this assumption has been questioned -- or outright rejected -- by liberal and constructivist scholars of International Relations, who have shown that domestic-level political interests can inform the foreign policy positions of governments just as much as the international-level interests of the states they govern (see discussions in Hurd 2009; Moravcsik 2009; Nincic, 1992). Bearing this in mind, a second set of explanations of peacekeeping contributions has looked within states and considered how domestic-level political considerations shape the likelihood that a government will choose to deploy its troops to UN PKOs.

Those taking this approach have been particularly interested in exploring whether regime type has an impact on the willingness of governments to commit national troops to PKOs. Andersson (2000), Lebovic (2004), and Perkins and Neumayer (2008), in particular, have all argued that democratic governments are more likely than non-democratic leaders to support peacekeeping. In making this claim, the authors assume that democratic governments have an ideational commitment to diffusing liberal institutions, which drives democrats to commit troops to liberal peacekeeping missions. Lebovic (2004) tests this claim by examining contribution trends between 1993 and 2001, finding that democracies were indeed particularly

likely to provide peacekeepers at that time. This conclusion has proven influential and, until now, it has been the definitive word on the topic (see Brosig, 2017; Gaibullov et al., 2015; Victor, 2010; Ward and Dorussen, 2016).

Consideration of domestic-level factors has certainly expanded our understanding of peacekeeping contributions, but there are two limitations to existing explanations of this type. First, Lebovic (2004) and Andersson (2000) offer limited direct support for the claim that democratic governments commit troops to UN PKOs out of an ideational commitment to liberalism. This explanation was, and remains, plausible. However, the cited studies do not directly test the claim. Rather, they find correlations between democratic regimes and troop contributions, and argue that those correlations may be driven by ideas and norms. In the absence of direct empirical support for that claim, however, it remains somewhat narrow. After all, there are many unique institutional characteristics of democratic regimes that could inform the propensity of elected governments to provide peacekeepers -- such as the dynamics of the electoral process itself -- and many of those characteristics are not explored in existing studies.

A second limitation is that the dataset which Lebovic (2004), in particular, draws on to support his claims is now 'dated' because it is based on observations until 2001, and we know that the nature of UN peacekeeping changed significantly during the 1990s, and it has continued to evolve since then. As the size, mandates, and risks associated with UN PKOs expanded across the 1990s, it is possible that the position of governments on the issue of troop contributions also changed. Indeed, a number of studies have questioned the idea that the governments of (Western) democracies are still more likely than the governments of other regimes to contribute troops to UN PKOs (Bellamy and Williams, 2009; Uzonyi, 2015), although that questioning has not yet been systematically explored. Thus, in the sections that follow, we revisit the relationship between regime type and contributions to peacekeeping, arguing that the nature of that rapport has changed since the 1990s, and that democracies have become less likely than non-democracies to make large-scale contributions.

### **Theoretical Framework: Benefits, Costs, and Regime-Specific Considerations**

Our theorizing starts by recognizing that *states* do not take foreign policy decisions; *governments* do. Consequently, any explanation of why leaders commit troops to peacekeeping needs to consider the domestic-level attitudes, interests, and institutional factors that might inform the decision-making of governments, as well as the international-level interests of the states they lead. Consequently, in this section we explore the evolution of domestic-level attitudes to peacekeeping, arguing that elite and popular positions on the question of troop

contributions changed across the course of the 1990s in response to shifts in the number, and nature, of UN peacekeeping operations (see Bellamy et al, 2004; Berdal, 2008/2010). At the elite level, we argue, there was a shift in the domestic-level motivations of governments that were willing to contribute their troops to UN missions across the 1990s -- from liberal ideas to political interests. And at the popular level, we identify a shift in the perceived response of domestic publics to the prospect of contributing troops -- from support to skepticism. We go on to propose that these shifts in attitude coalesced by the end of the 1990s in a way that has rendered democratic governments of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century less likely than non-democrats to contribute large numbers of troops to UN peacekeeping missions.

### ***Shifting Attitudes to Peacekeeping Contributions during the 1990s***

#### ***Governmental Motives -- From Ideas to Interests***

The early 1990s was a time of unparalleled “liberal optimism” (Snyder, 1990: 7-9) and, consistent with the arguments of Lebovic (2004) and Andersson (2000) cited above, that optimism arguably underwrote an early willingness from liberal governments to contribute troops to UN PKOs. As communist regimes fell across Central and Eastern Europe, democracy seemed to offer the best framework for ensuring stability and economic growth within states, as well as the best means for fostering peace and security between states. Consequently, leaders of some liberal democracies began to embrace the principle of foreign democracy-promotion (see, for example, Owen, 1994: 87). Since diffusing democracy through peacekeeping was also embraced by the UN after the Cold War (United Nations, 1992: para. 59), governments that supported democracy-promotion also had reason to support UN peacekeeping efforts through troop contributions. In some early cases of post-Cold War intervention, such as Namibia and El Salvador, that support seemed justified since elections run by the UN alongside peace operations were largely successful (Bellamy and Williams, 2010: 237-242, Online Appendix; Lyons, 2004). In cases such as Angola and Cambodia, however, the UN’s efforts to use peacekeeping as a vehicle for democracy-promotion were less effective, and illiberal outcomes followed (Stedman, 1997). By highlighting the fact that democracy diffusion through UN-led peacekeeping and peacebuilding would be a difficult -- and possibly counter-productive -- project (Boutros-Ghali, 1996: 52–55), those outcomes brought into question the liberal ideological basis for governments to contribute troops to UN PKOs.

While the ideological case may have weakened across the 1990s, interest-based motives for governments to contribute peacekeepers arguably strengthened as it became clear that an expansion of UN peacekeeping operations created opportunities for some governments to enjoy

resource and reputational gains through contributing troops to PKOs. On the resource front, in particular, a concurrent rise in the number of peacekeepers deployed globally (Providing for Peacekeeping, n.d.(a)) and in the fee that the UN was willing to pay to governments for each troop deployed to a UN mission (Coleman and Nyblade, 2018: 728) meant that leaders in (low-income) countries soon found that they could ‘profit’ from contributing to peacekeeping (see Gaïbulloev et al., 2015). This is because payments for peacekeepers were (and still are) typically transferred directly to ministries or governments’ central coffers (Coleman, 2014: 28), and so governing elites that paid their own troops less than the rate of UN reimbursement (then around \$1000 per troop, per month) stood to earn rent from supplying peacekeepers to the UN’s increasingly large missions (Bobrow and Boyer, 1997; also Daniel, 2011: 541).

On the reputational front, a growing number of governments were exposed to the possibility of prestige gains through contributing to peacekeeping because a rapid expansion of UN PKO deployments in the early ‘90s was accompanied by a diversification of contributors (Providing for Peacekeeping, n.d.(b)). Thus, while the leaders of mid-level, (largely Western) powers had long realized that contributing to peacekeeping could bring them (and their states) international standing (Neack, 1995), governments from a more diverse set of regions and regimes became exposed to the international-level reputational benefits of contributing to peacekeeping, and the knock-on legitimacy benefits of this at the domestic level (Malik, 2013: 210-211). The Chinese government, for example, is said to have contributed to the UN mission in Cambodia to boost its image, which had been strained following the 1989 crackdown on protestors in Tiananmen Square (Gill and Huang, 2013: 141). And Pervez Musharraf’s later willingness to “contribute as many [Pakistani] troops as possible” to peacekeeping has been seen as an attempt from the (former) military leader to bring legitimacy to his civilian rule (Malik, 2013: 205-6, 210).

