

ARTICLE

Protecting the Vote? Peacekeeping Presence and the Risk of Electoral Violence

Hanne Fjelde¹ and Hannah M. Smidt^{*,2}

¹Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

²University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

*Corresponding author. Email: smidt@ipz.uzh.ch

(Received 3 May 2020; revised 24 December 2020; accepted 11 March 2021; first published online 09 July 2021)

Abstract

Democracy assistance, including the promotion of electoral security, is often a central component of contemporary peacekeeping operations. Preventing violence during post-conflict elections is critical for the war-to-democracy transition. Yet, we know little about the role of peacekeepers in this effort. To fill this gap, we provide the first comprehensive sub-national study of peacekeeping effectiveness in reducing the risk of electoral violence. We combine geo-referenced data on peacekeeping deployment across all multidimensional peacekeeping missions in Africa over the past two decades with fine-grained data on electoral violence. We find a negative association between peacekeeping presence and the risk of electoral violence. The relationship is of similar magnitude in the pre- and post-election period. However, the association is more strongly negative for violence perpetrated by non-state actors compared to violence perpetrated by government-affiliated actors. Analyses using two-way fixed effects models and matching mitigate potential selection biases.

Keywords: electoral violence; United Nations; peacekeeping; conflict management

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, the holding of multiparty elections has become a core part of the international community's peace-building agenda (e.g. United Nations 2008). Elections are critical events in war-to-peace transition: they mark the transition from violent to peaceful modes of political contestation and spearhead efforts for more inclusive and legitimate governance (e.g. Manning 2004; Reilly 2008). If elections are seen as credible, they can facilitate democratization by legitimizing the political institutions, strengthening norms of nonviolent conflict resolution, and habituating contenders to democratic routines. If they degenerate into violence, they may de-legitimize the regime that comes to power, but also undercut trust in electoral institutions, and in the worst case precipitate a return to civil war (Flores and Nooruddin 2012; Brancati and Snyder 2013; Norris 2014).

The pivotal role of elections in the political trajectories of conflict-affected societies has led the international society to invest heavily in the safety of elections. A majority of all contemporary United Nations peacekeeping missions entails mandates to oversee, organize and secure elections (Smidt 2020a). Besides technical electoral assistance, peacekeeping missions, for example, deploy uniformed personnel to safeguard polling stations, conduct military patrols to ensure that voters can

exercise their political rights, and protect electoral materials. However, extant research evaluating the ability of UN peacekeeping operations to augment electoral security and reduce the risk of electoral violence is limited; focused on single-cases (Mvukiyehe and Samii 2017; Mvukiyehe 2018; Smidt 2020b) or aggregate cross-national relationships (Smidt 2020a). A growing body of literature have testified to the ability of UN peacekeepers to bring civil-war violence to a halt, prevent its resurgence and protect civilians from wartime abuse (for reviews, see Di Salvatore and Ruggeri 2018; Walter, Morjé Howard, and Fortna 2020). Yet, curbing electoral violence likely entails distinct challenges for peacekeepers, as the targets, perpetrators and the nature of such violence could look very different from the war-time dynamics. Recent studies have pointed to the limitations of UN peacekeepers in reducing post-war violence that does not follow the wartime master cleavage, such as crime or local strife (e.g. Autesserre 2014; Di Salvatore 2019; Bara 2020). Hence, peacekeepers' ability to enforce electoral security warrants explicit consideration.

Addressing this gap in our knowledge, we provide the first systematic examination of the local relationship between UN peacekeeping presence and the risk of electoral violence. We propose that peacekeepers reduce the risk of electoral violence through two pathways that play out at the local level. First, through monitoring and reporting, peacekeepers increase public accountability for actors that use electoral violence and thus amplify domestic and international *reputation costs*. That is, exposure of electoral violence may reduce electoral support from moderate voters and endangers potential international benefits, such as foreign aid. Second, peacekeepers increase *implementation costs* for executing electoral violence. Peacekeepers' military presence might serve to deter and constrain attacks on electoral infrastructure, political rallies, or voters, while their local programming activities related to demobilization and demilitarization reduce the supply of weapons and recruits. Although we expect a negative relationship overall, we also propose that the "politics of elections" intervene to make peacekeepers particularly effective in reducing violence in the pre-election phase, as reputation costs might be more salient before ballots have been counted. We also propose that the "politics of peacekeeping" and, specifically, the need for consent from host-governments might render peacekeepers more adept at reducing violence by non-state actors.

We examine the relationship between UN peacekeepers and electoral violence across sub-national administrative units in all countries hosting a UN peacekeeping mission in Africa over the period from 1994 to 2017. The analyses combine sub-national data on peacekeeping deployment (Cil *et al.* 2020) with geo-referenced event data on the occurrence of electoral violence (Fjelde and Höglund 2020). We use multiple strategies, including fixed effects models and matching, to guard against spurious relationships. Consistent with our expectations, we find a lower risk of electoral violence in the areas where peacekeepers are deployed. Contrary to our expectations, however, the negative correlation between peacekeeping and electoral violence is not stronger in the pre-election period compared to the post-election period. Finally, and as expected, the results suggest that peacekeepers are more consistently effective in curbing violence by non-state actors compared to violence by government actors.

These findings are significant for research and policy. First, our results speak to the role of peacekeepers in facilitating the war-to-democracy transition, which remains a critical knowledge gap in the current literature on peacekeeping, and one where existing results diverge (Walter, Morjé Howard, and Fortna 2020, 10). Although elections do not themselves equal democracy, they do represent a necessary stepping stone for democratic transitions. Moreover, first post-conflict elections represent particular critical junctures for future political developments (Zukerman Daly 2019). Protecting candidates and citizens from threats of political violence presents a core component of ensuring high-integrity elections (Norris 2014). Thus, beyond their immediate security-enhancing role, peacekeepers' success in reducing electoral violence might have benefits for post-war political transition to democracy. Second, we contribute to research on international efforts to promote electoral integrity. So far, sub-national studies on this topic largely focused on election observers.

While observers benefit electoral integrity overall, they also temporally and spatially displace some electoral violence (Daxecker 2014; Ichino and Schündeln 2012) and increase contention after election day (Von Borzyskowski 2019). Our findings suggest that peacekeeping deployments protect voting locally without such detrimental side-effects. Finally, we add to the still relatively limited knowledge about peacekeepers' impact on violence once war has ended (e.g. Bara 2020). Our results indicate that peacekeeping operations safeguard the post-conflict trajectory because of local troop deployments. Yet, our results also warn of the obstacles to local electoral violence prevention efforts that may emerge from peacekeepers' reliance on government-consent.

2. Motivation and contribution

This study evaluates peacekeepers' effectiveness in relation to one critical, but understudied security outcome in transitions from war to more peaceful politics: electoral violence. Doing so, our study makes important contributions to three strands of literature.

