

# **Nation-State Support for UN Peacekeeping Operations: The Impact of Self-Interest**

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## **Support for UN Peacekeeping Operations**

Since its formation the United Nations (UN) has undertaken many operations that are designed to keep peace. Even though the UN approves a peacekeeping operation, not every nation-state within the General Assembly agrees to enact the operation. For example South Africa contributed troops to the MONUC peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but did not contribute troops in the case of UNTAET in East Timor. How do we explain the variation in nation-state support for UN peacekeeping operations?

This paper will evaluate peacekeeping operations enacted by the UN since its formation that are currently in progress. UN peacekeeping operations are defined by the UN as different from those that are peacemaking. A peacekeeping operation is one that relies on the approval of the disputing countries and involves the use of peacekeepers to create a compromise between the countries. By contrast peace-making operations do not require the consent of the disputing countries and the peacekeepers are given the power to use all means necessary to resolve the conflict (United Nations). For the purposes of this paper, peacekeeping operations will refer to those operations that are defined as such by the UN organization. Nation-state support will be understood as a contribution of peacekeeping troops in order to establish or further authorize a peacekeeping operation. The member state does not have to contribute to the operation by providing peacekeeping observers or police. Many member states contribute one or both of these types of personnel as well, but this paper will only evaluate their peacekeeping troop contribution.

The issue of nation-state support for UN peacekeeping operation is important to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the UN General Assembly, as well as to the UN member states. The UNSC can use this information to influence nation-states that do not support peacekeeping operations by trying to change their opinions on the underlying issues that effects the decision. The UNSC can also avoid pursuing peace-

making operations, which are seen as encroaching on the parties involved in the conflict, in order to pursue a peacekeeping operation that is more widely accepted. In this way the UNSC can avoid the negative connotations surrounding an imposed peace-making operation. The General Assembly will find this information relevant because it is the body that funds peacekeeping operations. In order to get the monetary support that is needed within the General it needs to influence nation-states decisions about peacekeeping missions. The nation-state members will also find this information useful for influencing other nation-states to support a given operation. It is also essential for these member states to influence others to support the peacekeeping operation in order to reduce their costs of contributing troops, by distributing those costs to other member states as well. Each of these groups must be able to recognize and manipulate the factors that ultimately lead to either support or non-support of peacekeeping operations.

*This paper will argue that support for UN peacekeeping operation will occur when nation-states perceive a net benefit as a result of the action taken. Nation-states receive net benefits from reducing regional tension because it retains peace within their region as well as within the borders of the nation-state itself. Therefore, a nation-state will support a UN peacekeeping operation when it occurs within its region.*

### **The Contemporary Debate**

There are three schools of thought to evaluate when considering nation-state support for UN peacekeeping operations; the cognitivists, the neoliberals, and the neorealists. Each school provides a unique perspective, despite this all three share a common set of assumptions about the international system.

The schools all share assumptions because they are all rooted in the realist and liberal contrast that existed up until the late 1970's and still exists under the auspices of new theories today (Baldwin). Each theory takes part of either the past liberal or realist school and expands the theoretical grounding to create a new debate. Therefore each school aligns within the realist-liberal dichotomy. In the past liberals and realists argued over whether the central actor in the world system was either the state or the system respectively yet, today the neoliberals and neorealists each ground their theories on the notion that the nation-state is the central actor in an anarchic system. Other common

assumptions are the possibility of cooperation among nation-states and the presence of international regimes and institutions.

Cognitivists contend that a person must carry out a study of the international system and its norms, treating the nation-state as a role-player in that system (Hasenclever, Krasner). The cognitivist school of thought is based on knowledge and focuses on the sociological aspects of the nation-state. Nation-states will support UN operations when they see the UN as a legitimate body. Accordingly, “the authority of the UN to set up peacekeeping operations must, in the final analysis, rest on some generally accepted theory of why member states should regard UN resolutions as authoritative”(Tandon). When the members of the UN agree that the UN has the authority and the legitimate power in the international system to govern they will support peacekeeping operations.

Neoliberals focus on international cooperation. They posit the existence of interdependence among states (Keohane). From this perspective, international regimes and institutions exist in order to prevent outcomes that do not benefit each nation-state individually. The neoliberals are concerned most with the absolute gains to be achieved from international cooperation effort (Hasenclever). This school argues that the international regimes or institutions in place exert influence over individual nation-states in the system (Baldwin).