### *Public Opinion -- From Support to (Perceived) Skepticism*

While the 1990s arguably saw a shift from ideas to interests as the key motivation for governments to support PKOs, the evolution of peacekeeping toward more ‘robust’ -- and risky -- forms of engagement challenged public attitudes on the question of troop contributions.

At the beginning of the ‘90s, citizens of major contributor states largely shared their governments’ optimism about the possibility for humanitarian peacekeeping interventions to build peace and stability -- and that optimism translated into generally high public support for national troop contributions to PKOs (see Kull and Ramsey, 2003; La Balme, 2001/2005; Martin and Fortmann, 1995). For example, a poll taken shortly after the United States had

committed to sending troops into Somalia to support the distribution of aid found that 84% of respondents approved of the move (McManus, 1993). Other US polls suggested similar levels of support for intervention in Somalia (Baum, 2004: 215). Across the border in Canada, meanwhile, around 90% of respondents in 1991 thought that their government should maintain or increase its commitment to UN PKOs (Martin and Fortmann, 1995: 392-93). And 82% of those questioned in France in late 1992 agreed that their state's troops should contribute to the UN's humanitarian intervention in Somalia (La Balme, 2001/2005: 205).

Despite early optimism, public support for peacekeeping began to fluctuate during the mid-1990s, following the deployment of UN PKOs to active conflicts, where peacekeepers were subjected to unprecedented levels of risk (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). Those risks were most clear in Somalia, where US and Pakistani peacekeepers became embroiled in the country's armed conflict, suffering casualties at the hands of local warlords. As graphic images of US fatalities in Mogadishu were televised globally in late 1993, public opinion on peacekeeping began to sour -- particularly in the US (Baum, 2004: 218; Burk, 1999: 67; Jentleson and Britton, 1998: 401). Thus, by April 1994, 59% of respondents to an American poll were concerned about sending US troops to Bosnia, for fear of risking "a repeat of the same mess we got ourselves into in Somalia" (Kull and Ramsay, 2003: 82).<sup>1</sup> While the publics of other states were initially willing to see their troops join UNPROFOR, challenges on the ground in Bosnia contributed to waning public support for peacekeeping in countries such as Canada (Martin and Fortmann, 2001: 68-69), the Netherlands (van der Meulen and de Konink, 2001/2005: 137-139) and France (La Balme, 2001/2005: 208). In practice, public attitudes soon plateaued or even bounced back, but media outlets and officials in contributing countries continued to *perceive* that there was a contraction of popular support for contributing to peacekeeping (Dieck, 2015: Conclusion; Kull and Ramsay, 2003; Martin and Fortmann 2001; Sobel, 1998: 257) -- and it is ultimately governmental perceptions that matter for policy.

### ***Theorizing the Impact of Regime Type on Contributions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

If the 1990s saw a shift from ideas to interests as the key motivation for governments to contribute troops to UN missions, and a shift from public support to (perceived) skepticism in the face of contributions, then leaders since the 1990s have needed to weigh the domestic-level political benefits of contributing against the possible public opinion costs of doing so. We

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<sup>1</sup> This skeptical position on peacekeeping contrasts with broader support, over time, for the use of US troops in missions underwritten by national self-interest (Berinsky, 2009; Eichenberg, 2005; Jentleson and Britton 1998).

argue that the way in which governments have assessed that balance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century varies according to regime type. Specifically, we propose that anocratic/autocratic governments have seen greater scope for gain, and more limited risks, than their democratic counterparts. As such, non-democratic governments have been, and remain, interested in contributing large numbers of troops to PKOs, while freely-elected governments have an interest in making regular, but small-scale, troop contributions.

### *Non-Democratic Governments and Large-scale Contributions*

Our first proposal is that, as attitudes to peacekeeping evolved across the 1990s, illiberal governments came to see greater scope (than their democratic counterparts) for resource and reputational gains through providing peacekeepers, and this boosted their willingness to contribute troops after the '90s. In terms of resources, we propose that anocratic and autocratic governments particularly welcomed the expanding opportunities for 'peacekeeping profit' that accompanied an expansion of PKO deployments because peacekeeping rent offered them a source of patronage,<sup>2</sup> which is a key foundation of autocratic forms of rule (Brosig, 2017). To that end, Alex de Waal has discussed Ethiopia's increased contributions to peacekeeping as part of the Ethiopian government's embrace of "militarized rent-seeking" (de Waal, 2015: 195). On the reputational front, meanwhile, we argue that non-democratic governments have particularly welcomed the possibility for status gains through peacekeeping because illiberal forms of rule tend to lack legitimacy at home and/or international credibility abroad. As such, anocratic and autocratic governments stand to particularly benefit from the reputational boost that can come from contributing troops to UN missions (see logic in Victor, 2010: 219-221). This has arguably been the case in the DRC, where "the quest for...international image accounts for the attempts [of] the DRC government" to support peacekeeping with troops, according to Tshibambe (2016).

While illiberal leaders have arguably seen particular scope for gain through contributing troops to PKOs since the 1990s, we also argue that they have seen little risk of incurring political costs by contributing -- even when they have faced limited public support for such a move. This is because non-democratic governments do not rely on electoral support to retain power and, as such, they can discount any short-term negative impact that contributing may

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<sup>2</sup> Note that, in 2014, the UN pledged to increase payments to a little over \$1300 per troop, per month (Nichols, 2014).

have on domestic opinion (see Peceny and Beer, 2003: 340).<sup>3</sup> Evidence of such discounting began to emerge in Nigeria in the mid-to-late 1990s, for example, when “military-brass hats” under Sani Abacha could “brazenly ignore public opinion on the mounting costs and casualties of regional peacekeeping” (Adebajo and Landsberg, 2000) by choosing to deploy Nigerian troops to regional PKOs -- partly for strategic reasons, but also partly to deflect international criticism of Abacha’s regime (Adebajo, 2013: 261-62; Victor, 2010: 221). Significantly, however, the government’s position on troop contributions to PKOs began to change when Nigeria started to democratize under Olusegun Obasanjo,<sup>4</sup> who then needed to “answer to his isolationist public” (Adebajo and Landsberg, 2000).<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, he refused to commit troops to a UN intervention in Côte d’Ivoire (Henke, 2016: 481).

If non-democratic leaders have indeed set aside public skepticism since the 1990s, then the overriding domestic-level question for illiberal governments over the past 15 to 20 years has been whether contributing troops might bring them political benefits of the sort described above. Where such gains have been on offer, illiberal governments are likely to have seen reason to make *large-scale* contributions because the size of gains through contributing is broadly tied to the size of troop contributions. After all, the UN pays out cash per troop, and so larger deployments mean larger compensation and, thus, larger sources of patronage. Large-scale contributions also give governments greater scope to use deployment as a reward that can be disbursed to commissioned officers in countries where participation in UN PKOs is seen as “prestigious and as a boost to personal image and identity” (Krishnasamy in Malik, 2013: 217). Finally, governments that contribute the most troops to a given UN mission stand to maximize the reputational benefits of doing so because informal mission ‘ownership’ maximizes visibility and associated legitimacy gains for the leaders of sending countries.

### *Democratic Governments and Small-scale Contributions*

While illiberal governments may have recognized scope for benefit through contributing since the 1990s, we propose that democratic governments have seen less potential

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<sup>3</sup> We recognize that autocrats can incur ‘audience costs’ for adopting unpopular policies, but those costs tend to be restricted to dissent among elites and, as such, their political impact is arguably finite (see Fearon, 1994; Weeks, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Despite liberalizing, Polity continued to place Nigeria on the autocratic spectrum after 2000, although other regime datasets classify it as a democracy from then (Lüthmann et al., 2018: 71).

