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Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping

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States covet leadership and staff positions in international organizations. The posts of civilian leaders and force commanders of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations are attractive to member states. In selecting peacekeeping leaders, the UN Secretariat balances three considerations: satisfying powerful member states by appointing their nationals; recognizing member states' contribution to the work of the organization; and ensuring that leaders have the necessary skill set. We investigate appointments of more than 200 civilian and military leaders in 24 UN missions, 1990–2017. We find that contributing troops to a specific mission increases the chances of securing a peacekeeping leadership position. Geographic proximity between the leaders' country and the conflict country is also a favorable factor whose importance has increased over time. Civilian leaders of UN peacekeeping operations tend to hail from institutionally powerful countries, while military commanders come from major, long-standing troop contributing countries. Despite some role that skills play in the appointment process, the UN's dependence on troop contributors, together with its reliance on institutionally powerful states, can be a source of dysfunction if it prevents the organization from selecting effective peacekeeping leaders. This dynamic affects other international organizations that have significant power disparities among members or rely on voluntary contributions.

Introduction

States covet leadership and staff positions in international organizations (IOs). Such positions offer opportunities for exerting influence, obtaining information, and increasing visibility (Hall and Woods 2017; Parízek 2017; Novosad and Werker 2019). While recruitment is formally based on merit and civil servants are expected to be loyal to the organization, member states lobby to place their nationals in leadership positions. By appointing nationals of a certain country, IO secretariats can please powerful member states, reward governments for supporting the organization, or tap into skill sets tied to nationality, such as linguistic abilities or local knowledge.

Civilian and military leaders of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations have unique characteristics that distinguish them among IO officials. Stationed in conflict zones around the world, their decisions can mean life or death for civilians. Their leadership shapes mission performance and determines whether a UN operation enjoys local support. Despite the consequential role that peacekeeping leaders play, however, we know little about the process of peacekeeping leaders' appointment. Does the UN Secretariat select the best people for this challenging job? Or does the need to reward powerful or pivotal countries constrain its ability to do so? Answering these questions can help elucidate a foundational puzzle in the literature on the politicization of international bureaucracies, thus far researched mostly in the context of the European Commission (Christiansen 1997; Bauer and Ege 2012).

In this article, we aim to fill this gap by examining how civilian and military leaders of UN peacekeeping operations are selected. We develop a theoretical argument emphasizing three key characteristics that affect the probability that a country will receive peacekeeping leadership positions: its power, its personnel contributions to UN peacekeeping, and whether its nationality is a source of valuable skills. First, officials who hail from powerful countries dominate the UN's upper echelons, and we can expect a similar pattern among senior peacekeeping officials. Second, not only powerful but also pivotal countries, or countries that are crucial for the implementation of a specific IO activity, enjoy significant influence. A unique feature of UN peacekeeping is its reliance on voluntary troop contributions, which enables major providers of uniformed personnel to demand recognition in the form of leadership posts. The third characteristic that the Secretariat considers is leaders' linguistic and cultural skills that are suited to the local context, along with experience and socialization into UN's norms. In sum, we expect power, recognition, and skills to influence the appointment process.

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We evaluate our theoretical expectations against original data on the nationality of civilian and military leaders in UN peacekeeping between 1990 and 2017. We discover that a country's embeddedness in global processes, mission-specific troop contributions, and geographic proximity consistently increase nationals' chances of a peacekeeping leadership appointment. Civilian leaders are more likely to come from the three "Western" permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC)—France, the United Kingdom, and the United States (the P3)—as well as from countries that have served multiple terms as elected UNSC members. By contrast, military leaders are more likely to come from less developed economies, long-standing troop contributors, and states that are culturally proximate to the conflict country. Over time, the importance of coming from a P3 country and of mission-specific troop contributions has increased. Finally, a number of intuitively crucial factors, such as financial contributions to the peacekeeping budget or bilateral development assistance to the conflict country, do not influence the probability of appointment.

Our findings have implications for the literatures on the political economy of IOs, hierarchies in world politics, and peacekeeping effectiveness. First, they suggest that institutional power at the UN confers a key privilege, which allows the United States, the United Kingdom, and France to shape the direction of peacekeeping by placing their nationals in civilian mission leadership positions. Second, UN peacekeeping is structured by multiple hierarchies, where not only power but also troop contributions can be leveraged to obtain influence. Most IOs rely on voluntary provision of financial resources, which propels wealthy states to the top. By contrast, UN peacekeeping offers a unique avenue for developing countries seeking influence in global governance, even though they must take up the difficult and dangerous task of providing peacekeepers to achieve it. Third, the UN's dependence on voluntary provision of troops can prevent the Secretariat from selecting the most capable cadres to lead peacekeeping missions.

The article proceeds in four parts. In the first section, we analyze why and how member states lobby to place nationals in key positions in IOs. In the second section, we outline our hypotheses regarding the role of power, recognition, and skills, as well as the changes in the importance of these factors over time. In the third section, we introduce the dataset and the modeling approach. In the fourth section, we present the findings that emerge from the quantitative analysis. In the conclusion, we discuss the implications of our findings and suggest new research avenues opened by this study.

Leadership and Nationality in IOs and UN Peacekeeping

States lobby to place nationals in leadership and staff positions in IOs for various reasons. Politicians use IO officials of the same nationality to influence organizations' work (Urpelainen 2012; Kleine 2013). For example, in the European Union (EU), Commissioners' nationality has been shown to affect policy initiation, voting in the Council of the EU, and budget allocations (Thomson 2008; Wonka 2008; Killermann 2016; Gehring and Schneider 2018). At the UN, governments also seek to influence the work of the organization through nationals in strategic positions (Johns 2007). IO officials pass on information on organization's functioning to former colleagues (and future employers) in national governments, thus preventing IO bureaucracies from developing an information advantage (Parízek 2017). For example, during the Cold War, there was an entire unit in the UN Secretariat staffed by Soviet nationals, whose only purpose was to feed information back to their state (Salton 2017, 135). States also use staff and leadership appointments in IOs to reward loyal citizens: such posts come not only with prestige and visibility, but also with perks like foreign travel and per diems (Gray 2015). Key IO posts give nationals valuable experience, which improves their chances of similar appointments in the future, allowing their country to enhance influence in IOs further.

Attempts to secure leadership opportunities for nationals can take the form of "legacy positions" and "flags-to-posts" dynamics, or informal agreements tying key staff posts to nationality. For example, the NATO Secretary-General is traditionally a European, while an American gets the top military command post (Dijkstra 2016). In the EU, the post of the Director General for Agriculture and Rural Development has been occupied by a French national for 42 out of 50 years of the Common Agricultural Policy's existence (Kleine 2013). At the UN, "flags-to-posts" dynamics date back to the organization's founding years when the permanent UNSC members reached a "gentleman's agreement" that each would provide one Assistant-Secretary-General (Ravndal 2018, 30). A former Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Special Political Affairs recalled being "inserted by a major power at a young age into a prestigious post" when the British Prime Minister "installed [him] at UN Headquarters to gain a competitive advantage" (Salton 2017, 183). The practice continues today: for instance, the post of USG for Peacekeeping has been occupied by a French national since 1997. In 2016, China eyed the post, citing its growing troop contributions, which exceeded the combined contributions by the other four permanent UNSC members, and its financial contributions, which were second only to the United States (Lynch 2016). Observers expressed concerns that China could have used the position to steer peacekeeping away from its focus on human rights (Lagon and Lou 2018). Thus, the nationality of key IO officials is linked to states' quest for influence in IOs and has a significant effect on organizations' work. Further, we outline how peacekeeping leaders' nationality influences the direction and effectiveness of UN missions before turning to the drivers of appointments.