Neoliberal theory posits that international superpowers will support UN actions. This idea rests on the thought that only a “minimum working consensus” is needed in order to pursue peacekeeping operations (Diehl). A consensus is often dominated by the superpower states and their allies which are more often involved and by a majority in the decision whether or not to pursue a peacekeeping mission. In essence, as long as the UN is able to muster the requisite majority in the Council or the Assembly, the negative votes of the smaller Members are in fact of no consequence to the effective functioning of the commission. By the same logic the negative vote of a powerful state determined to obstruct the work of a UN peacekeeping commission will obviously have a fatal effect on the commission (Diehl).

Since neoliberals believe that there is a world society of states that work to achieve a common goal, if a nation-state is a superpower it has the ultimate authority in the system and will pursue a peacekeeping operation based on the interests of the system. In contrast to neorealist theory outlined below, neoliberals “contend that states are not engaged in simple struggle, like gladiators in an arena, but are limited in their

conflicts with one another by common rules and institutions” (Bull 25). This school advocates abiding by the rules of the system, obtaining the best outcome for all nation-states.

Neorealist theory contends that nation-states pursue a course of action that leads to the outcome that is in their best interest. Therefore nation-states support missions of the UN when it is in their best interest to do so. In contrast to the neoliberals, the neorealists are focused on the relative gains that can be made in international cooperation and actions. Instead of looking at the total positive or negative gain each nation-state achieves, neoliberalism weighs the costs and benefits of the action. Neorealism contends that each nation-state is looking out for its own good and is concerned only with benefiting its own interests. Therefore the cost of peacekeeping operation is placed on the disputing nations, since it is not in the interests of the other nation-states to pay for the peacekeeping operation.

Designed to allocate the risks of peacekeeping operation between the United Nations and the states in whose territories UN operation are deployed, it was predicated on the assumption that, in consenting to a peacekeeping operation in its territory for its own benefit, the host country is consenting to bear, at least in part, the financial consequences of the presence (Shraga).

Yet, there are benefits that cause other nation-states to vote in favor of the peacekeeping operation. In order to keep relative gains high for this action, nation-states must place the costs of the peacekeeping operation on the nation-states directly involved. Self-interested nation-states will support operations aimed at furthering their own interests.

Neorealism is a power-based theory, that focuses on the distribution of power in the international system, arguing that this creates problems for international cooperation and formation of international regimes and institutions (Hasenclever). In contrast to the neoliberals, the neorealists do not believe that international institutions have an extensive amount of power or influence over nation-states (Baldwin).

Neorealists theory, which posits self-interest as the motivation behind support for peacekeeping operations will provide the basis for the arguments made in this paper. The nation-state is acting in its self-interest, not in order to preserve or protect the common-interests of all nation-states when it supports a U.N. peacekeeping operation. The neorealists theory has the most explanatory power, because it focuses on the goals of the nation-states, which can be treated in essence as individuals in the international system. Therefore a rational analysis of their troop contribution can be completed under rational choice theory. Rational choice theory creates a framework for understanding individual preferences, or in this case national preferences and explaining outcomes based on this information.

## **The Explanatory Power of Rational Choice Theory**

Rational choice theory assumes that individuals are self-interested and rational; this paper will apply these characteristics to the nation-state. Since a nation-state is self-

interested, it is said to have a national interest. Preferences are ordered in terms of their likelihood of achieving the national interest. Since the nation-state is rational it will take actions calculated to achieve its interests. In other words, nation-states have a national interest that they rationally pursue through their actions. It follows that nation-states will act in a way to help other nation-states or cooperate with others when it will benefit their own perceived interests. Therefore, when deciding whether to support peacekeeping operations in the United Nations, nation-states will offer support when it is in their self-interest to do so. In essence, nation-state support for UN peacekeeping operations occurs when nation-states believe support will provide benefits.

Each nation-state has a different national-interest and therefore will support different peacekeeping operations. Thus, variation among nation-state support for UN peacekeeping operations is caused by the self-interests of the various members of the U.N. It is in the self-interest of all nation-states to reduce regional tension within their own respective region. Regional tension and conflict is easily spread beyond borders of individual nation-states, and nation-states favor a state of peace than conflict. Nation-states prefer a state of peace because conflict forces the government to deal with problems that occur as a result of disputes. Regional peace is preferred because conflict can spread easily beyond the borders of one nation-state, especially when it occurs for religious or cultural reasons, since religions and cultures are often not confined to individual nation-states. Nation-states would like to reduce the conflict in their own regions, and would therefore contribute troops to a peacekeeping operation within their region in order to end or reduce conflict and its potential to spread. Therefore, the hypothesis of this paper is that nation-states will support UN peacekeeping operations when they occur in their own region.