<sup>5</sup> Note that the discussion of Adebajo and Landsberg relates to Nigeria’s role in regional missions, rather than UN operations. However, we believe that the logic of an autocratic government discounting public opinion on troop contributions holds across both types of missions.

for resource and reputational gains during that time. In terms of resources, specifically, few democratic leaders have been in a position to ‘profit’ from peacekeeping -- simply because democracies are often housed in wealthy states, which pay their troops considerably more than the rate of UN reimbursement (Shimizu and Sandler, 2002: 654). And in poorer democracies, where there has been some potential for profit, institutionalized checks on executive spending are likely to have limited the capacity of democratic incumbents to use peacekeeping profit as a source of political patronage.<sup>6</sup> On the reputational front, meanwhile, there has been limited scope for democrats to enjoy status gains through contributing peacekeepers because leaders of prominent potential democratic contributors already derive significant status from their states’ membership of prestigious international ‘clubs’ (e.g. the European Union, NATO, and the G7). As such, they have little more to gain through sending national troops to UN PKOs.

While democratic leaders may have seen limited scope for benefit through contributing, it is also likely that they have seen increased political risk in contributing peacekeepers since the 1990s due to fluctuating support for peacekeeping among the very people who decide the fate of the government in democracies: the public. In light of that perceived risk, we argue that elected governments have been wary of committing their states’ troops to UN missions -- particularly when ballots have been looming. Anecdotal evidence of such an ‘election effect’ had already begun to emerge in the US during the early-to-mid 1990s, when Presidents H.W. Bush and Clinton became worried that sending American troops to peacekeeping missions might undermine their electability (although both did eventually agree to contribute US forces to PKOs) (Baum, 2004; Dieck, 2015). Since then, perceived public skepticism seems to have placed some constraints on the willingness of US governments to contribute peacekeepers (see Smith, 2014). Note, for example, the reluctance of Barack Obama to send US troops to UN missions during the years in which elections were scheduled. Interestingly, however, as Obama neared the end of his second term as president (and, thus, the end of his reliance on electoral support), the president chaired an international summit on UN peace operations, where he pledged to “double the number of U.S. military officers serving in peacekeeping” missions (Obama, 2015). That pledge led to the deployment of a further 34 American officers to UN missions over the year that followed, in addition to the provision of other resources (Pomper, 2016).

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<sup>6</sup> For a broader discussion of the conditions under which governments are likely to profit from peacekeeping contributions, see Coleman and Nyblade (2018).

Although democratic leaders may have become concerned that contributing peacekeepers to the UN could undermine the support of some voters, they may have also been worried that outright refusal to support UN PKOs could come at the cost of support from constituents who back peacekeeping. That group of voters is thought to be particularly large in states that have a long history of ‘liberal internationalism’, such as Canada (Paris, 2014) or the Nordic countries (Jakobsen, 2006). In those states, and beyond, it would be politically perilous for elected governments to simply ignore the preferences of ‘internationalist’ voters. Consequently, it is possible that elected governments have adopted a compromise position on the issue of troop contributions since the 1990s -- one that restricts overall contributions to very low numbers (to placate more ‘communitarian’ constituents), while also maintaining regular, small-sized contributions (to placate ‘liberal internationalists’).

### *Hypotheses*

Our theorizing is tied to two testable claims. The first is that the relationship between regime type and troop contributions has reversed since the 1990s. To test this, we compare contribution patterns over two periods: the decade following the Cold War, and the period since then. The turn of the century provides a meaningful cut-off point for two reasons. First, decisions taken in 1999 institutionalized some of the changes to the nature of peacekeeping that arguably triggered a shift in attitudes to peacekeeping across the 1990s. Specifically, 1999-2000 witnessed the formalization of more ‘robust’ forms of peacekeeping through the introduction of civilian protection as a core component of mandates (Wills, 2009: 41-43). There was also a call for more robust rules of engagement in the Brahimi Report (United Nations, 2000: ix-x). The second reason for taking 1999 as a cut-off is that there was a sudden upswing in UN peacekeeping deployments at that time, after period of retraction in the mid-1990s, following the chastening experiences of Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and beyond (Bellamy and Williams, 2010: 122). That upswing has been sustained (or increased) since 1999 (Providing for Peacekeeping, n.d.(a)) and, as such, the turn of the century can be seen as a turning point for peacekeeping -- and for contributions to peacekeeping.

For both of the time periods we examine, we assume that democratic governments have seen reason to contribute some troops to peacekeeping missions, due to an ideational commitment to peacekeeping, or otherwise. However, we also assume that increased concern over the electoral costs of contributing since the 1990s has rendered democratic governments reluctant to make large-scale contributions (>150 troops) since then. This contrasts with the position of governments at the non-democratic end of the spectrum, which we expect have sent

large numbers of troops into the field, so as to maximize any contributor-specific benefits, while not worrying about public opinion costs. Taken together, these expectations give rise to our first hypothesis:

**H1:** *(Since 1999) the more democratic a government, the less likely that it has made large-scale troop contributions to UN PKOs.*

On the expectation that liberal governments have indeed been reluctant to provide large numbers of UN peacekeepers since 1999, we test our second claim, which holds that concerns over public opinion and electability have been driving any observed reluctance. To investigate this, we focus exclusively on the period 1999-2015.<sup>7</sup> We assume that, if democratic governments have been concerned about the impact of troop commitments on electoral support during that period, then they will have been particularly reluctant to start contributing peacekeepers when free and fair elections have been on the horizon (see Gaubatz, 1991). Thus, our second hypothesis holds that:

**H2:** *(Since 1999) democratic governments have been particularly unlikely to initiate large-scale troop contributions to UN PKOs over the years preceding elections.*

## **Methodology**

### *Dependent Variables and Data*

In testing H1, our dependent variable is *large-scale troop contributions* to UN peacekeeping missions, where ‘troop’ refers to personnel in military combatant, military observer, or policing roles. We examine both the propensity of countries to contribute any number of troops to UN missions *and* the likelihood of ‘large-scale’ contributions, where that term is understood as the deployment of 150 troops or more (which is the standard size of a UN military company (United Nations, 2003: 65)). We include robustness checks that run our models with greater and fewer numbers of troops.

Our data on troop contributions comes from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and it includes observations of troop contributions to UN PKOs by all independent states between 1990 and 2015.<sup>8</sup> On occasion, we bifurcate our data on contributors at the year 1999 to explore whether the relationship between regime type and contributions has

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<sup>7</sup> While there are theoretical justifications for taking 1999 as a cut-off for our analysis, as laid out, data restrictions for this second analysis also meant that 1999 provided a useful cut-off date for our overall analysis.

<sup>8</sup> Several microstates and territories, which rarely have a Polity 2 score, are not included in the dataset.

shifted since the 1990s. The maximum number of troops deployed in a given month, of a given year, is taken as the value of the annual observation.

Our unit of analysis is the ‘potential contributor mission year’; thus, we include all years in which a contributor could have sent troops to UN missions, regardless of whether that was actually the case. This ensures that our dataset does not become a biased sample of cases in which states did, in fact, contribute troops. We use mission years -- as opposed to country years -- to control for the possibility that regime type is correlated with contributions to certain types of missions (e.g. peace enforcement). While we recognize that adopting this unit of analysis gives us a large number of observations, it allows us to control for the characteristics of a mission that motivate a government’s willingness to contribute when we are looking at the effect of ‘level of democracy’ on troop contributions.