First, our study informs research on international efforts to promote democracy through elections in conflict-affected countries. Researchers debate the role that these efforts play in facilitating war-to-democracy transitions. On the one hand, international election support is considered an integral part of facilitating the transition from bullets to ballots, allowing former warring actors to adopt non-violent modes of contesting for power and inviting external enforcement mechanisms (Lyons 2004; Matanock 2017). On the other hand, international efforts to push for early elections in a volatile post-conflict phase have also been criticized for running the risk of reinforcing existing divisions and precipitating violence, which may undermine the prospects of peaceful democratic rule (Paris 2004; Brancati and Snyder 2013; Flores and Nooruddin 2012). Contemporary peacekeeping operations are typically entrusted with strong mandates to counteract these dangers and safeguard the transition to a popularly elected regime. Yet, evidence for their effectiveness in promoting democracy is mixed. Some studies find that the presence of UN peacekeepers is associated with improvements in overall democracy scores (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Pickering and Peceny 2006; Steinert and Grimm 2015), but others find no such effect (Gurses and Mason 2008; Fortna 2008; Fortna and Huang 2012). The evidence for whether peacekeeping presence during post-conflict elections prevent civil war recurrence is similarly mixed (Brancati and Snyder 2013; Flores and Nooruddin 2012; Joshi, Melander, and Quinn 2017). In light of inconclusive findings, one way to advance our understanding of the potential role of the United Nations in safeguarding political transitions in conflict-affected environments is to move away from aggregate relationships. By honing in on a particular aspect of the war-to-democracy transition—electoral security—and analysing a specific aspect of peacekeeping—sub-national deployments patterns—we offer empirical evidence that informs our understanding of the broader relationship between peacekeeping and post-conflict democratization.

Our study also contributes to the debate about how international actors can spearhead electoral integrity in fragile political contexts. Electoral violence represents one of the most blatant forms of electoral malpractice, and it severely undermines the credibility of elections (Norris 2014). Extant studies of how the international community can promote high quality elections have so far focused on two instruments: the role of international election observers and UN technical electoral assistance. The net impact of observers, in particular, is debated: they have been found to enhance electoral credibility, e.g. through reducing manipulation (Hyde 2008; Kelley 2012), but also increase the risk of post-election contention after fraudulent elections (Daxecker 2012; Von Borzyskowski 2019; Borzyskowski 2019), to displace violent intimidation to less observed pre-election periods (Daxecker 2014), or to unobserved districts within countries (Ichino and Schündeln 2012). Although a less prevalent tool for enhancing electoral integrity, UN peacekeepers deserves particular attention because of their critical role in overseeing political transition in some of the world's most fragile countries, transitioning from civil war. Contrary to election observers and electoral assistance, UN

peacekeepers also target election-related security concerns heads-on through their military presence.

Finally, our study speaks to the literature on peacekeepers' impact on security-related outcomes and, specifically, their role in securing the post-war period. A number of recent studies suggest that UN peacekeepers can be effective in reducing and containing battle-field violence (e.g. Beardsley 2011; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2014) and shielding civilians from belligerents' attacks (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013; Bove and Ruggeri 2014; Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019). We should be cautious, however, to extrapolate peacekeepers' effectiveness during civil war to the enhancement of electoral security in post-war transitions. Recent work has questioned the ability of UN peacekeepers to deal with post-conflict violence that does not mimic the wartime master cleavage, such as crime or local power struggles (e.g. Autesserre 2014; Di Salvatore 2019; Bara 2020). As we discuss below, the qualitatively distinct characteristics of electoral violence might present particular challenges for peacekeeper effectiveness (Staniland 2014; Birch, Daxecker, and Höglund 2020, *c.f.*).

Against this backdrop, peacekeepers' impact on electoral violence is surprisingly under-studied. The only cross-national study on this relationship shows that the impact of peacekeepers on the risk of electoral violence is conditional on their activity in assisting with electoral security and organizing elections (Smidt 2020a). Yet, country-level associations make it hard to distinguish the contributions of local peacekeeping deployments from the overall effect that international intervention—including, for example, diplomatic efforts and other forms of election assistance. Moreover, the effectiveness of peacekeeping deployment may also be masked in cross-national studies because sub-national electoral security can vary significantly within countries. Therefore, this study joins a recent sub-national turn in the peacekeeping literature to further our understanding on whether and how peacekeepers can enhance electoral security in countries emerging from war (e.g. Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2017; Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019; Di Salvatore 2019).

3. Electoral security in post-conflict countries

Electoral violence is physical force used to influence the electoral process or its outcome (*c.f.* Birch, Daxecker, and Höglund 2020). The explicit link to the electoral process means that manifestations of electoral violence (who is targeted, why and by whom) likely look very different from how war-time violence manifests itself (for extensive discussions of the concept, see e.g. Höglund 2009; Bekoe 2012; Staniland 2014; Birch, Daxecker, and Höglund 2020).

With regard to targets, electoral violence can be directed against voters to deter them from casting their vote, to coerce them into voting a particular way, or to entirely re-shape electoral geography through strategies of forceful displacement (Strauss and Taylor 2012, *e.g.*). Electoral violence can target political candidates and their campaigns to stifle competition, for example, through violent crackdowns on party rallies or assassination of political rivals. It can also be directed at the electoral infrastructure itself to reduce voting by particular constituencies or derail the legitimacy of the elections (Staniland 2014, *e.g.*). After election day, electoral violence includes contentious behavior, *e.g.* violent protest and riots, to shape political developments after contested results. It can also be used by regimes to thwart popular mobilization, as seen after contested elections in Ethiopia in 2005 and Côte d'Ivoire in 2010, or to "punish" rival constituencies after ballots are counted, as in East Timor in 1999.

With regard to perpetrators, electoral violence is sometimes levied by the same armed groups that waged war with the aim of delegitimizing the elections and discrediting the government's ability to uphold law and order (*e.g.* Condra *et al.* 2017). In many other cases, however, electoral violence is orchestrated by state and non-state actors that use violence as a strategic complement to regular campaigning in order to further their electoral aims (Dunning 2011; Matanock and Staniland 2018). In these cases, the principals behind the violence are often legitimate electoral contenders,

such as party officials or candidates for office.¹ These principals, in turn, tend to outsource the implementation of coercion to violence specialists, such as special forces, militia groups, criminal gangs or mobs, to claim plausible deniability and evade sanctions (Staniland 2015).

In summary, electoral violence is oftentimes distinct from war-time violence. Thus, it may pose a particular thorny challenge for peacekeepers. Previous research notes that mandates and limited capacity of peacekeeping operations force peacekeepers to focus their efforts on containing violence by warring actors involved in the previous conflict (Bara 2020). Since the actors behind electoral violence will often be different from warring actors, peacekeepers might struggle to enforce electoral security. Furthermore, military peacekeepers generally have more training and experience when it comes to detecting and deterring war-related violence against military targets (e.g. army bases or buffer zones) compared to electoral violence against “softer” targets (e.g. polling stations, voters or election rallies). Thus, even in cases where the constellation of actors involved in electoral competition reflect the constellation of actors involved in war-time mobilization, peacekeepers may find it difficult to deal with the particular nature of electoral violence.

While electoral violence poses new challenges for peacekeeping, we point to two important drivers of electoral violence that could also make this type of violence particularly amenable to peacekeepers’ intervention. First, precisely because electoral violence is generally linked to the pursuit of electoral aims, the principals that command and organize electoral violence may be particularly sensitive to reputation costs associated with being called out and exposed. Principals that participate in elections and aspire to be politically legitimate actors will use electoral violence selectively. They are more likely to refrain when the risk and costs of exposure are high and a backlash from international actors and domestic electoral constituencies is likely. Thus, peacekeepers’ capacity to detect and report electoral violence and to amplify associated reputation costs provides them with a source of leverage that is particularly useful for maintaining electoral security.