#### **Data and Method**

To test the hypothesis of this paper the dependant variable of support will be analyzed using data of UN member states contribution of peacekeeping troops to current peacekeeping operations. Each peacekeeping operation will be coded regionally based on the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations layout of five regions: Africa, the

Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East (United Nations). Troop contribution will be analyzed using data from the UN web page that lists military contributions by each country for the individual peacekeeping operations (United Nations). I will code each member nation yes for peacekeeping operations in which troops were contributed and code each member nation that did not contribute troops as no.

The independent variable of this hypothesis is a member state's regional similarity. Regional similarity will be based on a recode of the United Nations Statistical Handbook regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America. These regions were recoded to make them more similar to the UN peacekeeping regions. North and South America were collapsed into Americas, Asia and Oceania were collapsed in Asia, and the remaining two remaining regions of Europe and Africa stayed the same; thus giving four regions of Africa, Americas, Asia, and Europe.

Each peacekeeping region of the dependent variable will be analyzed separately across the regions of the independent variable to determine whether regional similarity is correlated to support of peacekeeping operations. For the Middle Eastern peacekeeping operations regional similarity will be compared to nation-states within the independent variable value of Asia. All other peacekeeping operation regions are titled the same as the value of the independent variable regional similarity.

I will test the correlation between the dependant and independent variable using crosstab analysis. I will reject the null hypothesis that regional similarity has no impact on nation-state support of peacekeeping operations if the statistics calculated have a significance level of .05 or less. A chi-square will be calculated in order to evaluate whether or not the null hypothesis can be falsified. To test the strength of the relationship, I will calculate the following statistics: phi, Cramer's V, the contingency coefficient, and lambda. As phi, the contingency coefficient, and Cramer's V each approach the value of one, the strength of the association between the dependant and independent variable becomes stronger. Lambda relates the amount of the reduction of predicting the value of the dependant variable with the knowledge of the value on the independent variable. By calculating each of these statistics I can show the strength of the association between the dependent variable of support and the independent variable of

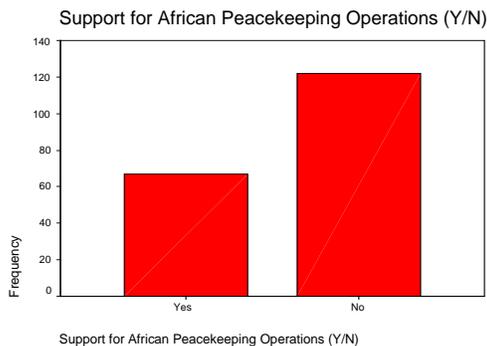
regional similarity as well as determining the reduction of error by knowing the value of the independent variable.

## Results

A crosstab table was created for each of the five dependent variable peacekeeping regions where support was dichotomously separated into yes and no categories. The four peacekeeping regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East each produced results, yet in the case of the Americas region there were no current peacekeeping operations in that region and therefore no data to analyze.

The frequencies for the African peacekeeping operations (Graph 1) show the number of nation-states that supported peacekeeping operations (yes) in that region was 67 and the number of nation-states that did not support peacekeeping operations (no) was 122 in that region.

Graph 1. Support for African Peacekeeping Operations



<b>Support</b>	<u>Frequency</u>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	67	35.4
No	122	64.6
Total	189	100.0

The crosstab table for African Peacekeeping Operations (Table 1) shows that 21 African nation-states support African peacekeeping operations compared to 9 American nation-states, 14 Asian nation-states, and 23 European nation-states. African nation-states supported peacekeeping operations in their own region only 38.2% of the time, whereas European nation-states supported 59% of African peacekeeping operations. The statistics table shows that the dependant variable and independent variable are weakly correlated as can be seen by the value of the chi square of 14.565 and a significance of .002, below the .05 standard I am accepting. The relationship that exists disproves the hypothesis, and shows that there is a relationship between not being in the same region as peacekeeping operations and support for those operations. The values of phi, Cramer's v, and the contingency coefficient all show a weak relationship between region and support for peacekeeping operations as well, in the direction of not being regionally similar and supporting a peacekeeping operation. The value of lambda shows that there is 14.386% reduction of error in predicting the value of the dependent variable as either yes or no by knowing the regional value of the independent variable.