When testing our second hypothesis (which relates to the specific effect of elections on contributions), our dependent variable is the *initiation* of a large-scale troop contribution. We focus on the initiation of contributions for this analysis because we assume that, once governments have decided to contribute peacekeepers, they are likely to stick to that decision -- even if elections are coming up. We also assume, however, that democratic governments will be concerned that taking a *new* position on troop contributions during an election season could politicize the issue and, as such, leaders will be particularly reluctant to start large-scale contributions when elections are on the horizon. To test this, we use a dataset that includes observations of the date when countries first contribute 150 or more troops to a UN mission. We use monthly observations because this makes it possible to code the twelve months leading up to an election as an ‘election year’, rather than using the calendar year of the election. We acknowledge that the actual deployment of troops as part of a PKO does not necessarily take place immediately after the decision to contribute peacekeepers is adopted. However, we believe that troop deployment is a good estimate, since it generally follows the decision to contribute relatively quickly.<sup>9</sup>

## Models

To test our first hypothesis, we specify a Heckman probit model. This two-step model allows us to first examine factors that determine whether governments will contribute *some* troops to UN peacekeeping missions, and then consider factors that might inform the *size* of

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<sup>9</sup> See UN Peacekeeping, “Forming a New Operation”: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/forming-new-operation> (accessed 30 November 2017).

those contributions. The first stage (the ‘selection’ equation) estimates the likelihood of a country participating in a UN mission in a given year, based on the full sample of potential cases of participation. The second stage (the ‘outcome’ equation) is then based exclusively on the sub-sample of countries that do participate in UN PKOs in a given year,<sup>10</sup> and it estimates the likelihood that a contributing state will make a ‘large-scale contribution’ that year. The Heckman model calculates the two equations simultaneously, to avoid inconsistent estimates due a correlation between error terms (Cameron and Trivedi, 2005: 546–53; Lee, 2003).

Following Lebovic (2004), we include a variable named (previous) ‘PKO Contributor’ in the selection equation, but not in the outcome equation. We do so to satisfy the Heckman model’s need for an exclusion restriction, which holds that a variable needs to appear with a non-zero coefficient in the selection equation but not be included in the outcome equation. With this goal in mind, our PKO Contributor variable is coded as 1 if a country has contributed personnel to a PKO in any of the years between 1990 and the year of the observation, and 0 if it has not. For example, if a given country contributes to a PKO for the first time in 1995, then the PKO Contributor variable is coded as 0 between 1990 and 1994, but 1 from 1995 onwards. We include this particular variable in the first, but not the second, equation because non-participation in any given mission year presumably comes easiest to perennial abstainers, such as North Korea. Hence, we expect this variable to have a strong significant and positive effect on contributions in a given year. However, it would not be meaningful to include PKO Contributor in the outcome equation, because countries that have never contributed to PKOs by definition do not make large-scale contributions to UN PKOs. Thus, the variable presents itself as a neat candidate for meeting the exclusion restriction because is likely to strongly influence the dependent variable of the selection equation but it is not relevant for the outcome equation.

To test our second hypothesis -- which investigates whether democratic governments are less likely to initiate a large-scale contribution to UN PKOs during an election year -- we code the month in which a contributing country first sends more than 150 troops to a UN mission as 1. Since the decision of a government to make a large-scale contribution, or not, is a binary variable, we use a logit model for this analysis.

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<sup>10</sup> We use a binary variable that measures large-scale troop contributions in the outcome equation, rather than a continuous variable that measures the number of troops contributed in order to make this section of our analysis consistent with the second section, which examines the effect of elections on whether governments decide to make a ‘large-scale contribution’ for the first time.

### *Independent Variables*

For our Heckman probit model, we measure our independent variable -- *level of democracy* -- using a 21-point regime scale that runs from full autocracy to full democracy, as coded in the Polity-2 index. The Polity-2 score is based on an evaluation of the competitiveness and openness of the system of executive recruitment (Marshall et al., 2016).<sup>11</sup> We use a scaled, rather than binary, measure for the Heckman analysis because we assume that concern over elections and electability is the mechanism driving the relationship between regime type and troop contributions.

We use a binary measure of democracy/non-democracy when presenting some of our descriptive statistics. When taking this approach, we follow standard practice in classifying any regime that has a Polity-2 score of 6 and higher as a democracy and any other as a non-democracy.

For our analysis of the relationship between elections and troop contributions, we use data on elections from the Election Guide Database, which has been compiled by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The election year variable includes both presidential and lower-house elections.

### *Controls*

We control for a range of factors that are known to inform a country's propensity to contribute to UN PKOs. While our own arguments focus on the domestic-level political interests that may drive governments to contribute, we recognize that the decisions of governments in relation to troop contributions are also driven by considerations of state interests at the international level, and so some of our controls account for those interests. We also control for factors that inform the feasibility of contributions.

First, we account for the wealth of a country -- measured as real GDP per capita -- because richer countries may channel their peacekeeping contributions through non-UN operations (Bellamy and Williams, 2009). Also, their governments have no financial incentives to contribute troops to peacekeeping missions since the rate of UN reimbursement, per troop, is less than wealthy states pay their soldiers (Gaïbullov et al., 2015: 730). GDP data is taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI).

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<sup>11</sup> Some of the countries included do not have Polity-2 scores. Thus, we took data prepared by Kristian Gleditsch, who has coded scores for several countries that were not included in the original Polity 4 dataset, and we extrapolated the Polity-2 score for the 2008-2015 period ('Polity Data Archive', n.d.).

We also control for the size of a country's population, and include a variable that measures the ratio of soldiers to population since countries with relatively large militaries may be particularly inclined to commit some of their troops to peacekeeping missions abroad. Our population data comes from the WDIs, and data on armed forces comes from the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

We account for various factors that may mean governments see that their states have a strategic interest in providing peacekeepers. Specifically, we control for whether a country is located in the region in which a peace mission is deployed (as defined by the Correlates of War project) and whether there is a previous colonial arrangement between a contributor country and a PKO host state (as coded by one of the authors), knowing that former colonial powers often have an interest in perpetuating influence over their former colonies. Following Lebovic (2004), we also include a variable that measures whether a potential contributor is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, on the assumption that these countries can influence their personnel contributions through a veto threat.

Since governments may be reluctant to deploy their states' troops into highly unstable and dangerous environments, we control for three characteristics of missions that reflect the risk associated with those missions: the presence of an ongoing active conflict in the country where a PKO is deployed (as coded by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program); the deployment of troops under Chapter VII of the UN Charter; and the number of peacekeepers that died in the previous year (as recorded by the UN DPKO).

Since country contributions tend to vary little from year to year, we use robust standard errors, clustered on the contributor-mission level, to account for the clustering contributions of a particular country to a given mission. To control for temporal dependence, the models include cubic splines (Beck et al., 1998), and a variable that measures the number of years since a country's last large-scale contribution.

Finally, we include further controls in models we run as robustness checks, as detailed in the online Appendix.

## **Results**

### *Descriptive Findings*

We first offer descriptive statistics which immediately suggest that, since the turn of the century, non-democratic governments have become more likely than their democratic counterparts to make large-scale troop contributions to UN missions. This is first seen in the results presented in Table 1, which compares the average Polity-2 scores of the 'top ten'

contributing states during the 1990s with the scores of the top ten contributors from 2000 onwards. Between 1990 and 1999, a clear majority of the largest contributors were democracies; indeed, seven of the top ten during the 1990s had Polity-2 scores of 6 or above. Moreover, the average Polity-2 score of the top contributors at that time was 7.1. Fast-forward to 2000-2015, and only two of the top ten would be categorized as democracies (India and Ghana), while the average Polity-2 score of the ten largest providers is just 1.5. Also note that the average annual number of troops deployed by the top contributors was 4,629 between 2000-15, which was more than twice the average size of contributions between 1990 and 1999.