Second, a necessary condition for electoral violence is the presence of agents able and willing to carry out intimidation and coercion. Even in contexts where *electoral incentives* for violence might be present, it is ultimately the availability of these agents that determines where and when electoral violence actually occurs (Höglund 2009; Colombo, D’Aoust, and Sterck 2019). These agents will be particularly sensitive to interventions that manipulate implementation costs, including costs for arms acquisition or the likelihood of forceful reprisals when violence is enacted. Thus, their ability to heighten the implementation costs of violence affords peacekeepers with another source of leverage to maintain electoral security.

In the context of post-conflict elections and given the legacy of the previous civil war, peacekeeping intervention likely has an added value because, at the baseline, the reputation and implementation costs associated with electoral violence are usually small (Lyons 2004; Höglund 2009). In war-affected countries, principals face little risks of exposure and backlash for ordering electoral violence because bodies of electoral oversight, such as the electoral commission and civil society groups, have limited capacity to monitor and sanction principals that rely on threat and coercion (Weidmann and Callen 2012; Condra et al. 2017). Moreover, the legacy of civil war also heightens the availability of agents of violence. Several political parties that stand for elections have their roots in armed organizations (Zukerman Daly 2019; Matanock 2017), while scores of former combatants may readily offer their violence services to new parties and politicians (Christensen and Utas 2008). Since the enforcement of electoral laws by the police, military and judiciary might be weak and politicized, violence-specialists can also expect to go unpunished for acts of violence (Weidmann and Callen 2012; Condra et al. 2017). Below we explicate how peacekeepers might strengthen electoral security by enhancing reputation and implementation costs for pursuing violent electoral strategies.

1. Some might have their origins in former rebel groups, but compete in elections through legitimate political parties (Matanock and Staniland 2018).

3.0.1 *Reputation and implementation costs in peacekeepers' presence*

First, we expect peacekeeping presence to increase *reputation costs* for actors that use coercive electoral strategies. Peacekeepers, much like electoral observers, increase the probability that violent strategies will be detected and publicized (on monitoring by observers, see Kelley 2012; Hyde 2008; Daxecker 2012). Through patrols, presence in communities and deployment at polling stations on election day, peacekeepers gather information on the local security situation. Peacekeepers channel this information to UN headquarters in daily situation reports and to a wider audience in regular press releases and conferences. For instance, before the 2018 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, UN News released detailed information on government responsibility in pre-election violence in areas where local peacekeepers were deployed (United Nations 2018). Peacekeepers also accompany and protect election workers, observers and UN investigation teams in the vicinity of their bases, helping them to expose attempts to influence the vote through coercion and intimidation in those locations.²

Perpetrators' reputation costs from exposure are partly tied to international audiences. These reputation costs can be non-material: shaming by peacekeepers and their international allies may hurt the democratic credentials of the actors that use violence. Consistent with Howard (2019), we propose that such non-material reputation costs can *persuade* actors to refrain from sponsoring violence. International reputation costs can also be material: elections held under the auspices of the international community coincide with a large inflows of assistance from external actors, including aid. These disbursements are often conditional on actors' compliance with norms of peaceful electoral conduct (Matanock 2017). In addition, the international community can also credibly threaten material punishment for violent behavior during elections through economic sanctions and market restrictions (Donno 2013). Again consistent with Howard (2019), we thus suggest that peacekeeping also comes with economic and institutional incentives that *induce* domestic actors to desist from acts of electoral violence.

Reputation costs are also tied to domestic audiences. Whereas electoral violence is often assumed to depress voting and demobilize targeted communities (Collier and Vicente 2014; Rauschenbach and Paula 2019), there is also evidence that electoral violence actually makes voters more likely to sanction violent candidates and vote for more peaceful ones (e.g. Gutierrez-Romero and LeBas 2020). In the segment of moderate and undecided voters, the exposure of violent electoral tactics might trigger shifts in public opinion, lower domestic legitimacy of the violence-wielding candidate and, ultimately, lead to lost votes. Voter-imposed reputation costs may be reinforced by peacekeepers' role in counter-acting disinformation. In Namibia, for example, peacekeepers' public outreach to anchor an electoral code of conduct in a tense electoral environment helped to empower voters to hold political party leaders accountable (Howard 2019, 75). Voter-imposed reputation costs may also be augmented by peacekeepers' ability to create "security bubbles" in areas where they are deployed. In Liberia, Mvukiyehe (2018) finds that respondents living near UN bases or interacting with the peacekeepers were more likely to participate in national politics, including elections. In the vicinity of peacekeeping bases, principals behind electoral violence may thus face a higher risk of public exposure, a more mobilized electorate and a greater popular backlash against the use of coercive electoral tactics.³

Above, we have discussed how UN peacekeepers influence the reputation costs for electoral violence. UN peacekeepers can also reduce the risk of electoral violence by influencing the *implementation costs* for violent tactics. Peacekeepers provide manpower and oversee programming activities to disarm and demobilize armed groups, that may otherwise be contracted for electoral violence

2. Monitoring is a core function of UN peacekeeping operations, and a central mechanism for the violence reducing-effect of UN peacekeepers (Walter 2002; Fortna 2008; Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019).

3. Admittedly, not all actors might be equally vulnerable to reputation costs. Non-state actors that engage in violence with extra-systemic goals (e.g. delegitimizing elections and the political order) will not be equally hurt by exposure, compared to those that *also* campaign for votes.

more easily (Christensen and Utas 2008). Specifically, UN military forces often help enforce arms embargoes, collect and secure small arms and light weapons and organize local disarmament and demobilization sites that keep ex-combatants separate from the civilian population. By constraining the supply of weapons and violence-specialists, peacekeepers make it more costly to organize and implement electoral violence.

Peacekeepers also influence implementation costs signalling their ability to defend potential targets of electoral violence, for example, by conducting armed patrols or deploying at election sites. While peacekeepers do not possess the capacity to use offensive force (e.g. Howard 2019), they can impose physical barriers between possible targets of electoral violence and the perpetrators. For example, peacekeepers can deploy around political gatherings, polling stations and vote-counting facilities. They can also provide armed escort of voting material and political candidates. Trying to circumvent such barriers would carry military costs. The local presence of peacekeepers may thus deter groups from engaging in electoral violence.⁴

Finally, peacekeepers can augment the implementation costs of attempts to escalate election-related tensions into violence. Specifically, peacekeepers may intervene in local election-related riots to separate rival groups. They may also dispatch troops to prevent revenge killings or retaliatory actions in the wake of elections.⁵ For example, after the first round of the 2005 presidential elections in Liberia, party supporters of the *Congress for Democratic Change* challenged the credibility of the election results and started throwing stones at the Liberian National Police. UN forces intervened, thereby possibly preventing further escalation (United Nations Security Council 2005). In the 2006 elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UN peacekeepers intervened as forces associated with the defeated candidate Vice-President Bemba exchanged fire with the Republican Guard headed by President Kabila. They did not only facilitate the cessation of hostilities, but also deployed armored personnel carriers around the residence of the Vice-President to stabilize the situation in the aftermath (United Nations Security Council 2006). Based on these arguments we propose the following hypothesis for statistical testing:

Hypothesis 1: The local presence of UN peacekeepers is, on average, associated with a lower risk of electoral violence locally.