Table 1. African Peacekeeping Operations

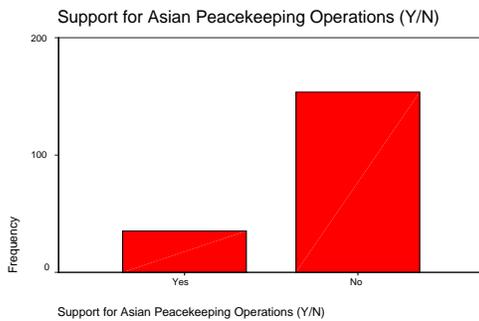
Support	Region of Supporting Nation-State				Total
	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	
Yes	21 38.2%	9 25.7%	14 23.7%	23 59.0%	67 35.6%
No	34 61.8%	26 74.3%	45 76.3%	16 41.0%	121 64.4%
Total	55	35	59	39	188

Statistic	Value	Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	14.565	.002
Lambda	14.386	.002
Phi	.278	.002

Cramer's V	.278	.002
Contingency Coefficient	.268	.002

The frequencies for the Asian peacekeeping operations (Graph 2) show the number of nation-states that supported peacekeeping operations (yes) in that region was 35 and the number of nation-states that did not support peacekeeping operations (no) was 154 in that region.

Graph 2. Support for Asian Peacekeeping Operations



<b>Support</b>	<u>Frequency</u>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	35	18.5
No	154	81.5
Total	189	100.0

The crosstab table for Asian Peacekeeping Operations (Table 2) shows that 13 Asian nation-states support Asian peacekeeping operations compared to 3 African, 6 American, and 13 European. Only 22.0% of Asian nation-states supported peacekeeping operation, whereas 33.3% of European countries supported peacekeeping operations in this region. Therefore the table shows that the hypothesis is rejected and

instead shows a relationship between support for Asian peacekeeping operations and nation-states not having regional similarity. The statistics of phi, Cramer's v, and the contingency coefficient all show a weak association between support and region, all within the acceptable significance level. The value of lambda shows only a .037% reduction of error by knowing the region of the nation-state, and it is also not a statistically significant value, since the significance level is .544, much larger than the acceptable range.

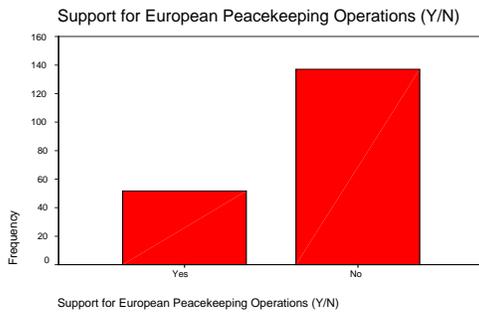
Table 2. Asian Peacekeeping Operations

Support	Region of Supporting Nation-State				
	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Total
Yes	3 5.5%	6 17.1%	13 22.0%	13 33.3%	35 18.6%
No	52 94.5%	29 82.9%	46 78.0%	26 66.7%	153 81.4%
Total	55	35	59	39	188

Statistic	Value	Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	12.369	.006
Lambda	.037	.544
Phi	.256	.006
Cramer's V	.256	.006
Contingency Coefficient	.248	.006

The frequencies for the European peacekeeping operations (Graph 3) show the number of nation-states that supported peacekeeping operations (yes) in that region was 52 and the number of nation-states that did not support peacekeeping operations (no) was 137 in that region.

**Graph 3. Support for European Peacekeeping Operations**



<b>Support</b>	<u>Frequency</u>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	52	27.5
No	137	72.5
Total	189	100.0

The crosstab table for European Peacekeeping Operations (Table 3) shows that 27 European nation-states supported peacekeeping operations in that region, compared to 5 African nation-states, 6 American nation-states, and 14 Asian nation-states. European nation-states supported 69.2% of peacekeeping operations in their own region compared to smaller percentages by any of the other nation-states in other regions. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed that nation-states will support peacekeeping operations in their own region. The chi square shows that the variables are dependent and that the null hypothesis can be rejected in this case, since the significance level is .000, showing no possibility of error in the sample. The statistics of phi, Cramer’s v, and the contingency coefficient show that there are however very weak relationships between the variables; all are statistically significant as well. The value of lambda shows that the region of the nation-state in this correlation only reduces the error of predicting the value of the dependent variable as yes or no by .182%, which shows region has little to no impact on support for peacekeeping operations.