*Table 1: Polity-2 Scores of the Top 10 Contributors to UN PKOs, 1990-99 and 2000-2015*

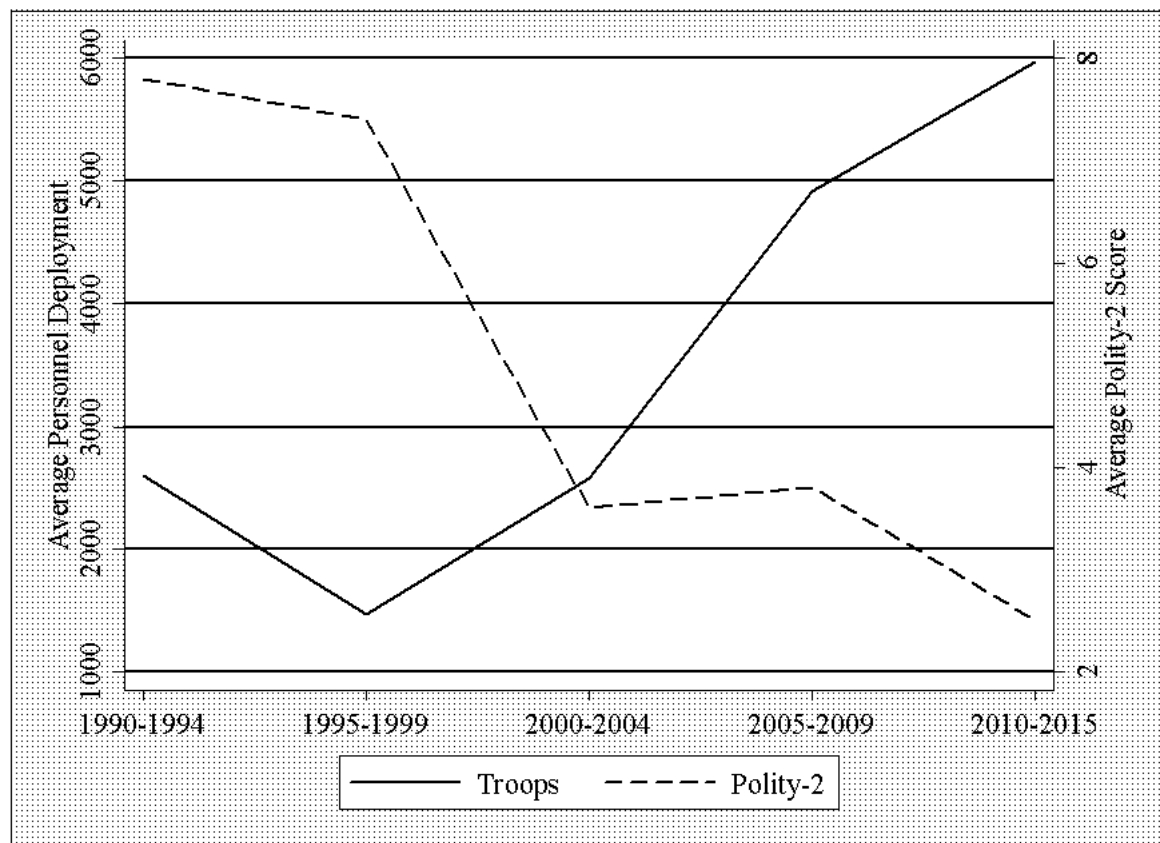
| <b>1990-1999</b>                 |                                 |                               | <b>2000-2015</b>                 |                                 |                               |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Top-10 Troop Contributors</i> | <i>Average Troop Deployment</i> | <i>Average Polity-2 Score</i> | <i>Top-10 Troop Contributors</i> | <i>Average Troop Deployment</i> | <i>Average Polity-2 Score</i> |
| Pakistan                         | 4,054                           | 6.2                           | Bangladesh                       | 8,388                           | 3.5                           |
| France                           | 3,146                           | 9                             | Pakistan                         | 8,032                           | 0.9                           |
| India                            | 2,162                           | 8.5                           | India                            | 6,678                           | 9                             |
| Bangladesh                       | 1,753                           | 4.9                           | Nigeria                          | 4,288                           | 4.2                           |
| United Kingdom                   | 1,678                           | 10                            | Ethiopia                         | 4,169                           | -2.6                          |
| United States                    | 1,630                           | 10                            | Nepal                            | 3,438                           | 3                             |
| Canada                           | 1,599                           | 10                            | Rwanda                           | 3,394                           | -3.3                          |
| Nepal                            | 1,293                           | 5.1                           | Jordan                           | 2,990                           | -2.6                          |
| Ghana                            | 1,269                           | -0.7                          | Ghana                            | 2,901                           | 7.3                           |
| Poland                           | 1,205                           | 8.2                           | Egypt                            | 2,018                           | -4.1                          |
| <b>Mean</b>                      | <b>1,979</b>                    | <b>7.1</b>                    | <b>Mean</b>                      | <b>4,629</b>                    | <b>1.5</b>                    |

Five of the top ten contributors during the 1990s have also been among the top troop suppliers from 2000, although the Polity-2 scores of these consistent contributors have shifted over time. Three such providers have suffered democratic backslides since 2000 (Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal), while Ghana has democratized and India has further strengthened its already-robust democratic regime. Given the contrary direction of these trends, the average score of the five countries that appear in the top ten list for both periods has remained basically constant (4.80 for the 1990-1999 period, and 4.75 for the 2000-2015 period). Thus, we infer that the drop in average Polity-2 score of *all* top contributors has not been driven by democratic backsliding among consistent contributors. Rather, it has come through the exit of five democracies from the list and the entrance of five non-democracies.

Figure 1 builds on the results of Table 1, by tracking the evolution of average Polity-2 scores of top contributors between 1990 and 2015, as well as the average size of their

contributions. The inverse patterns are striking. First, note that the average Polity-2 score of top contributors dropped substantially in the late 1990s, and it has continued on that downward trend since then. This illustrates the idea that, since the 1990s, there has been a shift in the regime type of governments that make major deployments -- from democratic to non-democratic. Also note that, as the top contributors have become more autocratic over the past two decades, so too has the average size of contributions increased.<sup>12</sup> This trend is consistent with our suggestion that, when non-democratic governments have seen political benefit in contributing, they have seen particular benefit in making large contributions.

*Figure 1: Temporal Trend of Average Troop Deployments and Polity-2 Scores of the Top Ten Contributors to UN PKOs, 1990-2015*