3.1 Beyond general relationships: period- and actor-specific effects

While we generally expect that peacekeeping presence will be associated with a lower risk of electoral violence, the effect might be more pronounced in particular periods and related to specific actors. To begin with, we propose that peacekeepers may have greater leverage in preventing electoral violence in the pre-election period. As elaborated above, peacekeepers can expose electoral coercion to domestic audiences. This enables moderate voters to punish candidates' violent behaviour at the ballot box, e.g. by voting for the opponents of those candidates. These domestic reputation costs in the form of lost ballots occur exclusively in the pre-election period. Once the electoral fate of politicians has been decided, this domestic component of reputation costs for the use of electoral violence is no longer relevant. In addition, after ballots have been counted, the electoral winners likely enjoy greater insulation from international and domestic pressures stemming from their political office. Consequently, the possibility that peacekeepers could expose and report violence might no longer deter election winners from ordering repression of political opponents and post-election protests. Meanwhile, electoral losers who find themselves excluded from power might feel that once polling has been concluded, they have little left to lose from resorting to electoral violence. In this context, the presence of international peacekeepers that can report and publicize acts of electoral

4. Military deterrence is a central function of UN peacekeeping operations and one explanation for their impact on reducing civil war violence and civilian victimization (Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2017; Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019).

5. When such incidents occur, peacekeepers can also complement their military presence with the use of mediation or other attempts at persuasion (Howard 2019, 75).

misconduct might even facilitate contentious counter-mobilization (e.g. Borzyskowski 2019). The *politics of elections* might thus interfere with peacekeepers' influence on electoral violence so that the UN military presence has a greater violence-reducing effect in the pre-election period than in the post-election period.

Hypothesis 2: The negative correlation between the local presence of UN peacekeepers and the risk of electoral violence is stronger in the pre-election period compared to the post-election period.

In addition, peacekeepers' ability to curb violence associated with elections is likely influenced by the *politics of peacekeeping*. A peacekeeping operation relies on the consent and cooperation by its host government, not only at the outset of the mission but also during their deployment. By consequence, the host government has leverage over peacekeepers' activities. Government leaders may use this leverage to reduce the constraints that peacekeepers impose on their strategies for maintaining power, including their use of electoral coercion (Piccolino and Karlsrud 2011). For instance, before the 2010 elections in Côte d'Ivoire, then-president Laurent Gbagbo successfully marginalised the role of the UN peacekeeping operation in securing the electoral process by creating "a new *internal* body in charge of election security" (Piccolino and Karlsrud 2011, 455, own emphasis). More generally, host governments determine peacekeepers' rules of engagement and they will use this power to shield themselves from reputation and implementation costs (Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019, 109–10).⁶ In addition, the operational guidelines of peacekeeping operations may prevent peacekeepers from using force against government perpetrators. The UN Department of Peace Operation highlights that judgements concerning the use of force need to be made "based on a combination of factors... most importantly, the effect that such action will have on national and local consent for the mission" (United Nations Department of Peace Operations 2020). The Department is careful not to write *government* consent. Yet, given host governments' leverage over continued peacekeeping deployment, it is reasonable to conclude that peacekeepers may be more concerned about using force against government actors than against opposition actors. Overall, peacekeepers may thus be in a better position to deter electoral violence organized by opposition parties and non-state armed actors compared to electoral violence orchestrated by local and national governments.

Hypothesis 3: The negative correlation between the local presence of UN peacekeepers and the risk of electoral violence is stronger for opposition-sponsored violence compared to government-sponsored violence.

4. Data and Research Design

We examine our argument with regression analyses across second-tier administrative units and over months during electoral periods in all Sub-Saharan African countries that hosted a UN peacekeeping operation at some point between January 1994 and December 2017. Building on existing research, we define electoral periods to last from six months before to six months after election day (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung 2019). The sample of analysis comprises of 16 unique elections in eight countries. There are in total 730 unique administrative units. Election dates are taken from the National Elections Across Autocracies and Democracies database version 5 for the period 1946–2015, which we extended to the year 2017 (Hyde and Marinov 2012).

For the local presence of peacekeepers, we draw on information from the Geo-PKO dataset (Cil *et al.* 2020). Geo-PKO covers all UN peacekeeping missions in Sub-Saharan Africa for the period 1994–2018. Table 1 provides details on the elections held during the lifespans of the peacekeeping operations in our sample. We construct measures for the presence and strength of peacekeeping deployment. For the strength, we count the number of military bases in a given administrative unit

6. While governments generally have greater leverage of peacekeepers, non-state actors can still obstruct peacekeepers' activity violently (Duursma 2019).

Table 1. List of UN peacekeeping missions and elections in our sample

Mission	Location	Election dates
ONUB	Burundi	Jul. 2005
MINURCA	CAR	Dec. 1998; Sep. 1999
MINURCAT	CAR	Jan. 2011
MINUSCA	CAR	Mar. 2016
UNOCI	Côte d'Ivoire	Nov. 2010; Dec. 2011; Oct. 2015; Dec. 2016
MONUC	DR Congo	Oct. 2006
MONUSCO	DR Congo	Nov. 2011
MINUSMA	Mali	Nov. 2013
ONUMOZ	Mozambique	Oct. 1994
UNAMSIL	Sierra Leone	May 2002
UNMIS and UNAMID	Sudan	Apr. 2010; Apr. 2015

and month during the electoral period. To capture presence, we use a dichotomous version of this variable.

For the dependent variable, we use information from the Deadly Electoral Conflict (DECO) dataset (Fjelde and Höglund 2020). The dataset is compiled based on published, as well as previously unpublished events, in the UCDP geo-referenced event database, covering the years 1989–2017 (Sundberg and Melander 2013). DECO defines electoral violence as violence “substantially linked to an electoral contest”. A central part of this definition is that the violence is directly tied to features of the electoral process such as political parties, voters, candidates, polling or the institutional arrangements surrounding elections (Fjelde and Höglund 2020, 10). The dataset focuses on lethal violence with at least one fatality. While this dataset thus omits threats and other forms of physical violence, it arguably captures the most severe forms of electoral conflict that military peacekeepers ought to address. In addition, lethal electoral violence suffers from less under-reporting than less severe violence (Fjelde and Höglund 2020, 12).⁷ For examining hypothesis 2, we split the sample into the pre- and post-election period and test the effect of UN military personnel in the two samples. For testing hypotheses 3, we construct two additional dependent variables that count violence by anti-government actors (e.g. opposition supporters and militias, rebel groups) and violence by pro-government actors (e.g. soldiers, police forces, government supporters and militias), respectively.

Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of violent events in the eight Sub-Saharan African countries included in our analysis. In total, there are 130 events of lethal electoral violence. When we aggregate events to our units of analysis, i.e. administrative units and months, then 63 out of 16,671 observations exhibit one or more events of electoral violence. In Appendix C we show similar results for a less sparse measure of electoral violence and contention (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung 2019). In Figure 1, administrative units with at least one UN peacekeeping base are colored in blue. Comparing the geographical distribution of peacekeeping bases and electoral violence incidents suggests that UN peacekeepers are deployed in places where electoral violence is more likely to occur.⁸

4.1 Identification strategies

One challenge to estimating the added benefit of peacekeeping for electoral security is that the UN likely deploys to places already at higher risk of violent electoral contention. From previous

7. Although news framing and quality may still introduce bias (Von Borzyskowski and Wahman 2019).

8. We exclude elections in the peacekeeping host countries Liberia and Chad, where no events of lethal electoral violence were recorded. This should make it harder to find a security-enhancing effect of local peacekeeping presence.

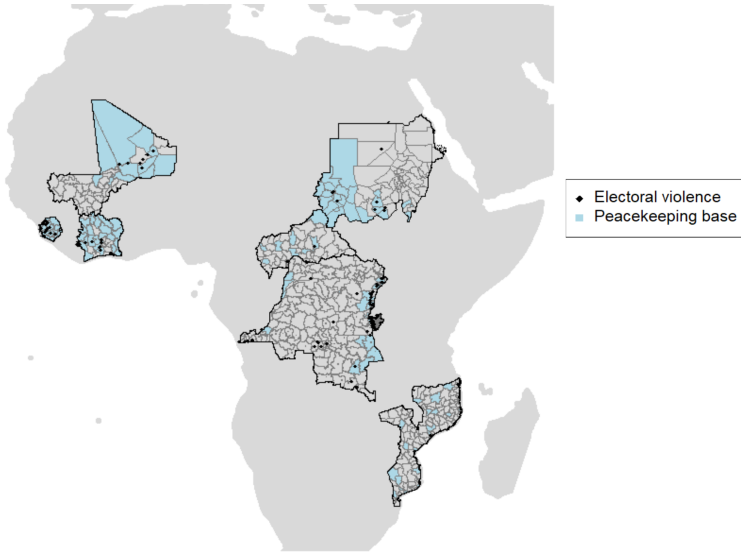


Figure 1. Geographical distribution electoral violence and UN peacekeeping bases

research, we know that UN military sets up bases in the civil-war hotspots (Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2017) and, as noted above, the occurrence of war-related violence previously likely increases the contemporary availability of means and manpower for organizing electoral violence. Moreover, peacekeepers continuously gather strategic intelligence on the spatial distribution of threats and adapt deployment patterns to fulfill their mission (Townsen and Reeder 2014; Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2017; Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019). As such, violent tensions in the early pre-election period are not only a precursor of worse electoral violence, but also likely shape a mission's decision to re-locate UN military during an ongoing electoral period. If there are generally more peacekeepers in times and places at greater risk of electoral violence, we likely underestimate their violence-mitigating impact.

To address this challenge, our models control for a variety of potentially confounding factors that may influence both peacekeeping deployments and electoral violence. First, we control for civil war-related violence two years previously, i.e. we count all incidents of state-based violence and one-sided violence in the 13th to the 24th month prior to the specific observation.⁹ In addition, we control for the trends in state-based violence and one-sided violence, respectively. To do so, we subtract the violent events count two year previously from the count one year previously (the first to the twelfth month prior to the specific observation). A negative value means that violence has already been decreasing before the electoral period. All four variables come from the UCDP-GED dataset (Sundberg and Melander 2013). Second, we control for characteristics of peacekeepers' operating environment. The mean distances to the capital and the next international border as well as the lengths of paved roads capture logistical challenges with respect to acquiring military and electoral supplies. Infrastructural challenges could also influence electoral violence, e.g. making it difficult for election workers to reach the area. Measures for distance to the capital and international borders come from the PRIO-Grid (Tollefsen, Strand, and Buhaug 2012), while roads data is available from the NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) 2019). Third, we control for the geographical size of the administrative unit and population size. Larger and more populous departments may experience more contentious events

9. A closer lag could induce post-treatment bias.

and host more UN peacekeepers.¹⁰ Fourth, we include the infant mortality rate to proxy the level of poverty. Poor localities may experience more electoral violence as people have lower opportunity costs of participating in violence. Data for these variables are retrieved from PRIO-Grid (Tollefsen, Strand, and Buhaug 2012). Our robustness test models also include a proxy for political grievances by using an indicator for whether the department is inhabited by a politically relevant ethnic group that is excluded from government power. Our results are substantively the same (see Appendix B).

We use three additional strategies to mitigate biases arising from non-random deployment of peacekeepers locally: fixed effects models, controls for time trends in our dependent variable, and matching. First, our fixed effects models account for unobserved heterogeneity in the risk of electoral violence across administrative units and electoral periods. In essence, we thus estimate whether changes in peacekeeping deployments influence variation in electoral violence within a locality. In another specification, we also add monthly fixed effects to control for unobserved shocks during an electoral period, for instance, a shifting power balance after the announcement of results. Though our dependent variable is binary, we use linear regression with robust standard errors to estimate these models because fixed effects in binary choice models may introduce the well-known incidental parameter problem. Linear regression yields unbiased estimates of the marginal effects, and Monte-Carlo experiments show that these estimates differ little from those of binary choice models (Angrist and Pischke 2008, 94ff.).¹¹

Second, we also account for time trends in electoral violence to ensure that a negative correlation between peacekeeping presence and electoral violence is not due to the possibility that peacekeepers deploy in locations that already trend towards peace and stability. Thus, we include control variables capturing time trends in our dependent variable over the past three months. For the first trend variable, we subtract the average level of electoral violence two and three months previously from the level of electoral violence one month previously. For the second trend variable, we subtract the level of electoral violence three months previously from the average level of electoral violence one and two months previously. A positive value indicates an upward electoral violence trend, while a negative value stands for a downward trend.¹²

As a third strategy to prevent spurious results, we use matching to create a quasi-experimental sample, where observations with and without local peacekeeping presence are similar in terms of influential covariates. The post-matching analyses allow us to estimate the effect of peacekeeping not only within but also across spatial units. Therefore, it neatly complements the longitudinal, within-units comparisons of the fixed effects models. Matching can only improve balance on observed factors. Yet, given the absence of a suitable instrument and our knowledge on the determinants of local peacekeeping deployment, it appears to be an appropriate technique (Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2016, e.g.). We show that our results are robust after pre-processing the sample with two matching methods: Propensity score (PS) and coarsened exact matching (CEM).

In the matching algorithm we use all control variables identified as potentially confounding factors. The sample after PS matching is reduced by 12,159 observations (about 73 per cent) and the post-CEM sample is reduced by 14,746 observations (just under 90 per cent). The algorithm prunes observations with and without a peacekeeping base that are too drastically different from each other in terms of the values of the matching variables. Figure 2 shows that the mean differences on influential covariates between observations with and without local peacekeeping presence are substantively reduced after matching. Yet, imbalances remain and therefore all matching variables

10. Note that administrative size is time-invariant and thus drops out of the fixed effects models.

11. Many administrative units do not experience any electoral violence. Therefore, logit models would only use less than three per cent of the observations in the sample.

12. The construction of a variable that captures a longer trend in electoral violence would require deeper lags. Since electoral violence, by definition, only occurs during the electoral period, a longer trend variable comes at the expense of losing many observations.