Leadership and Nationality in UN Peacekeeping

Multidimensional UN peacekeeping missions are headed by a civilian diplomat, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), who maintains overall authority over the military, police, and civilian components and, since the advent of integrated missions, coordinates the activities of other UN entities in the conflict country (UN DPKO/DFS 2008, 7). The head of a mission's military component is the Force Commander (FC), responsible for the military strategy, including the use of force.[1] Both categories of officials play important political and strategic roles, although SRSGs are slightly better researched (Johnstone 2003; Karlsrud 2013, 2016; Fröhlich 2014) than FCs.[2] As

[1] During the Cold War, most missions were headed by an FC, reflecting their military composition and orientation. An exception was the 1960 operation in Congo, which had an SRSG. The FC still heads contemporary missions with Cold War origins (like in Lebanon) or small operations that are primarily military in nature (like the border monitoring mission in Abyei). Yet, these are very rare events.

[2] Another category of senior leaders in peacekeeping missions includes heads of police components, Police Commissioners. Their appointment is different because it is assisted by the Standing Police Capacity, a small cell of police experts

former USG for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno (2015, 16) argued, heads of peacekeeping missions have "one of the most difficult, and most unrecognized, jobs on earth … [which] summarizes all the tensions and possible contradictions of the United Nations, an organization whose raison d'être is to serve the people, but whose influence depends on the capacity to generate and manage the support of powerful member states."

Both SRSGs and FCs wield considerable formal and informal influence over how a mission's mandate is implemented. In resolving dilemmas that the job entails, they rely not only on personal experience, but also on lessons from their country's history, cultural norms prevalent in their society, and informal networks developed during national service. For example, during the 2011 electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, SRSG Choi Young-Jin authorized airstrikes against the forces of the defeated incumbent who tried to cling to power through violence, to Russia's great displeasure. Before calling in the airstrikes, Choi had time to consult only the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, and not the Security Council (Karlsrud 2016). Choi was "a South Korean diplomat and friend of Ban" (Gowan 2011, 411). Choi's nationality has played a role in the speed (and possibly the nature) of this consequential decision. Yasushi Akashi of Japan served as the SRSG in both Cambodia and former Yugoslavia. In Cambodia, Akashi "had a measure of success in dealing with the intransigent factions in his emollient manner" (Shawcross 2000, 147), while in Bosnia, he was criticized for being too soft on the Serb forces due to his "Japanese character, which places peace above justice," a result of Japan's World War II experience (Geyer 1997, 83).

Activist FCs have also used national experience or connections. When Roméo Dallaire of Canada, the FC in Rwanda, tried to warn New York of the impending tragedy in the ill-fated "genocide fax," he addressed the cable directly to another Canadian, Maurice Baril, a military adviser in the UN peacekeeping department. Dallaire (2008, 145) knew his actions were "unprecedented" because he tried to open "a line of communication in an area where [he] had no authority to do so," but the shared nationality provided a helpful link. Patrick Cammaert of the Netherlands, who commanded the Eastern Division of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2005–2007, took robust action against militias that threatened civilians. Many years before the DRC assignment, Cammaert served in the Dutch battalion stationed in Srebrenica, which failed to prevent the massacre. The tragic experience, which led to lawsuits against the Dutch government, encouraged Cammaert to be proactive in protecting civilians in the DRC a decade later (Paddon Rhoads 2016, 130).

As we can see, SRSGs and FCs play a crucial role in promoting international peace and security, human rights, and civilian safety. Ideally, the UN should appoint the most skillful and suitable candidates to these positions. However, like with other categories of IO staff and leadership, member states seek to influence the process.

Peacekeeping Leaders' Appointment Process

The UN Secretary-General appoints civilian and military leaders of peacekeeping operations. Yet, in reality, member states seek to influence such decisions: UN officials have complained that "political considerations … prevailed over requirements of competence and merit in some cases" (UN OIOS 2015, §74; see also Lottholz and von Billerbeck 2019). The 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) stressed the need to enhance "Secretary-General's independence in the selection and appointment of senior leadership" (United Nations 2015, §271). For SRSGs (and we suspect FCs as well), the selection process is "a delicate balancing game along nationality lines" (Sisk 2010, 241). While qualitative studies and policy reports suggest that nationality might play a role, we do not know what considerations matter *systematically* for each type of peacekeeping leaders in each historical period.

By placing nationals in SRSG and FC positions, member states seek to influence the direction of UN peacekeeping in a specific country or in general terms. Governments might use an SRSG or FC to support the resolution of a particular conflict or to prop up a client regime. They might seek to exploit nationals in staff or leadership positions to control mission's activities.[3] If they intervene in a certain country, they might use a national leading a parallel UN force to enhance coordination or, vice versa, prevent UN meddling. They might wish to gain an economic foothold in the conflict country. Finally, they might use the opportunity to reward a national with a lucrative posting, a source of diplomatic experience[4] or military training.[5] In turn, it raises the quality of member state's diplomatic corps and military, while also enhancing peacekeeping leaders' loyalty, who feel an obligation toward the government that has lobbied on their behalf for an attractive international job.

To give an example of how peacekeeping leadership posts provide influence opportunities, Brazil was the key contributor to the UN mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The appointment of successive Brazilian FCs in "a clear break with standard practice" allowed it "direct influence in every sphere of decision-making" (Braga 2010, 718). We call such successive appointments "mission capture" by a troop contributing country (TCC). Subsequently, Brazil was invited to send an expert to the HIPPO panel, and a former Brazilian FC authored a controversial yet influential "Cruz Report" (Cruz 2017), enabling Brazil to exert a "palpable influence on the development of multilateral military interventions" (Harig 2017, §3). However, while all states endeavor to place nationals in peacekeeping leadership positions, not all of them are equally capable of doing so.

Power, Recognition, and Skills in Peacekeeping Leadership Appointments

We argue that three categories of factors affect individuals' chances of being appointed as a peacekeeping leader: their country's power; recognition of troop contributions by their state; and a set of skills, which are often nationality-related. In the following subsections, we discuss our expectations about the role of these three categories of factors in peacekeeping leadership appointments.

that can temporarily supply Police Commissioners for new missions. Unlike in the case of SRSG and FC posts, which are sought after, member states are sometimes reluctant to release talent from the national police force to serve as Police Commissioners in environment where they might not acquire transferable skills (Durch and Ker 2013).

[3] For example, Russian officials in the UN mission in Kosovo lobbied against devolving responsibility to the Kosovar authorities as this was seen as a step toward independence (Eckhard and Dijkstra 2017).

[4] For example, Bert Koenders, who had served as SRSG in Mali, subsequently became Netherlands' Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[5] As Acting FC in Haiti wrote, "[f]or a professional soldier, the opportunity to lead an international mission in a situation where resources are used in real-life situations is extremely valuable — especially in peacetime" (Aldunate 2010, 3).