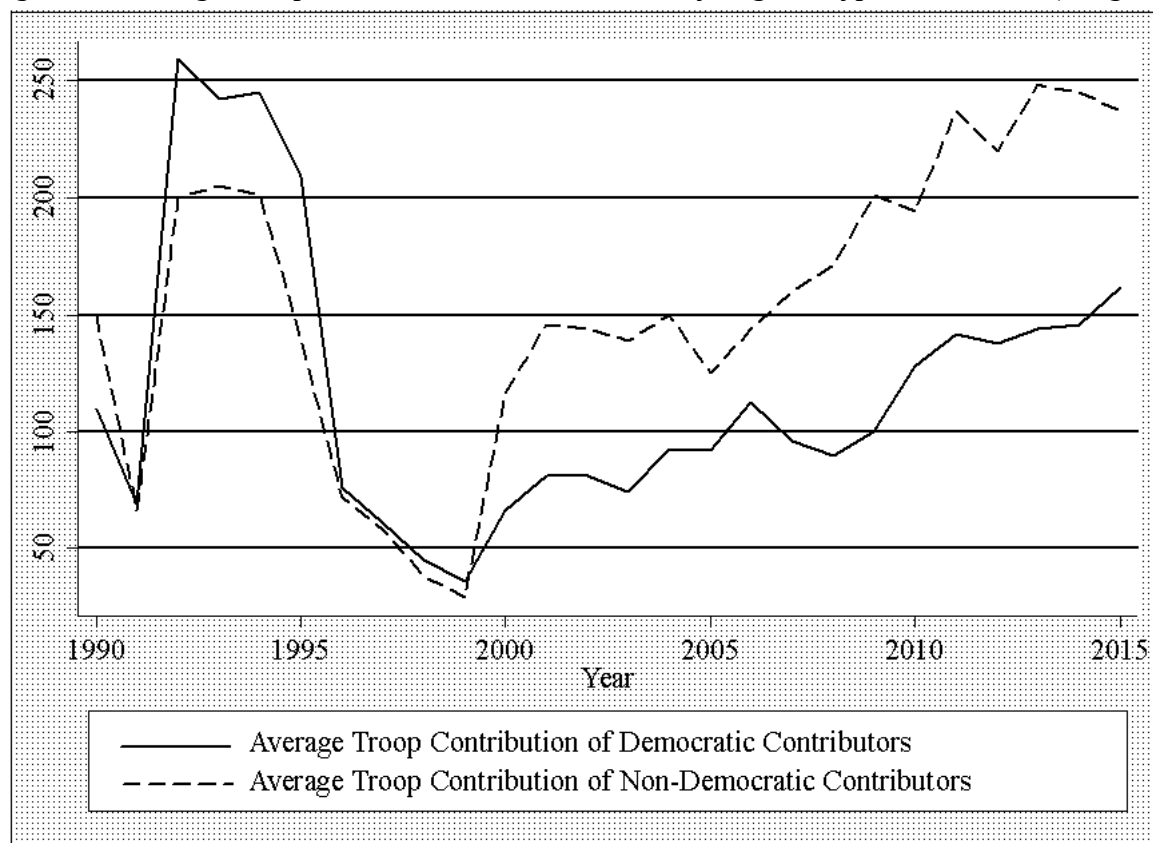


This finding is reinforced by looking at the average number of troops that have been deployed by democratic and non-democratic governments, once those governments have decided to contribute. The results of this calculation (shown in Figure 2) reveal that, since the late 1990s, non-democratic contributors have deployed (on average) around one third more

<sup>12</sup> The averages displayed in Figure 1 do not match averages over the two periods shown in Table 1 because the states included in the lists of top contributors over the 1990-1999 and 2000-2015 periods are not necessarily included in the 'top ten' lists for each of the periods shown in Figure 1.

troops than democratic contributors. It should be noted, however, that there are many democratic countries and, thus, many democratic contributors. Consequently, although democracies contribute smaller numbers of troops, the combined total numbers of troops contributed by all democratic and non-democratic governments, respectively, have been roughly similar in recent years (see Figure 1 in the Appendix).

Figure 2: Average Troop Contributions to UN PKOs, by Regime Type, 1990-2015 (Weighted)



### The Heckman Probit Models

Moving onto inferential models, Table 2 presents the results of our Heckman probit models, which first test whether the ‘level of democracy’ (now measured on a 21-point scale) has an impact on the decision of a government to contribute *some* troops to UN missions, before then narrowing the sample to contributor states and examining whether there is a relationship between the ‘level of democracy’ in those states and *large-scale* contributions. To explore our intuition that the relationship between regime type and troop contributions shifted after the 1990s, we split our sample into two periods. Model 1 estimates the effect of regime type on troop contributions between 1990 and 1999, and Model 2 estimates this effect based on observations between 1999 and 2015. Results of the full sample are provided in the Appendix.

In both models, the results of our selection equations suggest that, the more democratic a regime, the more likely that its government will make *some* level of troop contribution to UN missions. This finding is significant at the 1% level for both of the time periods we investigate. Thus, we infer that governments at the democratic end of the spectrum were, and have remained, committed to supporting UN peacekeeping with troops -- at least to some degree.

*Table 2: Propensity of Governments to Contribute Troops to UN PKOs (Heckman Probit)*

|                                             | 1990-1999                                          |                                                      | 1999-2015                                          |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | Selection Equation<br>Participation in PKO<br>(1a) | Outcome Equation<br>Large-Scale<br>Contribution (1b) | Selection Equation<br>Participation in PKO<br>(2a) | Outcome Equation<br>Large-Scale<br>Contribution (2b) |
| Level of Democracy                          | 0.025***<br>(0.004)                                | 0.023**<br>(0.011)                                   | 0.034***<br>(0.004)                                | -0.027***<br>(0.008)                                 |
| PKO Contributor                             | 1.131***<br>(0.038)                                |                                                      | 1.731***<br>(0.059)                                |                                                      |
| GDP per Capita –<br>logged                  | 0.098***<br>(0.017)                                | -0.081*<br>(0.046)                                   | 0.011<br>(0.013)                                   | 0.010<br>(0.029)                                     |
| Population – logged                         | 0.152***<br>(0.016)                                | -0.001<br>(0.047)                                    | 0.192***<br>(0.013)                                | 0.134***<br>(0.030)                                  |
| Military Personnel /<br>Population          | -5.718<br>(4.130)                                  | -5.467<br>(10.074)                                   | 0.375<br>(3.786)                                   | -1.369<br>(8.244)                                    |
| Permanent-5                                 |                                                    | 0.133<br>(0.199)                                     |                                                    | -0.603***<br>(0.186)                                 |
| Shared Region                               | 0.439***<br>(0.051)                                | -0.104<br>(0.125)                                    | 0.539***<br>(0.045)                                | 0.050<br>(0.085)                                     |
| Colonial Ties                               | 0.359<br>(0.252)                                   | 0.383<br>(0.328)                                     | 0.606***<br>(0.231)                                | 0.420<br>(0.286)                                     |
| Active Armed Conflict                       | 0.044<br>(0.043)                                   | -0.134<br>(0.094)                                    | -0.126***<br>(0.033)                               | -0.330***<br>(0.068)                                 |
| Chapter 7 Authorization                     | 0.379***<br>(0.060)                                | 0.218*<br>(0.124)                                    | 0.368***<br>(0.043)                                | 0.102<br>(0.072)                                     |
| Number of PKO<br>Personnel Killed           | -0.000<br>(0.001)                                  | 0.023***<br>(0.002)                                  | 0.013***<br>(0.001)                                | 0.021***<br>(0.002)                                  |
| Time since last major<br>contribution       |                                                    | -1.331***<br>(0.112)                                 |                                                    | -1.466***<br>(0.064)                                 |
| Spline 1                                    |                                                    | -0.000<br>(0.009)                                    |                                                    | -0.179***<br>(0.016)                                 |
| Spline 2                                    |                                                    | -0.199***<br>(0.030)                                 |                                                    | 0.052***<br>(0.008)                                  |
| Spline 3                                    |                                                    | 0.127***<br>(0.037)                                  |                                                    | -0.005**<br>(0.002)                                  |
| Constant                                    | -5.463***<br>(0.279)                               | 0.430<br>(1.092)                                     | -6.082***<br>(0.235)                               | -1.838***<br>(0.635)                                 |
| Wald chi-Squared                            |                                                    | 397.42***                                            |                                                    | 1352.27***                                           |
| Observations                                | 27837                                              | 3291                                                 | 51429                                              | 10060                                                |
| Chi-square test of<br>independent equations |                                                    | 4.80**                                               |                                                    | 41.20***                                             |