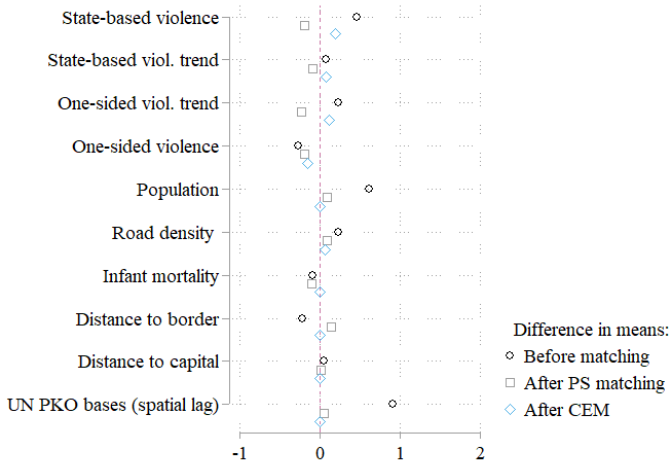


Figure 2. Mean covariate differences before and after matching

enter in the post-matching regression analyses. Given the binary nature of the dependent variable and the exclusion of fixed effects, the post-matching regressions use a logit link function.

5. Analysis

The analyses support the expectation that UN peacekeeping deployments locally are associated with a lower incident risk of electoral violence. In Table 2, we report the results of the fixed effects linear regression model. Model 1 is our baseline and Model 2 adds the control variables. Model 3 further adds monthly fixed effects. Across all model specifications, the effect coefficient on UN military bases is consistently negative. In substantive terms, an additional UN base in an average sub-national unit decreases the incident risk of electoral violence by 0.5 percentage points. The reduction is substantively important. It corresponds to about one-tenth of the sample standard deviation in the risk of electoral violence.

Models 4 and 5 include the time trends for violence. The effect coefficient on UN military bases remains negative and becomes even larger. The positive coefficients on the trend variables indicate that a prior upward trend in violent electoral conflict relates to a greater risk of electoral violence in future periods. The only control variable that is consistently significant across the models is the trend in state-based violence. The positive coefficient suggests that electoral violence is more likely if battles between government and non-state armed groups have been increasing over the past two years.

...

6. Conclusions

Our study shows that local-level deployment of UN military can make a difference for the peacefulness surrounding the local vote in elections in war-torn countries: we find robust support for the notion that UN military presence overall reduces the risk of electoral violence. The statistical results are substantively the same across both the pre- and post-election period, but they are more consistent for electoral violence organized by non-state actors compared to government actors. Our analyses also suggest that peacekeepers may be able to avoid some of the unintended consequences that plague the record of international election monitoring missions, as peacekeepers do not seem to incite violent

Table 2. Fixed effects linear regression of electoral violence

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Baseline	Controls	Month FE	Time trend 1	Time trend 2
UN peacekeeping bases	-0.005* (0.002)	-0.005* (0.002)	-0.005* (0.002)	-0.008* (0.003)	-0.009** (0.003)
State-based viol. (lag 24 months)		-0.007 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.017* (0.008)	-0.018* (0.008)
State-based viol. trend		0.006+ (0.003)	0.006+ (0.003)	0.014** (0.005)	0.014** (0.005)
One-sided viol. (lag 24 months)		0.005* (0.002)	0.005* (0.002)	0.005 (0.003)	0.002 (0.004)
One-sided viol. trend		-0.002* (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.002)
Population size		-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
UN peacekeeping presence (spatial lag)		0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Electoral violence trend 1				0.033*** (0.006)	
Electoral violence trend 2					0.035*** (0.008)
Constant	0.005*** (0.000)	0.013* (0.006)	-0.002 (0.005)	0.027+ (0.014)	0.030* (0.015)
R-squared	0.000	0.006	0.026	0.038	0.029
N	16671	16671	16671	12765	12765
FE for admin. units	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
FE for months	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

contention related to elections, nor geographically shift electoral violence to administrative units nearby where fewer peacekeepers are deployed (Daxecker 2012, 2014; Ichino and Schündeln 2012).

These findings testify to UN peacekeepers' ability to enhance security-related outcomes also in the post-conflict phase (Bara 2020). While deadly electoral violence is less frequent than war-time battles and violence against civilians, it often has far-reaching repercussions beyond the immediate target and the elections. Exposure to electoral violence can harden ethnic identities, polarize the electorate and make violent means more accepted among voters (Gutiérrez-Romero 2014). Violent elections can undermine the legitimacy of the post-war order and, in the worst case, precipitate a return to fighting as in Angola (Ottaway 1998). Thus, the security-enhancing effects of local peacekeeping deployments in the electoral period are substantively important for peacebuilding success. Our findings also shed light on the debated relationship between peacekeeping deployment and democratization in war-torn places (Fortna 2008; Fortna and Huang 2012). Given diverging macro-level findings regarding the role of peacekeepers in the war-to-democracy transition, our study suggests that it is worthwhile to focus on specific and local-level aspects of UN peacekeeping

operations. In so doing, researchers can understand how exactly international interventions may support the process towards democratic governance after war. Our findings suggest that peacekeepers can contribute positively to war-to-democracy trajectories by creating a safer electoral environment.

While the analyses yield important findings regarding security in post-war elections, there remains room for further refinement in future research. First, it would be important to know more about how peacekeepers' presence interacts with electoral dynamics, such as the degree of competitiveness or fraud. Such research could further illuminate the conditions under which peacekeepers can help reduce electoral violence. Second, the two mechanisms proposed in this study – reputation costs and implementation costs – are observationally equivalent in our data, and warrant further empirical testing. Collecting fine-grained sub-national data to differentiate between different electoral security strategies, e.g. those aimed at exposing perpetrators and those seeking to de-mobilize the infrastructure of coercion, could help untangle these mechanisms empirically. Whereas we proposed that a stronger impact of peacekeepers in the pre-election period would substantiate the importance of the reputation-costs mechanism, our results do not support such conjectures. One way to further probe the importance of this mechanism would be to examine whether peacekeepers are more efficient in reducing the risk of electoral violence by actors that are likely to be more sensitive to reputation costs, e.g. compare actors that also participate in the electoral contests versus actors that seek to spoil the electoral process. Finally, an increasing number of regional organizations deploys peacekeeping operations. Bara and Hultman (2020) show that their effectiveness in preventing government-sponsored violence against civilians is similar to UN missions. Yet, regional peacekeeping operations are usually more militarily focused. Thus, they might be less committed to promoting democracy after war. Exploring regional peacekeepers' effects on securing the post-war elections and subsequent political trajectories presents an interesting avenue for future research.

For international policy-makers, the article corroborates that UN peacekeeping deployment is an important addition to existing democracy assistance and electoral violence prevention tools. Of course, UN peacekeepers' military presence deals with symptoms of, not the root causes of violent electoral contention. Yet, the deterrent and mitigating impact on violent electoral contention may prevent violent escalatory spirals that increase the risk of renewed large-scale violence. Through their contribution to high integrity elections, allowing voters and candidates to exercise their political rights without coercion and intimidation, peacekeeping presence may also feed into the longer term prospect for democratic governance.

Acknowledgement

We thank...