Power

In the UN and other IOs, power has been demonstrated to affect staff appointments (Parízek 2017; Novosad and Werker 2019), but we only have anecdotal evidence of its role in peacekeeping leadership selection. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1999) recalled how he accommodated US interests by appointing SRSG Jonathan Howe in Somalia or FC Joseph Kinzler in Haiti, both Americans. As the literature on informal governance in IOs suggests (Stone 2011), other member states might tolerate this practice to prevent superpower's disengagement from the UN or from a specific conflict. For example, Guéhenno (2015, 135) appointed an American SRSG, William Swing, to lead the UN mission in the DRC because it made it "more difficult for the Congolese to ignore the UN and also more difficult for the United States to walk away from Congo."

Thus, besides being influenced by direct lobbying, for which powerful member states have greater capacity, the Secretariat might appoint nationals of such countries to top peacekeeping positions in order to tie their country closer to the organization or the mission. This leads to our first expectation:

H1: Peacekeeping leaders are more likely to come from powerful countries.

We expect two types of power to matter in this case, one stemming from country's general capacities and another one arising from institutional privilege. We thus differentiate between extra- and intra-institutional power.

Recognition

In IOs that rely on voluntary resources provided by member states, major donors have a disproportionate influence on staff appointments (Thorvaldsdottir 2016), as well as other decisions (Graham 2017). For instance, UNICEF has always been headed by an American, which raised no questions as long as the United States was the largest financial contributor. When Scandinavian countries became the main financiers in the mid-1990s, Boutros-Ghali (1999, 228) recalled that "there was no longer automatic acceptance" that the post should "belong" to the United States, as Scandinavia demanded recognition of its financial contributions.[6] While financial contributions to UN peacekeeping are a compulsory expenditure,[7] member states provide troops voluntarily. In the unsuccessful attempt to wrestle the top Secretariat peacekeeping post from France, China, which is less powerful economically and diplomatically, stressed its credentials as a TCC.

Overall, there is an "unwritten rule" that FCs come from countries that "make large contributions to the operation in question" (Jakobsen 2016, 756). Guéhenno (2015, 226) admitted that he "had to accept that the nationality of key commanders would be decided by the troop-contributing countries." Italy, one of the largest contributors to the expanded mission in Lebanon, supplied three out of five FCs in 2007–2018, although it is "rare at the UN that the leadership of a mission is repeatedly assigned to officials of the same nationality" (Tercovich 2016, 688). If this is indeed a systematic occurrence, then TCCs have a unique avenue to influence at the UN. While we expect this consideration to matter for FC appointments, we want to test whether it applies to SRSGs as well. There is some anecdotal evidence pointing in that direction: Guéhenno ruled out a former Mexican Foreign Minister as the SRSG in Haiti "in part because Mexico is not deeply involved in MINUSTAH" (USUN 2006, §8).

Since states contribute troops in part "to influence decisions about the operation through the acquisition of key posts within the mission headquarters" (Bellamy and Williams 2012, 4)—although there are diverse reasons for contributions (Bove and Elia 2011; Bellamy and Williams 2013; Sandler 2017)—TCCs that feel that they are not recognized through leadership appointments might cut back on participation in peacekeeping in general or in a specific mission. In terms of general troop contributions, India threatened in 2009 to reduce its peacekeeping participation unless it got more leadership positions (Takshashila Institution 2010). The following year, an Indian was appointed to command the UN operation in the DRC, despite allegations of misconduct by Indian troops and objections from the host government (Krishnasamy 2010). Nepal, which has provided only five FCs in the history of peacekeeping despite being a major TCC, complained about "underrepresentation and sought 'justice' for its contributions going back to 1955" (Pariyar 2016, §2).

In terms of mission-specific troop contributions, Nigeria, the largest initial contributor to the UN mission in Sierra Leone and the leading country in the preceding regional peacekeeping force, was infuriated when it did not receive both the SRSG and FC posts. An Indian was appointed as the FC, although India provided 4000 troops less than Nigeria, which led to a severe intra-leadership conflict.[8] More recently in Mali, a Nigerian FC of the "re-hatted" African Union operation was not appointed to lead the UN mission that took over, causing Nigeria to scale down its contribution to the UN mission (McGregor 2013). This leads to our second hypothesis:

H2: Peacekeeping leaders are more likely to come from countries that are major troop contributors.

We want to test not only whether the Secretariat rewards TCCs with FC (and possibly also SRSG) positions but also whether it seeks to cultivate long-term relations with long-standing contributors or makes *quid pro quo* deals with countries willing to provide troops for a specific mission. To that end, we differentiate between cumulative and mission-specific troop contributions.

Skills

Peacekeeping leaders are expected to be excellent strategists, administrators, and mediators, so the Secretariat should aim to find the best people for the job despite member states' lobbying. Some skills mentioned in the SRSGs' job description might have a (perceived) connection to nationality, such as "integrity and respect for human rights" or "cultural and gender sensitivity" (UN 2017). For example, SRSG Martti Ahtisaari of Finland sought to ensure gender equality within the UN mission in Namibia, a decision in which his "Nordic background may have played a role" (Hudson 2000, 27).

In addition, proximity between the leaders' country and the conflict country may confer advantages. In IOs with

[6] Sweden has recently managed to secure other key UNICEF posts, like the Deputy Executive Director.

[7] Each state is assessed according to its wealth, but the five permanent UNSC members pay a larger share because of their special privileges and responsibilities, and there are discounts for least developed countries.

[8] The Nigerian contingent might have misinformed the Indian FC, leading the latter to make imprudent decisions, while the Indian FC accused Nigerian troops of illegal diamond mining and rebel collusion (The Economist 2000; Olonisakin 2015).

a large field presence, such as the UN, knowledge of the local context can help get jobs (Parízek 2017; Eckhard and Steinebach 2018). In peacekeeping, success often depends on mission leadership's familiarity with the conflict (Howard 2008, 18), a fact of which the Secretariat is keenly aware. For example, Boutros-Ghali (1999, 54) appointed Mohammed Sahnoun of Algeria as the SRSG in Somalia in part because of "his close knowledge of African affairs"[9] and Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh of Cameroon as the SRSG in Rwanda because Booh-Booh was "a francophone African intimately familiar with Rwandan politics" (Salton 2017, 189)–some would say, too intimately (Dallaire 2008).

Geographic and cultural proximity between peacekeeping troops and the local population is associated with less violence against civilians and fewer battle deaths (Bove and Ruggeri 2019; Bove, Ruffa, and Ruggeri 2020), and the Secretariat might expect this from peacekeeping leaders as well. However, proximity can be a double-edged sword. Neighboring countries often have a history of enmity or rivalry, while peacekeeping missions need to maintain impartiality. Whether proximity is an obstacle or an asset requires empirical analysis.

If a country has already provided a leader for a particular operation, hiring another leader of the same nationality for the same mission provides the benefit of continuity, although we have discussed how "mission capture" is a rare event that sits uneasily with the principle of broad representation and multinational composition in peacekeeping. We also explore the effect that previous *personal* experience—as opposed to a country's experience—of leading a peacekeeping mission might have. Our third hypothesis thus focuses on the Secretariat's expectations about leaders' skills:

H3: Peacekeeping leaders are more likely to be appointed if they are perceived as possessing valuable skills.