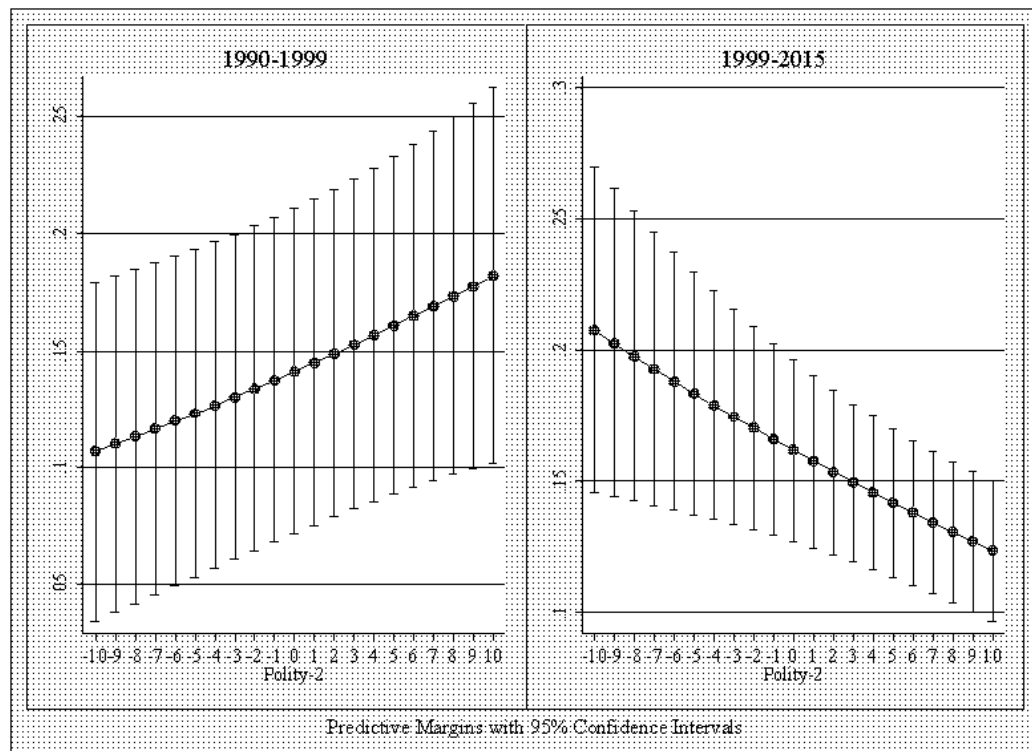
Note: Robust standard errors, clustered on the contributor-mission level, are in parentheses. The cubic splines are statistically significant when tested jointly in Model 1 ( $\chi^2=0.0000$ ) and Model 2 ( $\chi^2=0.0000$ ). \*significant at 10 percent; \*\*significant at 5 percent; \*\*\*significant at 1 percent.

Crucially, however, we find that the two time periods show different results in terms of the relationship between ‘level of democracy’ and the likelihood of a *large-scale* troop contribution. Model 1, which isolates the 1990-1999 period, shows that the effect of democracy on a large-scale contribution was positive at that time (significant at the 5% level). Thus, in line with Lebovic (2004), our results suggest that democratic governments were more likely to make large-scale troop contributions to UN missions throughout the 1990s. However, Model 2 shows that this relationship then inverted between 1999 and 2015. For that period, ‘level of democracy’ is negatively associated with the likelihood that its government will make a large-scale troop contribution, once it has decided to contribute in some way (significant at the 1% level). Hence, our second model suggests that, since 1999, the more democratic a regime is, the *less* likely that its government will make large-scale troop contributions to UN missions -- consistent with Hypothesis 1.

This finding is further illustrated when we calculate the predicted probabilities that a particular type of government will make a large-scale troop contribution. As shown in Figure 3, between 1990 and 1999, the probability that governments would make large-scale troop contributions increased with their levels of democracy. For the period 1999-2015, however, the probability that a fully autocratic country (with a Polity-2 score of -10) will make a large-scale contribution (after deciding to commit in some way) is around 21%, while the probability that a fully democratic government (with a Polity-2 score of 10) will make such a contribution is only around 12%. A country with a Polity-2 score of 0, meanwhile, has a 16% chance of making a large-scale troop contribution.

We conducted three sets of robustness checks of our Heckman models. First, we replicated Model 2, but with the addition of further control variables including mission size, the amount of aid a contributing country receives, whether a contributor is engaged in other military operations, and a squared version of the Polity-2 score. Second, we estimated the impact of ‘level of democracy’ on different thresholds of troop contributions (35 and 650 troops, respectively). Third, to test whether the relationship between a state’s level of democracy and its propensity to contribute troops is dependent on its level of wealth, we examined whether ‘level of democracy’ has an impact on major troop contributions in the richest *and* poorest states. The details of these checks, and the associated findings, are reported in the Appendix. As shown there, the findings of our initial models prove robust.

Figure 3: The Likelihood of a Large-Scale Troop Contribution, by Polity-2 Score



Overall, we find support for our argument that, since the 1990s, freely-elected governments have become less likely than non-democracies to make large-scale troop contributions to UN missions. Governments at the democratic end of the spectrum remain more likely to make some level of contribution, but this often amounts to what Coleman (2013) describes as ‘token’ efforts -- a handful of troops. This willingness to commit some personnel, but a reluctance to contribute large numbers, is consistent with the idea that democratic leaders adopt a compromise position when considering troop contributions -- one that aims to retain the electoral support of liberal internationalist voters who favor sending troops to UN PKOs, but also the support of those who are more skeptical about the merits of sending national troops to multinational PKOs.

### *The Impact of Elections on Contributions*

While the findings thus far suggest that democratic governments have become more reluctant than their more autocratic counterparts to contribute large numbers of troops, the Heckman analysis tells us little about *why* that may be the case. So, as a second step, we tested our second hypothesis, which explores the claim that democratic leaders have become reluctant to contribute troops because they are concerned about the impact of that step on electoral

support and, thus, their capacity to retain power. If this is indeed the case, then we would expect that, since 1999, democratic governments have become particularly reluctant to contribute large numbers of troops when elections have been on the horizon.

To test this mechanism, we first restricted our sample to potential contributor states that have played host to regimes with Polity-2 scores of 6 or more (i.e. liberal democracies). The election year variable was coded as 1 for the month in which an election took place, as well as the preceding 11 months. We assumed that democracies only became reluctant to contribute from the late 1990s, and we focused exclusively on the period 1999-2015. During that time, democratic governments contributed 150 or more troops to a mission for the first time in 150 individual months. The number of theoretical mission-months in which all democratic governments could have contributed 150 or more troops is 340,464. Democratic states had 783 rounds of elections within the 1999-2015 period, of which 730 were regular elections and 53 were unscheduled elections. Out of the total of 340,464 mission-months to which governments could have contributed troops for the first time, 99,965 months fell within an 'election year'.

Our test looked at whether democratic governments have been particularly unlikely to contribute large numbers of peacekeepers during the year preceding elections. Model 1 of Table 3 shows that this is indeed the case, and the effect is significant at the 5% level. To explore this finding further, we used the CLARIFY software program (Tomz et al., 2001) to calculate predicted probabilities. All else being equal, the probability that a given democratic country will start a large-scale troop contribution in a given month is 0.030%, if there are no elections run over the following year. This figure drops to 0.019% when elections are on the horizon. Thus, we conclude that, over the year preceding elections, a democratic government will be around one third less likely to start a large-scale troop contribution to a UN PKO than otherwise.