References

- Angrist, Joshua, and Jorn-Steffen Pischke. 2008. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Autesserre, Severine. 2014. *Peaceland. Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bara, Corinne. 2020. Shifting Targets: The Effect of Peacekeeping on Postwar Violence. *European Journal of International Relations* 26 (4): 979–1003. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066120902503>.
- Bara, Corinne, and Lisa Hultman. 2020. Just Different Hats? Comparing UN and Non-UN Peacekeeping. *International Peacekeeping* 27 (3): 341–368.
- Beardsley, Kyle. 2011. Peacekeeping and the Contagion of Armed Conflict. *Journal of Politics* 73 (4): 1051–1064. ISSN: 00223816. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381611000764>.
- Bekoe, Dorina A. 2012. *Voting in Fear: Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Edited by Dorina Bekoe. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

- Birch, Sarah, Ursula Daxecker, and Kristine Höglund. 2020. Electoral Violence: An Introduction. *Journal of Peace Research* 57 (1): 3–14. issn: 14603578. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319889657>.
- Borzyskowski, Inken von. 2019. *The Credibility Challenge: How Democracy Aid Influences Election Violence*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Bove, Vincenzo, and Andrea Ruggeri. 2014. Kinds of Blue: Diversity in un Peacekeeping Missions and Civilian Protection. *British Journal of Political Science* 46 (3): 681–700. issn: 14692112. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123415000034>.
- Brancati, Dawn, and Jack Snyder. 2013. Time to Kill: The Impact of Election Timing on Postconflict Stability. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (September): 822–853. <http://jcr.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0022002712449328%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1177/0022002712449328>.
- Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN). 2019. *Global Roads Open Access Data Set, Version 1*. Palisades, NY.
- Christensen, Maya, and Mats Utas. 2008. Mercenaries of Democracy: The 'Politricks' of Remobilized Combatants in the 2007 General Elections, Sierra Leone. *African Affairs* 107 (429): 515–539. issn: 0001-9909. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adn057>. <http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/doi/10.1093/afraf/adn057>.
- Cil, Deniz, Hanne Fjelde, Lisa Hultman, and Desiree Nilsson. 2020. Mapping blue helmets: Introducing the Geocoded Peacekeeping Operations (Geo-PKO) dataset. *Journal of Peace Research* 57 (2): 360–370.
- Collier, Paul, and Pedro C Vicente. 2014. Votes and Violence: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Nigeria. *The Economic Journal* 124 (574): F327–F355.
- Colombo, Andrea, Olivia D'Aoust, and Olivier Sterck. 2019. From Rebellion to Electoral Violence: Evidence from Burundi. *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 67 (2): 333–368.
- Condra, Luke N, Michael Callen, Radha Iyengar, James Long, and Jacob N Shapiro. 2017. Damaging Democracy? Security Provision and Turnout in Afghan Elections. *Working paper* (August): 1–62. https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/jns/files/ccils_22aug2017.pdf%20papers3://publication/uuid/605B71D4-4B94-4744-857D-532D1A66C2B2.
- Daxecker, Ursula, Elio Amicarelli, and Alexander Jung. 2019. Electoral Contention and Violence (ECAV): A New Dataset. *Journal of Peace Research* 56 (51): 714–723. issn: 14603578. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318823870>.
- Daxecker, Ursula E. 2012. The Cost of Exposing Cheating: International Election Monitoring, Fraud, and Post-Election Violence in Africa. *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 4 (July): 503–516. <http://jpr.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0022343312445649%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1177/0022343312445649>.
- . 2014. All Quiet on Election Day? International Election Observation and Incentives for Pre-election Violence in African Elections. *Electoral Studies* 34 (June): 232–243. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2013.11.006%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1016/j.electstud.2013.11.006>.
- Di Salvatore, Jessica. 2019. Peacekeepers against Criminal Violence—unintended Effects of Peacekeeping Operations? *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (4): 840–858. issn: 0092-5853. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12451>.
- Di Salvatore, Jessica, and Andrea Ruggeri. 2018. Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations. In *Oxford encyclopedia of empirical international relations*, edited by William R. Thompson. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Donno, Daniela. 2013. *Defending Democratic Norms. International Actors and the Politics of Electoral Misconduct*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Doyle, Michael W., and Nicholas Sambanis. 2000. International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis. *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 4 (January): 779. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2586208?origin=crossref%20papers3://publication/doi/10.2307/2586208>.
- Dunning, T. 2011. Fighting and Voting: Violent Conflict and Electoral Politics. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 3 (May): 327–339. <http://jcr.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0022002711400861%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1177/0022002711400861>.
- Duursma, Allard. 2019. Obstruction and Intimidation of Peacekeepers: How Armed Actors Undermine Civilian Protection Efforts. *Journal of Peace Research* 56 (2): 234–248. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318800522>.
- Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Höglund. 2020. Introducing the Violent Electoral Conflict (VECO) Dataset. *Working Paper, available from the authors*, 1–43.
- Fjelde, Hanne, Lisa Hultman, and Desirée Nilsson. 2019. Protection Through Presence: UN Peacekeeping and the Costs of Targeting Civilians. *International Organization* 73 (1). issn: 15315088. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818318000346>.