A stronger test of our hypotheses can be achieved by assessing their role in different periods of contemporary peacekeeping: 1990–1998, 1999–2006, and 2007–2017.[10] Peacekeeping has experienced significant changes after the Cold War. The early and mid-1990s were marked by active participation of the P3: the United States contributed many soldiers to the missions in Somalia and Haiti, while France and the United Kingdom were major TCCs in former Yugoslavia. This should have led to greater interest in peacekeeping leadership posts on the part of the P3. Troop availability was not always a pressing issue: in the early 1990s, Boutros-Ghali confidently asserted that "[m]ilitary observers and infantry are invariably available in the required numbers" (UNSG 1992, §70-3), although this began to change with the crises in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In terms of skills, the vestiges of the Cold War emphasis on TCC neutrality (Williams and Nguyen 2018) might have weakened the role of proximity.

The 1999–2006 period was marked by the disengagement of the Western powers as their attention turned to Afghanistan and Iraq, with uncertain effects on their interest in peacekeeping leadership posts. The Secretariat faced difficulties in finding qualified troops, especially for more robust operations with protection mandates, heightening the importance of mission-specific contributions. The norm of neutrality was reinterpreted as impartiality (Paddon Rhoads 2016), paving the way for the participation of neighboring countries as TCCs and potentially increasing the perceived usefulness of proximity.

In the 2007–2017 period, some of the P3 began to express newfound appreciation of peacekeeping, at least rhetorically: for example, Obama called UN peacekeeping "one of the world's most important tools to address armed conflict" (US White House 2015, §3). However, the pressures of force generation did not ease. By the end of the period, TCCs from Africa, Asia, and Latin America supplied more than 90 percent of uniformed peacekeepers (Weiss and Kuele 2019), despite signs of limited re-engagement by some Western countries (Koops and Tercovich 2018; Karlsrud 2019a). The norm against neighboring countries' participation weakened: by the end of the period, 34 percent of TCCs came from the conflict country's neighborhood (Williams and Nguyen 2018), which could further increase the perceived benefits of proximity. The 2007 reform of the UN peacekeeping apparatus and the creation of the Senior Leadership Appointment Section should have resulted in greater attention paid to skills and local suitability of peacekeeping leaders. Overall, we expect the importance of power to experience surges and dips, and the importance of recognition and skills to increase over time.

Data

Dependent Variables

We assembled monthly data on the name, nationality, and tenure of 89 SRSGs and 149 FCs for 24 UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and Asia over the 1990–2017 period.[11] We build on and extend Bove, Ruggeri, and Zwetsloot's (2016) and Bove, Ruffa, and Ruggeri's (2020) dataset on leadership in peacekeeping operations, using official UN documents, academic literature, and media reports. Our dataset represents the most comprehensive overview of leadership in UN peacekeeping operations to date. There is no available dataset of civilian and military leaders of peacekeeping operations; the UN does not provide one. To the best of our knowledge, there has been only one qualitative attempt to collect information on SRSGs (Fröhlich 2014), which focused on the nature and evolution of SRSGs' work (and many SRSGs are thematic positions, like SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who do not serve as heads of peacekeeping missions). Our dataset allows us to explore how the nationality of SRSGs and FCs affects their chances of appointment.

Independent Variables

For H1, we use several measures of extra- and intra-institutional power. To assess extra-institutional power, we turn to indicators that have been developed to measure relevant national characteristics. First, we use the *Composite Index of National Capability* taken from the National Material Capabilities dataset (Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972). The index includes information on demographic, economic, and military strength of a country and has been extensively used in the literature. Second, countries that are deeply integrated into the world economy and society can be expected to have a greater influence in IOs than states that

[9] The other reason was the desire to increase the number of Africans in key UN positions. Peacekeeping leadership is supposed to be recruited "on as wide a geographical basis as possible" (UNSC 2018, §8), yet the descriptive statistics that we present later show this remains an aspiration.

[10] We focus on the post–Cold War period because TCC-disaggregated data are not available for the pre-1990 era, and their absence would have prevented us from assessing recognition-related dynamics.

[11] This leads to a maximum of 3,233 observations. Yet, note that due to missing values for some of our covariates, the sample size decreases in terms of the models presented in the next section.

are less able or willing to participate in global processes. We use the *KOF Political Globalisation Index* (Gygli et al. 2019) to investigate whether more integrated countries supply a greater number of peacekeeping leaders. The index captures a country's membership in intergovernmental organizations, the number of international treaties, and the diversity in treaty partners, as well as the participation in UN missions, the number of embassies, and international NGOs in the country.[12] We also include a time-varying 0–1 dummy variable coding *NATO membership*,[13] since the alliance serves as an additional source of military power and influence.

Regarding intra-institutional power, there are UN-specific privileges that might translate into a greater number of peacekeeping leadership appointments. The permanent five members of the UNSC (the P5) have a disproportionate influence over peacekeeping decision-making (Allen and Yuen 2014). Among them, the P3 have an even greater influence, for example, by serving as "penholders" on almost all peacekeeping resolutions (Security Council Report 2019). Peacekeeping resolutions are first shared and discussed among the P3, before being sent to Russia and China and only then to elected members (von Einsiedel, Malone, and Ugarte 2016). Therefore, we assess whether *the three "Western" permanent members of the UNSC (the P3)* are especially successful at securing peacekeeping leadership positions for nationals. Additionally, among the top five contributors to the assessed peacekeeping budget, two—Germany and Japan—are not permanent members of the UNSC. Thus, we include information on *financial contributions to the peacekeeping budget* from the International Peace Institute (IPI) Peacekeeping Database.[14] Financial contributions are a source of power at the UN: although they are mandatory, some countries, such as the United States, have used their ability to withhold, delay, or unilaterally cap payments to extract concessions from the Secretariat. *Nonpermanent membership of the Security Council (E10)* might also increase the chances of nationals' appointment. Frequent elections to the Council mean that a country possesses reputational and diplomatic assets, while serving on the UNSC allows lobbying on behalf of nationals. We use the number of terms on the UNSC as an elected member throughout the country's history as the indicator.

For H2, we use monthly data on troop contributions from the IPI Peacekeeping Database (Perry and Smith 2013). The variable *troop contribution* measures mission-specific contributions by each country, operationalized as the mean contribution in the second year since mission's establishment (to account for possible delays in deployment). The variable *cumulative troop contribution* is measured as the total sum of troops provided by a country, across all UN missions, through to the point of observation.

For H3, we use several proxies for valuable skills. Contemporary peacekeeping missions are broadly expected to promote democratization, although, as Karlsrud (2019b) argues, there may be a trend away from it due to the recent emphasis on stabilization, plus, as von Billerbeck and Tansey (2019) argue, inadvertent enabling of authoritarianism can take place in practice. Still a person socialized into the norms of democratic governance may have a higher chance of becoming an SRSG or FC. We operationalize the level of *democracy* of the leaders' country as the V-Dem liberal democracy index (Coppedge et al. 2017).