To test the robustness of this finding, we first employed a rare event logit model, which was developed by King and Zeng (2001) to account for events that occur infrequently. This model is appropriate because there are many more observations in the dataset in which a potential contributor state does *not* make a troop contribution for the first time than when a potential contributor does make a contribution for the first time. Thus, initiating a contribution is, on the whole, rare. As shown in Model 2 of Table 3, our findings hold when using such a rare event logit model since the start of a large-scale troop contribution remains significantly less likely to occur in an election year.

As a second robustness check, we coded elections as 'scheduled' or 'unscheduled' and then investigated whether democratic governments are less likely to initiate large-scale troop

contributions over the year preceding unscheduled or ‘snap’ elections (e.g. elections that are called at short notice after the dissolution of a government). The logic here is that, if democratic governments are particularly unwilling to contribute troops when they know that elections are on the horizon, they should *not* be especially reluctant to contribute when they do *not* know that elections are coming -- as is the case when ‘snap’ elections are run outside of the regular electoral cycle. As evidenced in Model 3 of Table 3, we find support for this intuition; *scheduled* elections make the start of a troop contribution significantly less likely, but the impact of *unscheduled* elections on contributions is not statistically significant.

As a final robustness check, we tested the impact of elections on troop contributions for the full sample of states (i.e. all regime types). Contrary to our expectations, we found that democratic *and* nondemocratic leaders are reluctant to initiate large-scale troop contributions when elections are looming. We discuss and interpret this finding in the online Appendix.

*Table 3: Impact of Elections on the Propensity of a Democratic Government to Initiate a Large-scale Troop Contribution to UN PKOs, 1999-2015*

|                                          | Logit                                                     | Rare Even<br>Logit                                        | Logit                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | Start of a<br>Large-Scale<br>Contribution<br>to a PKO (1) | Start of a<br>Large-Scale<br>Contribution to<br>a PKO (2) | Start of a<br>Large-Scale<br>Contribution<br>to a PKO (3) |
| Election Year                            | -0.465**<br>(0.205)                                       | -0.452**<br>(0.204)                                       |                                                           |
| Scheduled Election<br>Year               |                                                           |                                                           | -0.408**<br>(0.207)                                       |
| Unscheduled<br>Election Year             |                                                           |                                                           | -0.661<br>(0.720)                                         |
| Level of<br>Democracy                    | 0.095<br>(0.086)                                          | 0.097<br>(0.089)                                          | 0.095<br>(0.086)                                          |
| Level of<br>Democracy X<br>Election Year |                                                           |                                                           |                                                           |
| GDP per Capita –<br>logged               | -0.194**<br>(0.082)                                       | -0.196**<br>(0.084)                                       | -0.192**<br>(0.082)                                       |
| Population –<br>logged                   | 0.405***<br>(0.049)                                       | 0.406***<br>(0.040)                                       | 0.406***<br>(0.049)                                       |
| Military Personnel<br>/ Population       | -18.344<br>(26.985)                                       | -15.386<br>(23.715)                                       | -18.489<br>(27.052)                                       |
| Permanent-5                              | -2.202***<br>(0.672)                                      | -2.074***<br>(0.680)                                      | -2.211***<br>(0.673)                                      |
| Shared Region                            | 1.158***<br>(0.178)                                       | 1.162***<br>(0.176)                                       | 1.159***<br>(0.178)                                       |
| Colonial Ties                            | 3.060***<br>(0.457)                                       | 3.116***<br>(0.477)                                       | 3.062***<br>(0.457)                                       |
| Active Armed<br>Conflict                 | 0.485***<br>(0.173)                                       | 0.489***<br>(0.173)                                       | 0.485***<br>(0.173)                                       |
| Chapter 7<br>Authorization               | 0.743***<br>(0.190)                                       | 0.737***<br>(0.212)                                       | 0.743***<br>(0.190)                                       |
| Number of PKO<br>Personnel Killed        | -0.002<br>(0.009)                                         | -0.000<br>(0.011)                                         | -0.001<br>(0.009)                                         |
| Constant                                 | -14.161***<br>(1.033)                                     | -14.155***<br>(0.768)                                     | -14.184***<br>(1.036)                                     |
| R-Squared                                | 189.88 ***                                                |                                                           | 189.25***                                                 |
| Pseudo R-Squared                         | 0.0725                                                    |                                                           | 0.0723                                                    |
| Observations                             | 340,464                                                   | 340,464                                                   | 340,464                                                   |

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. \*significant at 10 percent; \*\*significant at 5 percent; \*\*\*significant at 1 percent.

## Conclusion

In this article we have argued, and found, that non-democratic governments have become more likely than freely-elected governments to contribute large numbers of national troops to UN peacekeeping missions. This finding revises existing understandings of the relationship between regime type and troop contributions. We have also found qualified support for our argument that democratic governments are reluctant to contribute large numbers of troops to UN missions because they are concerned that such a step will have a negative impact on public opinion and, ultimately, their capacity to retain power through elections. Non-democratic governments, by contrast, seem to recognize the possibility for political gain through contributing and, thus, they contribute large numbers of troops on occasion, without being overly concerned about the long-term impact of public opinion. Together, these findings matter for both the study, and practice, of peacekeeping.

From an analytic perspective, our findings suggest that domestic-level political interests now play a more important role than liberal ideas in shaping the (un)willingness of governments to commit their states' troops to UN missions. This matters because previous works had shown that the pendulum between interests and ideas as a motivator for PKO contributions had swung in favor of the latter after the Cold War. While our findings do not repudiate that claim, our updated analysis suggests that the pendulum has swung back over the past 15 or so years, so that governments now prioritize political self-interest when considering whether to contribute troops to UN peacekeeping operations. Contrary to the assumption of many realist scholars, however, we have argued that considerations of political self-interest do not necessarily relate to the international-level interests of *states*. Rather, the domestic-level political interests of *governments* have a strong influence over the foreign policy positions that leaders take on the issue of peacekeeping.

From a policy perspective, our findings matter because they suggest that much of the 'everyday' work of liberal peacebuilding is now being executed by troops that are sent into the field by illiberal governments. Beyond the fact that democracies may be free-riding off the contributions of autocratic states, a proliferation of troops from illiberal regimes may be undermining the efficacy of the so-called liberal peace project. While it would be wrong to assume that troops act in illiberal ways simply because their governments are thus, it is possible that troops deployed to UN missions by illiberal governments have less preparation in areas that are key for liberal peacebuilding, such as human rights and election monitoring. Democracies also tend to be characterized by greater levels of gender equality than autocracies (Beer, 2009), and we know that PKOs populated by peacekeepers who hail from states with

strong gender equality show lower levels of sexual exploitation and abuse (Karim and Beardsley, 2016). Thus, it may be that large-scale contributions of troops from illiberal regimes can partly explain the ongoing problem of human rights violations by UN peacekeepers.

If there is reason to think that UN peacekeeping would benefit from an increase in contributions from liberal democracies, then it is worth closing by considering whether institutional reforms could encourage democratic governments to support UN missions when humanitarian need arises. One such reform, we propose, would be for democracies to establish professional, standing peacekeeping forces as branches of their national militaries (Gledhill, 2006). That way, when UN missions form and troop contributions are needed, elected leaders could swiftly contribute their own peacekeepers to a UN PKO without fear of incurring public opinion costs for doing so. After all, the decision of a government to deploy troops who have volunteered to join a national ‘peacekeeping unit’ would presumably not be met with objection by the volunteers themselves, or by constituents who sympathize with those volunteers. Consequently, the domestic political costs to democratic governments that are willing to support UN peacekeeping could be minimal and, as such, those governments may become willing to contribute peacekeepers when need calls, rather than when it is politically convenient.

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