**Table 3. European Peacekeeping Operations**

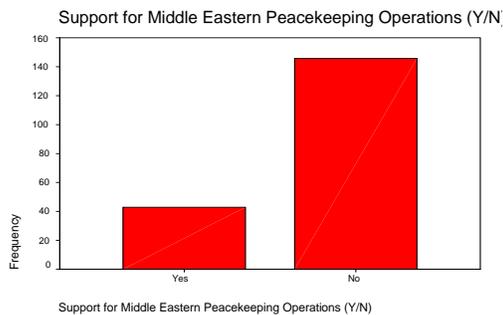
	<b>Region of Supporting Nation-State</b>				
Support	Africa	Americ as	Asia	Europe	Total
t					

Yes	5 9.1%	6 17.1%	14 23.7%	27 69.2%	52 27.7%
No	50 90.9%	29 82.9%	45 76.3%	12 30.8%	136 72.3%
Total	55	35	59	39	188

Statistic	Value	Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	45.55	.000
Lambda	.182	.027
Phi	.492	.000
Cramer's V	.492	.000
Contingency Coefficient	.442	.000

The frequencies for the Middle Eastern peacekeeping operations (Graph 4) shows the number of nation-states that supported peacekeeping operations (yes) in that region was 43 and the number of nation-states that did not support peacekeeping operations (no) was 146 in that region.

Graph 4. Support for Middle Eastern Peacekeeping Operations



Support	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	22.8
No	146	77.2
Total	189	100.0

The crosstab table for Middle Eastern Peacekeeping Operations (Table 4) shows that Asian nation-states supported 12 peacekeeping operations in this region compared to 4 African nation-states, 6 American nation-states, and 21 European nation-states. Only 20.3% of Asian nation-states supported peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, whereas 53.8% of European countries supported these operations. Therefore, the data in this table shows that the hypothesis is rejected; support for a peacekeeping operation is instead related to regional dissimilarity. The statistics for this crosstab table show that there is a weak correlation between support and region of 29.663, and this value is highly significant at the .000 level. The values of phi, Cramer's v, and the contingency coefficient all show a weak relationship between region and support, all at a significance level of .000 as well. The Lambda has a value of .093, which shows that there is .093% reduction of error in predicting the support or non-support of a peacekeeping operation by knowing the region, which shows little influence on the outcome and this value is not statistically significant either.

**Table 4. Middle Eastern Peacekeeping Operation**

Support	Region of Supporting Nation-State				Total
	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	
Yes	4 7.3%	6 17.1%	12 20.3%	21 53.8%	43 22.9%
No	51 92.7%	29 82.9%	47 79.7%	18 46.2%	145 77.1%
Total	55	35	59	39	188

Statistic	Value	Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	29.663	.000
Lambda	.093	.270
Phi	.397	.000
Cramer's V	.397	.000
Contingency Coefficient	.369	.000

## Implications

This paper has sought to evaluate the variation among nation-state support of peacekeeping operations. I proposed that under rational choice assumptions that nation-states would follow their own national interests when deciding whether or not to support peacekeeping operations. From this premise I proposed that nation-states would support peacekeeping operations when it was in their national interest. Based on the premise that reducing regional tension is a nation interest, it follows that when operations are located in the same regions nation-states will support those operations. Yet, the data above shows that this hypothesis should be rejected. The null hypothesis that nation-state will not support peacekeeping operations when they are in their own region is not rejected by the data. The data points to the idea that possibly regional dissimilarity leads to nation-state support of peacekeeping operations.

It is interesting to see the trend across the regions of the data that in all cases European nation-states supported more peacekeeping operations than other regions of nation-states. Further analysis should be done to evaluate a possible explanation for a large European support for UN peacekeeping operation in all areas of the globe. Another possible analysis may focus on the difference between nation-state support for peacekeeping operations based on the individual nation-states not grouped by region or within each region compared to one another as well.

New hypotheses need to be formulated either from the neorealist theoretical background or from other competing theories to find a reason for the variation among nation-states when it comes to supporting peacekeeping operations. Regional data may be useful in evaluating other hypotheses related to support for peacekeeping operations, such as looking at the different economic or cultural development of certain regions, leading to support or non-support. However, the data above rejects the hypothesis that regional similarity leads to support of UN peacekeeping operations.

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