To measure a leaders' potential familiarity with the local context, we leverage information on their country's history of engagement with the conflict country through the provision of *official development assistance* (ODA). In particular, we use information on the value of bilateral net ODA disbursement between nations of leaders from the OECD and conflict countries.[15] We also assess the effects of previous peacekeeping *leadership experience* generally or in the given mission.[16] Since top positions are expected to rotate among nationalities, "mission capture" by a major troop contributor would be strong evidence of the recognition rather than skills logic. Following Bove and Ruggeri (2019), we assess the role of cultural proximity using two indices of linguistic and geographic *distance* between peacekeeping leaders' country and the conflict country. In terms of linguistic distance, we use the data from Fearon (2003), which are based on linguistic "tree diagrams" and measure the maximum number of branches between any two languages. We follow Spolaore and Wacziarg (2016) who take into account the existence of linguistic subgroups within countries. As such, we are employing weighted distances that account for subpopulations within each country. The data on (population-weighted) bilateral distance between the origin and destination country in kilometers are from the CEPII Distance Dataset (Head and Mayer 2014).

Finally, we control for per capita gross domestic product (per capita GDP), as relative wealth of a country can affect its chances of having a national appointed as a leader of a peacekeeping mission, although we have been agnostic about the direction of the relationship.

Descriptive Statistics

In figure 1, we provide a global overview of the nationalities of UN peacekeeping leaders. We can see that SRSGs and FCs tend to come from different types of countries, but within each category, it is hard to identify clear-cut patterns. Fifty different countries have provided SRGSs. Of those, six SRSGs are from the United States and four from Germany, top countries in terms of institutional power measured as P3 membership or peacekeeping financial contributions. Yet, Nigeria has also supplied four SRSGs. They are followed by the United Kingdom, Tunisia, Switzerland, Canada, and Pakistan. Pakistan is a major TCC, while others, like Canada, make frequent but small troop contributions, whereas Switzerland rarely contributes. France, despite being among the P3, is not on the list. FCs in our sample come from forty-eight different countries. Brazil, Pakistan, India, Nigeria, and Bangladesh are the top five countries of FCs' origin. These are all key TCCs. Yet, when we move further down the list, the situation is more ambiguous: we find a heterogeneous set of countries and quite a lot of variation in troop contributions. Whereas Senegal and Kenya are important TCCs, this is no longer the case for Italy, Denmark, and Ireland. Descriptive statistics do not provide a clear test of each of our hypotheses. These patterns can be further investigated with the leadership data in ways that have not been possible previously.

[12] This is a composite index with more than forty indicators. After controlling for participation in UN missions, we remove that source of variation. Moreover, the correlation between the KOF Political Globalisation Index and participation in UN missions is very low, around 0.11, which means that the index is also accounting for many other distinct characteristics of globalization.

[13] Available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm.

[14] Available at http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/contributions.

[15] Available at https://stats.oecd.org.

[16] Our dataset of peacekeeping leaders allows us to identify whether a country has provided a peacekeeping leader in the past for the mission in question and whether a particular individual has already served as an SRSG or FC.

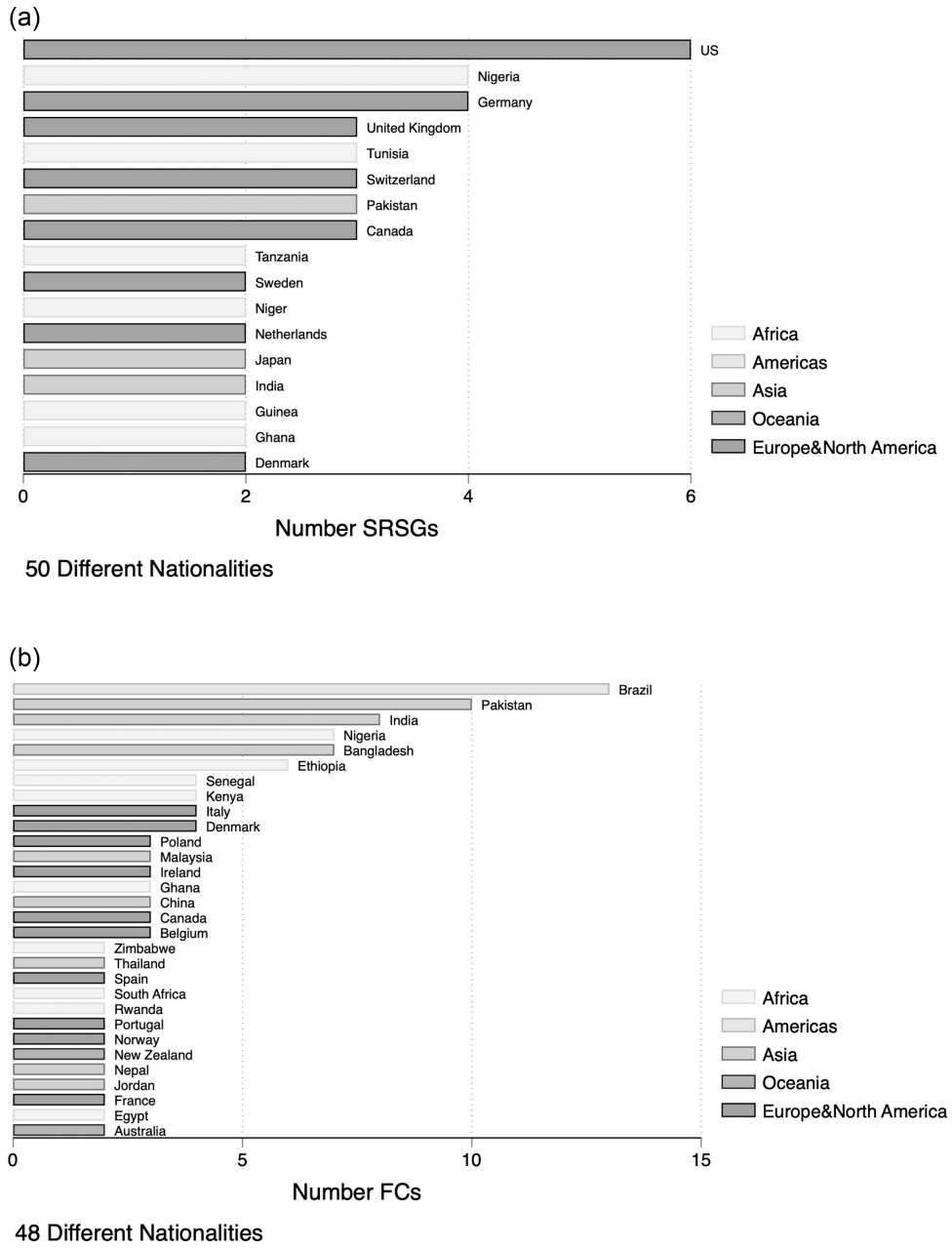

Figure 1. (a) Special Representatives in UN missions in Africa & Asia, 1991–2017. (b) Force Commanders in UN missions in Africa & Asia, 1991–2017.

Results

We use logistic regression to estimate the probability that an SRSG or FC of a certain nationality is appointed. Our unit of analysis is dyad month, pairing the leaders' country with the conflict country for all the months of the mission. We drop all observations between consecutive appointments to ensure that we are only modeling factors affecting the appointment of new leaders rather than their tenure. We report logit estimates with robust standard errors, clustering by missions to consider heteroskedasticity. Year fixed effects are entered to control for temporal, global, or systemic effects. These effects capture cross-sectional dependence when the impact of common factors is similar across countries. As we cannot directly interpret the size of the coefficients in logistic regression, for our main hypotheses and key significant variables we also show marginal effects plot for the probability of appointments, depending on the characteristics of the leader's country. Note that the odds that a peacekeeping leader is appointed from a specific country are very small, less than 1 percent, meaning that even a small substantive impact makes a great difference in the overall probability.