- Flores, Thomas Edward, and Irfan Nooruddin. 2012. The Effect of Elections on Postconflict Peace and Reconstruction. *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 2 (March): 558–570. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1017/S0022381611001733%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1017/S0022381611001733>.
- Fortna, Virginia Page. 2008. Peacekeeping and Democratization. In *From war to democracy. dilemmas of peacebuilding*, edited by Anna K Jarstad and Timothy Sisk, 39–79. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Fortna, Virginia Page, and Reyko Huang. 2012. Democratization after Civil War: A Brush-Clearing Exercise. *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (May): 801–808. <https://academic.oup.com/isq/article-lookup/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2012.00730.x%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2012.00730.x>.
- Gurses, Mehmet, and T David Mason. 2008. Democracy Out of Anarchy: The Prospects for Post-Civil-War Democracy. *Social Science Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (June): 315–336. <papers3://publication/doi/10.2307/42956316?ref=search-gateway:b9b210dc86ead001031753121dacfce3>.
- Gutierrez-Romero, Roxana, and Adrienne LeBas. 2020. Does Electoral Violence Affect Voting Choice and Willingness to Vote? Evidence from a Vignette Experiment. *Journal of Peace* 57 (1): 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3054763>.
- Gutiérrez-Romero, Roxana. 2014. An Inquiry into the Use of Illegal Electoral Practices and Effects of Political Violence and Vote-Buying. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58 (8): 1500–1527.
- Höglund, Kristine. 2009. Electoral Violence in Conflict-ridden Societies: Concepts, Causes, and Consequences. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21 (3): 412–427.
- Howard, Lise Morjé. 2019. *Power in Peacekeeping*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. 2013. United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War. *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 4 (May): 875–891. <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/ajps.12036%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1111/ajps.12036>.
- . 2014. Beyond Keeping Peace: United Nations Effectiveness in the Midst of Fighting. 108, no. 4 (October): 737–753. http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0003055414000446%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1017/S0003055414000446.
- Hyde, Susan D. 2008. How International Election Observers Detect and Deter Fraud. In *Election fraud: detecting and deterring electoral manipulation*, edited by Michael R. Alvarez, Thad E. Hall, and Sudan D. Hyde, 201–215. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Hyde, Susan D, and Nikolay Marinov. 2012. Which Elections Can Be Lost? *Political Analysis* 20 (2): 191–210.
- Ichino, Nahomi, and Matthias Schündeln. 2012. Deterring or displacing electoral irregularities? Spillover effects of observers in a randomized field experiment in Ghana. *Journal of Politics* 74 (1): 292–307. issn: 00223816. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381611001368>.
- Joshi, Madhav, Erik Melander, and Jason Michael Quinn. 2017. Sequencing the Peace: How the Order of Peace Agreement Implementation Can Reduce the Destabilizing Effects of Post–accord Elections. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61 (1): 4–28. issn: 0022-0027. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715576573>.
- Kelley, Judith. 2012. *Monitoring Democracy. When International Election Observation works and Why it Often Fails*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lyons, Terrence. 2004. Post-conflict elections and the process of demilitarizing politics: the role of electoral administration. *Democratization* 11 (3): 36–62.
- Manning, Carrie. 2004. Elections and Political Change in Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Democratization* 11 (2): 60–86. issn: 13510347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340412331294212>.
- Matanock, Aila M. 2017. *Electing Peace. From Civil Conflict To Political Participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Matanock, Aila M., and Paul Staniland. 2018. How and Why Armed Groups Participate in Elections. *Perspectives on Politics* 16 (3): 710–727. issn: 1537-5927. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3079281>.
- Mvukiyeh, Eric. 2018. Promoting Political Participation in War-torn Countries: Microlevel Evidence from Postwar Liberia. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62 (8): 1686–1726. issn: 15528766. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002717698019>.
- Mvukiyeh, Eric, and Cyrus Samii. 2017. Promoting Democracy in Fragile States: Field Experimental Evidence from Liberia. *World Development* 95:254–267.
- Norris, Pippa. 2014. *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Ottaway, Marina. 1998. Angola's Failed Elections. In *Postconflict elections, democratization and international assistance*, edited by Krishna Kumar, 133–151. Boulder, Colorado; London, UK: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Paris, Roland. 2004. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Piccolino, Giulia, and John Karlsrud. 2011. Withering Consent, but Mutual Dependency: UN Peace Operations and African Assertiveness. *Conflict, Security & Development* 11 (4): 447–471.
- Pickering, Jeffrey, and Mark Peceny. 2006. Forging Democracy at Gunpoint. *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (August): 539–560. issn: 00208833. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2006.00413.x>. <http://www.readcube.com/articles/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2006.00413.x>.
- Rauschenbach, Mascha, and Katrin Paula. 2019. Intimidating Voters with Violence and Mobilizing them with Clientelism. *Journal of Peace Research* 56 (5): 682–696. issn: 0022-3433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318822709>. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022343318822709>.
- Reilly, Benjamin. 2008. Post-war Elections: Uncertain Turning Points of Transitions. In *From war to democracy: dilemmas of peacebuilding*, edited by Anna K Jarstad and Timothy D Sisk, 157–182. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Ruggeri, Andrea, Han Dorussen, and Theodora-Ismene Gizelis. 2016. On the Frontline Every Day? Subnational Deployment of United Nations Peacekeepers. *British Journal of Political Science* 48 (4): 1005–1025.
- . 2017. Winning the Peace Locally: UN Peacekeeping and Local Conflict. *International Organization* 71, no. 1 (January): 163–185. https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0020818316000333/type/journal_article%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1017/S0020818316000333.
- Smidt, Hannah. 2020a. Keeping Electoral Peace? Activities of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Their Effects on Election-related Violence. *Conflict Management and Peace Science Forthcoming*.
- . 2020b. Mitigating Election Violence Locally: UN Peacekeepers' Election-education Campaigns in Côte d'Ivoire. *Journal of Peace Research* 57 (1): 199–216. issn: 14603578. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319884993>.
- Staniland, Paul. 2014. Violence and Democracy. *Comparative Politics* 47 (1): 99–118.
- . 2015. Armed Groups and Militarized Elections. *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (March): 694–705. <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/isqu.12195%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1111/isqu.12195>.
- Steinert, Janina Isabel, and Sonja Grimm. 2015. Too Good To Be True? United Nations Peacebuilding and the Democratization of War-torn States. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32 (5): 513–535. issn: 15499219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894214559671>.
- Strauss, Scott, and Charlie Taylor. 2012. Democratization and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. In *Voting in fear: electoral violence in sub-saharan africa*, 15–38. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
- Sundberg, Ralph, and Erik Melander. 2013. Introducing the UCDDP Georeferenced Event Dataset. *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 4 (June): 523–532. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022343313484347%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1177/0022343313484347>.
- Tollefsen, A. F., H. Strand, and Halvard Buhaug. 2012. PRIO-GRID: A Unified Spatial Data Structure. *Journal of Peace Research* 49 (2): 363–374. issn: 0022-3433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311431287>. <http://jpr.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0022343311431287>.
- Townsen, Ashly Adam, and Bryce W. Reeder. 2014. Where Do Peacekeepers Go When They Go? Explaining the Spatial Heterogeneity of Peacekeeping Deployment. *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 18 (1-2): 69–91. issn: 1875-4104. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-1802003>. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24799617%5Cnhttp://jnm.snmjournals.org/cgi/doi/10.2967/jnumed.114.142042%5Cnhttp://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/18754112-1802003>.
- United Nations. 2008. *Capstone Doctrine - United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*. New York: United Nations.
- . 2018. DR Congo elections: “Excessive use of force” in campaign must be avoided, says Bachelet. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1028561>.
- United Nations Department of Peace Operations. 2020. Principles of Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/principles-of-peacekeeping>.
- United Nations Security Council. 2005. *Ninth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*. Technical report S/2005/764.

- United Nations Security Council. 2006. *Twenty-second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Technical report S/2006/759.
- Von Borzyskowski, Inken. 2019. The Risks of Election Observation: International Condemnation and Post-election Violence. *International Studies Quarterly* 63 (3): 654–667. issn: 14682478. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz024>.
- Von Borzyskowski, Inken, and Michael Wahman. 2019. Systematic Measurement Error in Election Violence Data: Causes and Consequences. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1–44. issn: 14692112. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123418000509>.
- Walter, Barbara F. 2002. *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Walter, Barbara F, Lise Morjé Howard, and V. Page Fortna. 2020. The Extraordinary Relationship between Peacekeeping and Peace. *British Journal of Political Science Online First*.
- Weidmann, Nils B, and Michael Callen. 2012. Violence and Election Fraud: Evidence from Afghanistan. *British Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 1 (July): 53–75. http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0007123412000191%20papers3://publication/doi/10.1017/S0007123412000191.
- Zukerman Daly, Sarah. 2019. Voting for Victors: Why Violent Actors Win Postwar Elections. *World Politics* 71 (4): 747–805.

Appendix 1. Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (Italian Version)

Appendix 2. Openness to Discuss Cancer in the Family Scale Questionario sulla Comunicazione in Famiglia (Italian Version)

Table 3. Predicting approval of one's own house member

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Religion Match	0.077*** (0.014)	-0.029 (0.061)	-0.027 (0.062)

Note: Entries are coefficients from a probit regression model. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
 *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$, two-tailed test.