Tables 1 and 2 present the results of logistic regressions estimating the probability that an SRSG or FC of a given nationality is appointed. Model 1 includes only the variables related to H1, H2, and H3, excluding dyadic variables. Model 2 is a full model that includes additional covariates, in particular per capita GDP, as well as measures of distance, and is estimated using the entire sample. Model 3 excludes the P5. Model 4 uses the subset of countries that have had at least one SRSG or FC appointed. In addition, we run rare-events logit, add leader's country or mission fixed effects, and exclude countries with no armed forces. We

Table 1. Appointment of SRSGs: baseline models

	(1) Baseline	*(2) Full*	*(3) No P5*	*(4) At least one appointment*
P3	1.753**	2.407**		1.248
	(0.615)	(0.864)		(0.853)
NATO membership	0.302	0.238	0.189	0.371
	(0.430)	(0.478)	(0.515)	(0.590)
Cumulative number of presence in UNSC	0.098*	0.081	0.030	−0.041
	(0.048)	(0.054)	(0.068)	(0.055)
KOF Political Globalisation Index	0.038**	0.039*	0.053**	0.028
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.018)
Composite Index of National Capability	3.532	5.143	−5.617	11.933*
	(5.446)	(4.931)	(19.924)	(7.005)
Troop contribution (in thousands)	0.397	0.683*	0.633*	0.633*
	(0.274)	(0.360)	(0.364)	(0.335)
Cumulative troop contribution (in thousands)	0.003	−0.021	−0.013	−0.025
	(0.010)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.017)
ODA: total net (USD, million)	0.002**	−0.015	0.004	−0.020*
	(0.001)	(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.010)
Financial contributions (USD, million)	−0.000	−0.000	0.001	−0.001*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Previous SRSG experience	−0.215**	−0.173	−0.498*	−0.171
	(0.082)	(0.109)	(0.300)	(0.121)
Previous SRSG same mission	0.311	0.580*	0.000	−0.067
	(0.491)	(0.296)	(0.000)	(0.280)
Liberal democracy index	−0.926	−1.041	−1.265	−1.388
	(0.903)	(1.031)	(1.050)	(1.069)
Linguistic distance		−2.720	−3.104	−1.314
		(3.591)	(3.827)	(3.521)
Distance (pop-wt, km, in thousands)		−0.128*	−0.102	−0.052
		(0.061)	(0.069)	(0.068)
Per capita GDP (in thousands)		0.012	−0.005	0.016
		(0.013)	(0.021)	(0.016)
Constant	−8.045**	−4.554	−4.629	−4.076
	(0.878)	(2.776)	(2.987)	(3.116)
Observations	9,546	5,526	5,144	1,879

*$p < .10$, **$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$.
Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the conflict country level. Year dummies are included but not reported.

report these additional models in the online Appendix, tables A1 and A2, but we briefly comment on important divergences across the tables here.

We begin by analyzing H1, or whether peacekeeping leaders come from powerful countries. We find that only one measure of power, the KOF Political Globalisation Index, is associated with higher odds of both SRSG and FC appointments. In figure 2, we show the substantive impact of this index on the chances of supplying both civilian and military leaders of UN missions using the full model. Moving from the minimum to the maximum increases the odds of having a civilian and military leader appointed by 1.2 and 0.7 percentage points, respectively.

Institutional power, as measured by coming from a P3 country, affects the probability of SRSG appointments but has no statistically significant effect for FCs. Other power variables, in particular NATO membership or financial contribution to the peacekeeping budget, lack significant effects for both leader types. This is contrary to the popular perception that NATO countries get preferential treatment in UN peacekeeping (Cold-Ravnkilde, Albrecht, and Haugegaard 2017) and that the UN paymasters use the "power of the purse" to exert influence. The overall impression from the analysis of power variables is that top civilian diplomats tend to come from countries with an important institutional position within the UN system, while military commanders tend to come from less institutionally powerful countries, a pattern that resonates with the notion of a "North–South" divide at the UN.[17]

Turning to H2, we find that the more troops a country contributes to a specific operation, the more likely it is to supply the FC as well as the SRSG, which confirms the impression that contributions are linked to FC posts but also advances the existing knowledge by showing that it matters for SRSG positions as well. Moreover, being a major contributor of troops to peacekeeping throughout history increases the likelihood of having an FC appointed. The cumulative number of troops provided in the past does not seem to affect SRSG appointments. Figure 3 depicts the effects of troop contributions: as expected, troop contributions to a specific mission are associated with higher odds of leadership appointments.

Regarding H3, we find that our measures of cultural proximity—proxies for a leader's familiarity with the conflict country—have predictive power. SRSGs and FCs have lower chances of appointment if they come from countries that are more geographically distant from the conflict country (figure 4). Linguistic distance plays the same role for FCs although it is now always statistically significant. The fact that their appointments are more clearly

[17] Developing countries at the UN have for decades complained that the UN bureaucracy is dominated by nationals of rich, Northern states (Weinlich 2014; Guéhenno 2015; Salton 2017).

Table 2. Appointment of FCs: baseline models

	(1) Baseline	*(2) Full*	*(3) No P5*	*(4) At least one appointment*
P3	0.866	−0.760		−2.018*
	(1.058)	(1.233)		(1.210)
NATO membership	−0.512	−0.267	−0.299	−0.317
	(0.372)	(0.383)	(0.391)	(0.495)
Cumulative number of presence in UNSC	0.099*	0.088	0.110	0.039
	(0.060)	(0.076)	(0.074)	(0.082)
KOF Political Globalisation Index	0.047**	0.042**	0.042*	−0.011
	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.022)
Composite Index of National Capability	0.398	6.043	−2.667	8.466
	(5.649)	(9.340)	(6.984)	(7.525)
Troop contribution (in thousands)	0.994**	1.336**	1.318**	1.212**
	(0.302)	(0.374)	(0.372)	(0.333)
Cumulative troop contribution (in thousands)	0.003	0.023*	0.025*	0.022*
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
ODA: total net (USD, million)	−0.000	0.000	0.002	−0.001
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.010)	(0.007)
Financial contributions (USD, million)	−0.002*	−0.000	0.000	0.004*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Previous FC experience	−0.217*	0.258	0.160	0.175
	(0.120)	(0.203)	(0.206)	(0.173)
Previous FC same mission	1.854**	1.389*	1.406*	1.064
	(0.662)	(0.753)	(0.705)	(0.730)
Liberal democracy index	0.002	1.554	1.881	2.025
	(0.708)	(1.035)	(1.161)	(1.461)
Per capita GDP (in thousands)		−0.042**	−0.050**	−0.033**
		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Linguistic distance		−2.575*	−2.643	−2.387*
		(1.545)	(1.637)	(1.382)
Distance (pop-wt, km, in thousands)		−0.160**	−0.171**	−0.175**
		(0.039)	(0.047)	(0.042)
Constant	−9.032**	−5.383**	−5.288**	−1.128
	(0.495)	(1.673)	(1.733)	(1.752)
Observations	14,928	9,246	8,911	3,139

*$p < .10$, **$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$.
Standard errors in parentheses are clustered at the conflict country level. Year dummies are included but not reported.

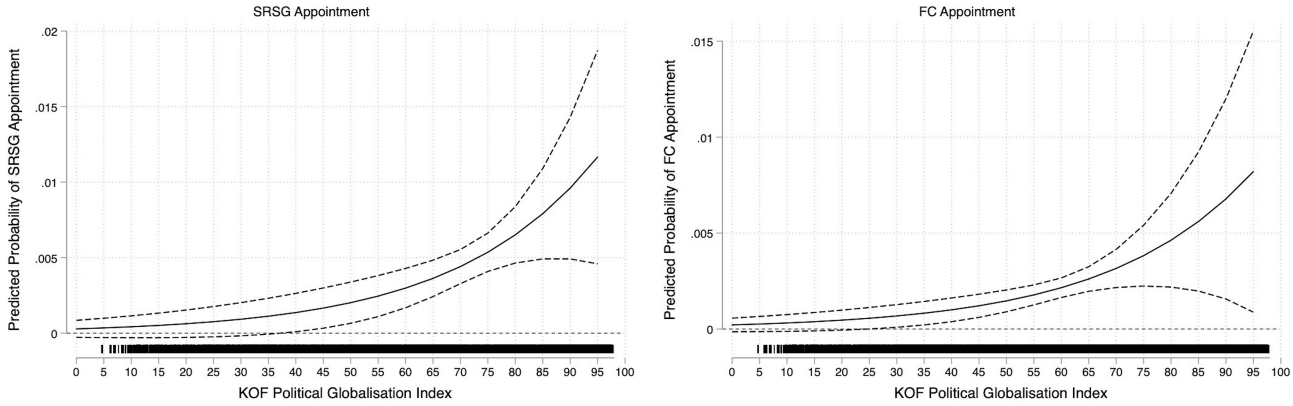

Figure 2. Marginal effects plot for probability of appointment, depending on political globalization.
Notes: Graph shows linear predictions of appointment while holding all other covariates constant at their means; dashed lines signify 90 percent confidence intervals; rug plot at the horizontal axis illustrates distribution of the KOF Political Globalisation Index.

guided by considerations of cultural proximity suggests that the Secretariat hopes that proximity between the military component, including the head of the military component, and locals will reassure the latter and reinforce trust (Bove and Ruggeri 2019; Bove, Ruffa, and Ruggeri 2020).

Our results also suggest that countries that have already provided a civilian or military leader for a specific mission are more likely to have other SRSGs (tables 1 and A1) or FCs (tables 2 and A2) appointed to lead the same mission. The results are consistent with the "mission capture" logic, in which a country supplies several leaders for the same mission, which is often motivated and justified by large troop contributions to the operation in question. When we look at the substantive effects, however (figure 5), the coefficients

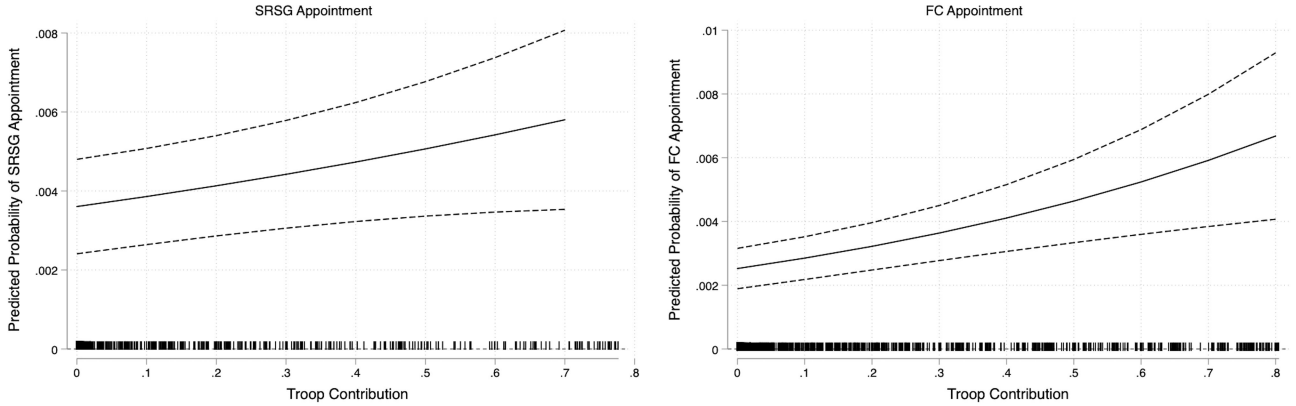

Figure 3. Marginal effects plot for probability of appointment, depending on troop contribution to the mission by leader's country.
Notes: Graph shows linear predictions of appointment while holding all other covariates constant at their means; dashed lines signify 90 percent confidence intervals; rug plot at the horizontal axis illustrates distribution of mission-specific troop contribution.

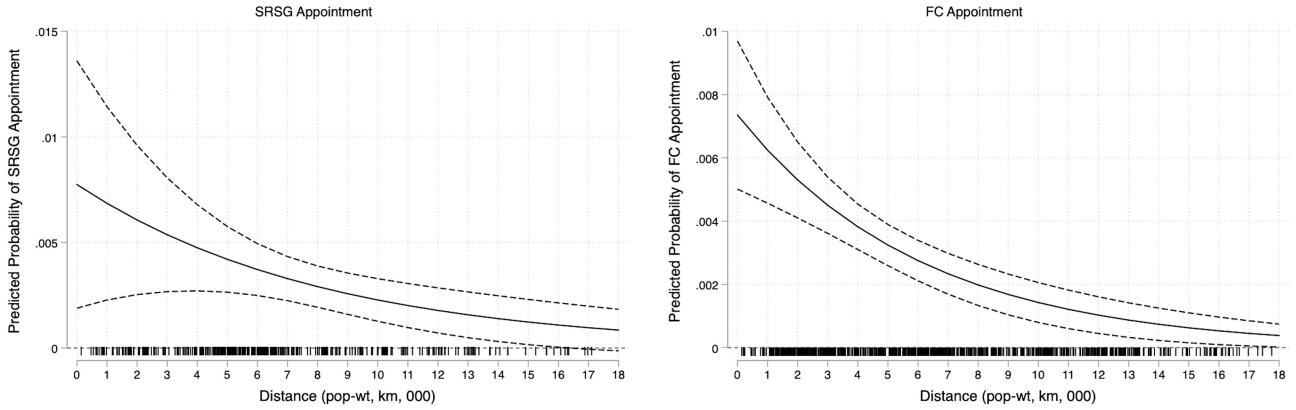

Figure 4. Marginal effects plot for probability of appointment, depending on geographic distance.
Notes: Graph shows linear predictions of appointment while holding all other covariates constant at their means; dashed lines signify 90 percent confidence intervals; rug plot at the horizontal axis illustrates distribution of geographic distance.

are imprecisely estimated, and the confidence intervals are larger and include zero for FCs. Surprisingly, in table 1, previous general SRSG experience seems to be negatively correlated with SRSG appointments, but this negative relation does not survive additional scrutiny in table A1.

We do not find strong associations between appointments and most other measures of nationality-related skills. Neither bilateral development assistance nor liberal democracy has a consistent and significant effect on appointments. To the extent that development assistance generates country-specific expertise, it does not appear to shape the UN's selection of peacekeeping leaders. Similarly, liberal democracy does not reliably increase the probability of appointments. Finally, less developed economies are more likely to be represented among military leadership, whereas per capita income does not affect the odds of SRSG appointments.

We also observe several temporal trends in terms of the importance of our three categories of factors (tables A3 and A4). The P3 have strengthened their influence over SRSG appointments after 1999, which suggests that instead of disengagement, they have attempted to increase strategic control over peacekeeping. Recognition of mission-specific troop contributions has had a greater impact on SRSG and FC appointment after 1999 as well, reflecting the Secretariat's growing dependence on TCCs. On the contrary, the effect of cumulative troop contributions on FC appointment was strong in the immediate post–Cold War period, suggesting the Secretariat could afford not to engage in *quid pro quo* deals but build long-term relations with major contributors, rewarding them with command posts. Finally, in terms of skills, proximity has had an increasing effect on FC appointments after the 1990s, reflecting the emerging norm that peacekeepers and their commanders should come from neighboring countries.

In summary, we find evidence that appointments of civilian and military leaders in UN peacekeeping are shaped by specific factors relating to power, recognition, and skills. While some factors affect both leader types in a similar way, there are also differences. Similarities concern the role of country's international integration, mission-specific troop contributions, and geographic proximity to the conflict country, which generally enhance the chances of being selected for both positions. Coming from a P3 country or a country that is powerful diplomatically, as reflected in multiple elections to the UNSC, increases the chances of being appointed an SRSG. Cumulative troop contributions and linguistic proximity to the conflict country enhance the probability of FC appointments. In terms of skills, we find little support for the importance of a democratic background or personal experience. However, countries

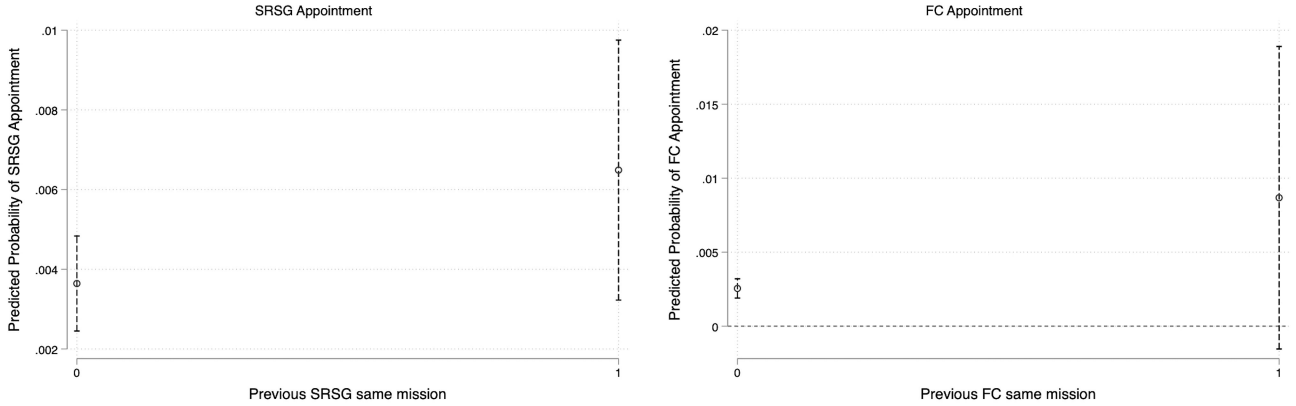

Figure 5. Marginal effects plot for probability of appointment, depending on having previously provided a leader for the same mission.
Notes: Graph shows linear predictions of appointment while holding all other covariates constant at their means; dashed lines signify 90 percent confidence intervals.

often supply several leaders for the same mission, benefitting from "mission capture," despite the UN's aspiration to ensure representation and rotation within senior peacekeeping ranks.

As mentioned earlier, in tables A1 and A2 in the online Appendix, we perform a number of robustness checks: appointment is a rare event, and to address potential bias due to a rare-events data-generating process, we re-estimate the full models using a rare-events logit design (model 1); we include dummy variables for the leader's country (model 2) and for the mission (model 3); and we exclude countries with no armed forces (model 4). To mitigate concerns about selection bias, country and mission effects are added to account for the unobserved heterogeneities that are specific to each country or mission.

Conclusion

Appointments of civilian and military leaders of UN peacekeeping operations are affected by the leaders' nationality. Countries that are highly integrated into global processes, supply a significant number of troops for a specific mission, and are geographically close to the conflict country have a higher likelihood of providing civilian or military leaders. The three permanent "Western" members of the Security Council, as well as countries that have served multiple terms as elected members, provide a greater number of civilian heads of missions than other countries. Major contributors of troops to all peacekeeping missions and countries that are linguistically proximate to the conflict country have an increased chance of getting the top military post. We find no support for the importance of national capabilities, NATO membership, democracy, personal experience (except coming from a country that has already led the given mission in the past), or bilateral assistance to the conflict country.

These findings point to several ethical and practical problems in the functioning of UN peacekeeping and, within generalizability, IOs more broadly. The prominence of institutional power in the selection process of top diplomats in peacekeeping missions can be a source of dysfunction if it stands in the way of appointing the most capable individuals. The Secretariat's dependence on troop contributors is also a potential risk. A former USG for Peacekeeping disapproved of the practice of offering mission command to the largest troop contributor "because it weakens the loyalty of commanders to the UN and leads to a dangerous system of rotations, limiting the pool of applicants, with the risk that the wrong commander may sometimes have to be appointed" (Guéhenno 2015, 226). Nevertheless, our analysis shows that the practice is widespread and also affects the selection of civilian leaders. However, we should not overlook the benefits that might arise from appointing peacekeeping leaders of a particular nationality if it promotes commitment and engagement with the UN on the part of their country.

While institutionally powerful states are more likely to secure the most important post in peacekeeping missions, that of the civilian head, developing countries have an alternative avenue to influence by supplying troops and demanding representation among mission leadership. Multiple hierarchies structure UN peacekeeping (Coleman 2020): institutional privilege in the form of Security Council membership is an important but not the only source of clout. Yet, the existence of multiple hierarchies cannot conceal the "North–South" divide and the fundamental inequality of UN peacekeeping where developing countries risk the lives of their soldiers to obtain influence (Cunliffe 2013), while institutionally and diplomatically powerful countries can achieve the same through lobbying.

This study opens three research avenues. First, informal influence and hierarchies operate in subtle ways in IOs that are not easily observable but worthy of scholarly attention. For example, powerful states shape peacekeeping by placing nationals not only in leadership positions but also in less visible yet important mission posts.[18] Some countries demand special arrangements in rare cases when they contribute troops to UN peacekeeping.[19] Further research is needed into informal hierarchies in international institutions. Second, member states make contributions to the work of IOs that are not easily observable. While assessing troop contributions is relatively straightforward, there are other ways in which member states support activities of IOs, such as seconding experts or hosting conferences. These contributions can serve as the basis for demanding appointments or a source of influence in general. Third, international secretariats might find it difficult to dismiss officials from powerful or pivotal countries, which can undermine IOs' efforts to improve performance and ensure accountability.

[18] Citizens of Western countries often secure key jobs at mission headquarters dealing with planning, logistics, and intelligence (Coleman 2013).

[19] An example is the Strategic Military Cell staffed by Western military experts in the UN mission in Lebanon.

Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is available at the *International Studies Quarterly* data archive.

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